

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021, AT 6:00PM
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET

Approved March 1, 2022

Commission Members Present: Laz Scangas, Chair; LisaMarie Charlesworth; Richard Stahl, Lisa Evans, Joe Luneau.

Staff Present: Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning and Development; Angela Bernard, Minute Taker

Members of the Public Present: Lyssa Papazian, Historic Preservation Consultant; Josh Ellerbrock, *Saint Albans Messenger*.

1. Open Meeting. **L Scangas called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.**

- a. Introduction of attendees - Introductions were made.
- b. Public Comment on issues not on agenda - None.
- c. Discuss additions or deletions to agenda - None.

2. Discuss Historic District Update project.

L. Papazian introduced her memo regarding the St. Albans Historic District update, including draft survey forms and a proposed new numbering system for structures included in the Historic District.

L. Papazian began by explaining that her updated district plan included a new numbering system for included structures because a previous version included properties that had since been demolished. She removed all demolished properties altogether and started over with a new map and new numbering system, starting with Taylor Park as #1. The new map includes only existing properties.

L. Papazian then explained to the board that she tried to keep the same street addresses together. For example, all properties from Main Street are kept together, all Lake Street properties, etc.

L. Papazian then opened the floor for questions, comments, and corrections. L. Charlesworth asked for a correction on an address that's listed as being numbers 2-8 North Main Street, but the listed address is actually just 2. L. Papazian explained she went by the 911 numbers, and she said there were several properties with similar address ranges that she questioned.

L. Papazian asked C. Sawyer if there are some buildings in the city whose address includes a range of numbers and others are a single address. He said yes.

J. Luneau asked if there should be a discussion about the Historic District boundaries and map as presented. L. Papazian said she hasn't proposed any boundary changes, with one exception of a small boundary change on Catherine Street.

L. Scangas said he likes how the streets are kept together for the numbering system. J. Luneau said he likes that the elements in Taylor Park are enumerated (1A, 1B, etc.). L. Evans and L. Charlesworth both said they like the changes and the new numbering system and think it makes the document easier to understand and follow.

C. Sawyer said right now she's doing an update of the existing historic district and then they can talk about how the map is changed. He explained that the forms sent for this meeting were all buildings that are currently in the district.

L. Papazian pointed out several places within the Historic District map where structures are "too altered" to be considered contributing to the district. These include the downtown car dealership and a former foundry property on Federal Street that burned down and is now used as a courtyard.

J. Luneau agreed that the oldest component of the car dealership is historic but significantly altered. He said the oldest structure on the property is from 1920, while its newest structure is from the 1990s.

L. Scangas asked if a building is built in the 20s and is in the district but architecturally not great is it still contributing? L. Papazian said yes. She explained that there are some that are not noteworthy architecturally but still part of the downtown.

J. Luneau told her that new number 57 on the map is referred to as the Houghton Block.

L. Evans pointed out number 4 on the new list and explained that it should be listed as the "St. Albans Museum" officially on the paperwork, rather than the Franklin County Museum / St. Albans Academy. L. Papazian said in its historic application it will be referred to as the Academy, but she will change its official name to St. Albans Museum.

L. Papazian wondered if the building at the corner of Main Street and Hoyt Street should be included even though it is a former house that's now used for commercial purposes. L. Scangas and C. Sawyer agreed. L. Papazian also said she is questioning the Baptist Church on Congress Street and wondered if it should maybe be included because it can be seen from the park. She thinks it could be reconsidered as a visual border for the district. L. Scangas agreed it should be included. C. Sawyer agreed and asked about another structure on Congress. Between the Church and Ace Hardware.

J. Luneau asked about the former post office building on Main Street and the High School. L. Papazian said the post office is already individually listed on the national register and the high school could be.

L. Papazian said on the high school side of Main Street, it's an interesting complex of buildings with an interesting history and the dates of the separate buildings are historic but

altered because they're all connected now. She said the original high school could definitely be considered historic, but that it's less clear on the former mansion-turned-former-hospital-turned part of the high school.

L. Scangas said once past Stebbins the whole character changes of the street. C. Sawyer and L. Scangas said the high school sits by itself as a gateway to downtown but it's a little too separated from the official Historic District area by several non-contributing buildings.

