

MEETING MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION VIA
REMOTE CONNECTION
6:00 PM TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2021

Approved June 1, 2021

Board Members Present: Laz Scangas, Chair; Richard Stahl, Vice-Chair; Lisamarie Charlesworth; Stan Bradeen; Barbara Weinstein.

Board Members Absent: Alex Lehning; Joe Luneau;

Staff members Present: Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning and Development; Wendy Coy, Minute Taker

Public Present: None.

AGENDA

- 1. Open Meeting. Chair Laz Scangas opened the meeting at 6:02 PM.**
 - a. Introduction of attendees.
 - b. Public Comment on issues not on agenda. None.
 - c. Discuss additions or deletions to agenda. None.

- 2. Approval of Minutes – Vice-Chair Stahl made a motion to approve the minutes of February 2, 2021, as presented. Member Charlesworth seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.**

- 3. Update on St. Albans Historic District update project –** Mr. Sawyer reviewed the RFP for the project. He has sent to Division of Historic Preservation for comments. He expects to release it in April if not the end of March. He wanted to know to what extent be involved with the review and selection of consultant. He would like to have the consultant for June Meeting. The Commission agreed that Chair Scangas, Vice-Chair Stahl and Member Bradeen would help with the review and selection. The Commission discussed the different types of presentations and the timings of them as the project continues. Chair Scangas asked if the total project budget was normally put into the RFPs. Mr. Sawyer stated that they were but that he would look into it.

- 4. Update on work of the City Planning Commission** Member Bradeen gave an update on the items that the City Planning Commission is currently working on.
 - a. Updating the districts, namely adding a Business-Professional district - The new district would allow a greater degree of uses. The City has wonderful residential communities along with professional offices. The Commission would like to preserve and protect the existing uses; recognize the current patterns and uses

and protect them. The balanced approach will help out potential applicants and protect the rights of existing uses.

- b.** Blighted Home program – The City has larger older building that were designed for a different density of human habitation. The Commission wanted to address the idea of adaptive reuse. It is adaptive form one residential use to another. The program is designed to encourage reinvestment. It would have an internal as well as an external design review. The buildings would need to be brought up to energy standards. If the developer could prove that a density bonus is necessary to adapt the blighted home, they could potentially get a density bonus increase. Chair Scangas liked the idea of a protected entrance; keeping the character of an area but allowing businesses as well. He was concerned with a potential density bonus as the single family home needs to be protected as well. He suggested the property be owner occupied. Member Bradeen told the Commission that the State almost mandated that any acre lot with water and sewer could be broken up into four lots; an 8th of an acre for each residence. This doesn't address the issue that Vermonters keep thinking of the single family home as the model of development but there needs to be a model for cities and towns. A model that fits a center city but is still residential. Eventually the State is going to insist that this be done. There is not enough reasonably affordable housing for people making an income. The question that the HPC can help with is how a City does a downtown residential district that also contributes to the fabric of the community. Mr. Sawyer stated that the State fired huge warning shot without any planning. The State funded grant programs to help with planning at a local level. The Cities have to start showing the State and its residents that they are going to take a hard look at their neighborhoods. The regulations need to match the densities. Chair Scangas stated that he has concerns but that this might be the right approach as there are buildings that can't be saved unless they can have more units within them.
- 5. Updates on other projects and ideas** – Member Weinstein gave an update on her contact with Walter Wallace, the HPC in Rockingham / Bellows Falls. They have been working on doing their housekeeping the way we are. She discussed several programs that they are doing including workshops, color consultants and an Old Home Award. Mr. Wallace has been working on reaching out to other HPCs throughout New England to kind of tie together and see if what works for one HPC might work for another. Member Weinstein invited him to attend one of the HPC meetings.
- 6. Other business** – None
- 7. Review next meeting date and time** – June 1st, 2021 6:00 p.m.
- 8. Adjourn** - Member Bradeen made a motion to adjourn at 7:03 pm. Chair Scangas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.