

MEETING MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY DOWNTOWN BOARD
& BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ST. ALBANS FOR THE FUTURE
VIA TELECONFERENCE 6:00 PM TUESDAY JUNE 16, 2020

Approved July 28, 2020

Board Members Present: Maureen Brown, Chair; Emily Richards; David Glidden; Keith Longmore, alternate; Ashley Cleare; Jeremy Read; Donna Howard; Valdemar Garibay; Elizabeth Reed, Secretary
Treasurer

Board Members Absent: Rachael Sink; Ben Letourneau; Erik Johnson, Vice-Chair

Public Present: None

Staff Members Present – Wendy Coy, Minute Taker; Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development; Marty Manahan, Director of Operations

1. Begin Recording
2. **Call to Order – Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 6:03.**
 - a) **Attendance and introductions** - None
 - b) **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda** – Discussion of Downtown Board participation in a community movement
3. **SAFF Financial Report** - Mr. Sawyer stated that there is \$6770 in Downtown Dollars. Mr. Manahan asked if anyone had turned in cards for the Downtown Dollars. Mr. Sawyer stated that he hadn't seen any. Member Cleare stated that she has received a few but hadn't turned them in yet.
4. **Economic supports before / after COVID-19**
 - a) **Regional marketing / Buy local funding** – Chair Brown stated that the funding isn't secure yet and it is hard to plan without knowing the funding. Mr. Sawyer stated that the Governor pledged several million dollars to seven regions in the State. St. Albans would be in the Franklin / Grand Isle region. The regions would subscribe to some sort of regional marketing campaign. There was a regional meeting that included Chamber of Commerce, Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce, the Regional Planning Commission, Mr. Sawyer, Mr. Manahan and Chair Brown. There is no fiscal agent set yet. They discussed that there needs to be marketing inside and outside Vermont for tourism. Capacities for going forward need to be built such as the Regional calendar and website, highlight the Rail Trail etc. The State put out an RFP so that the region would have a suite of vendors to choose from. What has been learned from COVID that we can be hurt if there is a recession regionally. The City has heard from retailers that not having the tourist and the camps has hurt the bottom line. Mr. Manahan stated that the legislature needs to act quickly. Mr. Sawyer talked about the Seven Days Staytripper program. It is to highlight local tourist spots for locals. Chair Brown stated that she

hadn't received the email but that she had received a call from GMP looking to have Staycations for their employees. Mr. Sawyer stated that the need to come up with a marketing committee that can meet quickly and conveniently. Member Cleare stated that she contacted Seven Days to get the rates. Do we want to have a committee that makes decisions for the whole Downtown.

Member Howard made a motion that the Board allocate \$500 to the Promotions committee to use between Board meetings. Member Garibay seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

b) E-commerce and delivery options – Not discussed

5. Status updates from events, programs and committees –

a) **FoT / Last Night** – Considering putting the trees in empty store fronts downtown so people could walk along and see them. The committee is working with an aerial photographer to take pictures.

b) **Downtown Dollars** – Discussed earlier

c) **Review Public Art Opportunities** – Mr. Sawyer stated that the utility boxes are going forward and that they will be painted by local artists. The art wall is going up in Houghton Park soon. A group of artists watch the Swanton wall in order to keep vandalism down so that art might show up one day and disappear the next. Member Howard stated that a group in the community has already volunteered. Member Glidden asked which wall it would be going on. Mr. Manahan stated that the west wall would be the most visible.

d) **Mayor's photo contest** - Website is up and some submissions have been received. Leahy Press will be printing calendars with the winning submissions. There is planning in e-commerce to sell some of the prints on-line. The Village Shoppe is willing to partner with the Downtown Board in that endeavor. He is starting with the previous years photos. Make Music Day has been put up on the SACA page as an event.

e) **SACA** - has lost their social media person due to wanting to use the social platform to push political views and what is going on in the world at the moment. Member Howard contacted him and stated that he could post about any local movements but to keep away from National politics. The Board agreed with her decision.

f) **Downtown Website** – None

g) **Cigarette Litter Cleanup** – Mr. Sawyer stated that the Tobacco Coalition was asking for help and ideas. Maybe someone would be interested in sponsoring. Member Cleare stated that there is someone who already cleans up downtown. Mr. Manahan stated that he is the husband of the owner of Downtown cuts. Member Garibay asked if this was just Taylor Park or all of downtown. Mr. Sawyer stated that they usually did all of Downtown. Member Garibay asked how long they were expected to be out there. Mr. Sawyer stated that it wasn't usually more than an hour. Member Garibay stated that he would contact Mr. Sawyer after the meeting.

6. Discuss Social Media Strategy – Mr. Sawyer stated that they discussed the style of posts that need to be done whether is it just sharing posts or having varying different posts. They talked about who could do what. City Staff is good at sharing posts. If there were any Downtown Board members who wanted to volunteer they would organize a meeting to get a consistent voice. The other discussion was whether the social media business should go out to bid and the answer was yes. A budget hasn't been set yet. Mr. Sawyer is going to see if the City could contribute to the budget. Vice-Chair Johnson opened an Instagram for Downtown. Member Reed stated that she would love to help with Instagram. Member Richards stated that they were trying to figure out how to get Instagram to feed the Facebook page. Member Howard suggested guest posters. Mr. Sawyer stated that it helps if people share the Downtown page posts and for the Downtown page to share posts.

7. Other Business

- a) **Approval of May 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes** – Member Glidden made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Member Howard seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.
- b) **Next Meeting Date and regular meeting dates** – July 27, 2020. There was a suggestion to move the Downtown Board to the fourth Tuesday.

Member Howard made a motion to change the meeting date to the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00. Member Garibay seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

- c) **Other** – Member Glidden stated that the Peace and Justice Center is doing a community's values campaign. He works with youth and they seem to really respond to it. He was wondering if the Downtown Board wanted to participate in something similar. He stated that there was a sticker that said welcome in several different languages that could go in the windows downtown. Secretary Treasurer Reed suggested that it be brought up at the Merchants committee as they would be the ones posting it in their windows. Member Howard stated that it would have to be smaller rather than larger to get buy in from the Downtown merchants. Member Glidden is going to forward a sample.
- d) **Maple in September** – There is talk of a maple event being put on by the Maple Fest in September.
- e) **Relay for Life** – They are looking for volunteers for the Light the Fight set up 2:30 – 4:00 and clean-up 10:00 – 11:00 on June 20th. Anyone who is interested contact Member Garibay. The event has been shared on the Facebook page.

8. Public Comment – None

9. Adjourn – Member Richards made a motion to adjourn. Secretary Treasurer Reed seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:06.