J. Luneau asked about the former jail on Lincoln Avenue that used to part of the courthouse but is now privately owned and occupied. L. Papazian said it's a great building but that you can't see it anymore, even from the parking lot of the courthouse. She said she thought it would be strange to have it on the map as a little sliver off the district. J. Luneau said it's also weird to have it part of the residential district because it's historic. C. Sawyer said he would rather see it as part of the Historic District than a residential district, but it is an unusual case. J. Luneau said he thinks it served at its original purpose until the 1990s. L. Papazian said the exterior is fairly unchanged and the current owner leaves the inside unchanged.

L. Scangas asked about a property on Kingman Street, the new 70 on the map. He wondered if it is a building or part of the parking lot. L. Papazian explained it is part of the building - Tim's House now. L. Papazian said the map clarity is off and said she might check with the regional planning commission to see if there's a better map somewhere. C. Sawyer said they could shift the lines and asked if the map needs to show the parcel lines. L. Papazian said ideally it should show parcel lines and the building footprint as well.

L. Scangas asked if a building has to be 50 years old in order to be eligible to be considered contributing. L. Papazian said yes and the only reasons why it wouldn't be is if it was significantly altered.

L. Papazian asked about the building across from the Catholic Church, St. Mary's Parish Hall. L. Scangas and J. Luneau explained it was built in the 1970s so not quite 50 years old.

C. Sawyer asked about an apartment building on Center Street. L. Papazian said she was thinking about that building as well and wanted to incorporate it but questioned it because it is separated by parking lots.

L. Scangas asked about the railroad building and L. Papazian said she'd like to leave it off because it's already listed individually, and the rest of its block is significantly altered.

R. Stahl asked about a request L. Papazian made from the museum for research help and said the museum is requesting clarification of what it is she wants exactly. L. Evans said she would reply, and they could get into specifics of what exactly she's looking for, such as clippings, photos, or files on individual buildings. L. Evans said depending on what she needs it could take some time to dig it up. L. Evans offered to set up with a volunteer to help out.

C. Sawyer asked L. Papazian if she could meet with the commission in March, or did she think they should meet sooner. The March meeting is scheduled to be the public presentation

of the draft. L. Papazian said a February meeting would be useful. L. Scangas said it would be nice to get the forms so the commission could look ahead of time. He suggested sometime in January, then schedule a meeting for February before public meeting.

The commission thanked L. Papazian for her time and she exited the meeting.

3. Discuss Museum Equity & Inclusion historic marker note.

L. Scangas introduced this item on the agenda and L. Evans presented it for the commission.

L. Evans said the Saint Albans Museum is recommending the creation of two, new historical markers as part of its Equity and Inclusion Committee. The first marker would highlight the St. Albans connection and contribution to the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers, which was the first African American regiment to serve in significant combat during the Civil War and which included several local residents. There are markers for these men at Greenwood Cemetery. The second historic marker would represent Jeremiah Boggs, an escaped slave who ended up in St. Albans, became friends and worked for Lawrence Brainerd, before fleeing to Liberia after being recognized by someone locally.

J. Luneau said these two cases might be eligible for the state historic roadside marker program.

L. Scangas suggested approaching the state historic group about markers.

L. Scangas and L. Charlesworth said they like the idea. C. Sawyer asked if the museum is going to reach out to the state. C. Sawyer said in terms of markers that are respectful and durable the state historic markers are the way to go as opposed to the city buying their own.

J. Luneau pointed out that the state also has a maintenance program for them.

J. Luneau said he would email the state and cc C. Sawyer and L. Evans.

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion by L. Charlesworth to approve the meeting minutes from June 1, 2021, June 30, 2021, and September 7, 2021, as presented. Second by R Stahl. Minutes for all three meetings approved with all in favor at 7:04 PM.

5. Other business - None.

6. Review next meeting date/time - C. Sawyer will send out a notice about a possible additional meeting in February. Otherwise, the next scheduled meeting is set for March 1, 2022.

7. Adjourn. - **L. Scangas adjourned the meeting at 7:08 PM.**