

**MEETING MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
5:30 PM MONDAY, JULY 18, 2022**

Approved September 19, 2022

Commission Members Present: Denise Smith, Chair; Lauren Dees-Erickson, Vice Chair; Amy Burleson; Michael Gawne; Courtney Seale, Alternate (via Zoom); Carl Watkins, Alternate (arrived at 6:18 PM).

Commission Members Absent: Zachary Nuse.

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

Members of the Public Present: Wendy Morrill; