

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**ST. ALBANS CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**6:00 PM TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022**  
**ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET**

*Approved June 7, 2022*

**Commission Members Present:** Laz Scangas, Chair; Barbara Weinstein; Richard Stahl; Lisa Evans (via Zoom); Joe Luneau (via Zoom, left at 7:20 PM).

**Commission Members Absent:** Lisamarie Charlesworth.

**City Staff Present:** Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development; Angela Bernard, Minute Taker.

**Members of the Public Present:** Lyssa Papazian, Historic Preservation Consultant; Dean Pierce (via Zoom); Alicia McDonald; Emma McDonald; Justin McDonald; Josh Ellerbrock, *St. Albans Messenger*; Kevin Austin; Lori Barney; Evelyn Martin; Peter Martin; Tess Littledale (arrived at 6:10 PM); Jake Thibault (arrived at 6:10 PM).

**1. Open Meeting - L. Scangas opened the meeting at 6:03 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. Presentation on current status of Historic District Update project**

L. Scangas introduced the redistricting project and discussed the need for changing the boundaries of the Historic District. L. Scangas introduced L. Papazian.

L. Papazian put a PowerPoint presentation on the screen, viewable to the members of the public in the room and the attendees on Zoom. Her presentation started with a summary about why the Historic District needs to be preserved. She touched on several key areas within the district, including Church Street and Taylor Park, and discussed the various types of architectural styles and buildings that make up the Main Street / downtown district.

L. Papazian explained the project's progress to date and explained the next steps for the process. She introduced an updated map of the Historic District, with color-coded boundaries indicating the previous District and the proposed new changes, including six additional properties that are being added to it.

L. Barney asked if the audience could ask questions during the presentation or wait until the end. L. Scangas asked her to hold questions until the end.

L. Papazian showed audience members a sample of the survey form that has been completed for each of the structures in the District. Each survey form (112 forms in total) includes written descriptions of the properties and describes their importance, with pictures from the present, as well as historic images.

L. Papazian then described the Statement of Significance that she put together describing the Historic District, with details on the types of buildings, their architecture, and the time period in which they were built. She showed the audience images of historic buildings downtown and discussed their original purpose (inns, hotels, theaters).

L. Papazian showed a sample of historic civic buildings in the District and explained that there are a lot for a small area, such as the St. Albans Free Library, courthouses, jail etc.

Continuing describing the various types of buildings, L. Papazian showed images of a number of churches in the area and explained that there are also a lot of these for a small area.

L. Papazian explained that although there is a variety in the architecture and history of each of the buildings in the District, there is also a cohesiveness to them. She explained that even the newer buildings that have been added maintain the cohesiveness of the District. They're not contributing to the Historic District, but they're not detracting from it either. She said out of the entire area, there are only 14 buildings that are non-contributing to the District.

L. Papazian explained the three important time periods that most contributing structures were completed in. (1792-1850; 1850-1895; 1895-1960).

L. Papazian then went into a detailed description of Taylor Park, including its history and its architecture. She showed historic pictures of the park from before and after the fountain went in, as well as a picture of a row of Elm trees that were once in the park but have since been removed.

L. Papazian then showed the audience six examples of what she called "outstanding architecture," including the Library, City Hall, and the Historical Museum.

L. Papazian then went into a detailed description of various blocks and the buildings on them and their historic significance. She showed several examples of architecture trends around town, such as buildings with canted corners, buildings with decorative masonry, buildings with arches, and buildings with storefronts.

### 3. Questions and comments

P. Martin thanked the Commission for their work and the attention put into the report. He explained that he owns a small business with his wife on Center Street and mentioned that he might be seeking compensation for a light fixture on Center Street that lights up the block at night.

L. Barney asked what is the age relevance for a property being considered "historical" and wondered if there was a specific age. L. Papazian answered that typically buildings have to be at least 50 years old to be considered historic, but she explained that there are more factors to be considered other than age, such as architectural significance. L. Barney asked if there is really a significance for a structure to have mixed use as a residential and commercial building. L. Papazian explained that it is just a way of designating a building that could be in both a commercial district and residential district. L. Barney pointed out a couple of errors describing her building (132 Main Street) in the survey, including the fact that the structure has a slate roof.

L. Barney asked what is the gain or loss of becoming part of the District and wondered if it's mandatory or voluntary. C. Sawyer said it makes the structure eligible for Federal tax credits if the owner chooses to renovate and said there is no requirements to being a part of the District for private owners.

J. Luneau answered that the property owner's rights aren't diminished or change that much by becoming part of the District. L. Papazian answered that all property owners would still have to follow local zoning ordinances. C. Sawyer said the state will send property owners an official letter and if they choose to petition it, they can opt out of being included in the District.

L. Scangas explained that the six properties being added have been carefully considered and that they see it as an honor for individual structures and properties to be added.

T. Littledale asked about some of the pictures of buildings that have been drastically changed and wondered if buildings that are completely changed if that affects their eligibility. L. Papazian explained that most of the dramatic changes were completed a long time ago and are now historic in and of themselves. C. Sawyer said any buildings that have been changed drastically to the point where they are no longer significant, that structure gets a "non-contributing" label.

B. Weinstein commented that the reports L. Papazian put together are detailed and thorough and wondered if there is a way for the individual homeowners to get a copy of the survey information.

B. Weinstein then suggested that L. Papazian include mention of the Tiffany windows for the survey for the Congregational Church.

J. McDonald asked what is required from the property owner to be included in the District. C. Sawyer said that, as a property owner, they can still change their property and being a part of the District won't impact their future plans, so long as they get a permit for it and stick to the zoning regulations. J. McDonald asked if there is a benefit to being a part of District. C. Sawyer said learning the background and history of the structure is a bonus and there are Federal tax credits involved. However, once the owner goes for the tax credits, there are strings attached from the government that require review for any updates or changes to the property.

4. Discuss next steps

C. Sawyer explained that there is another public meeting in July, with the final deadline to the state for the entire application due in August. L. Scangas also explained that the public meeting in July will also include a walkthrough tour of the entire District.

5. Approval of Minutes

**B. Weinstein made a motion to approve the minutes of March 1, 2022, as presented. Second by R. Stahl. Minutes approved with all in favor at 7:25 PM.**

6. Other business

L. Evans thanked the Commission for help getting a grant for the museum

7. Review next meeting date/time - Next meeting on June 7, 2022

8. Board photo - Photo taken.

9. Adjourn - **L. Scangas adjourned the meeting at 7:26 PM.**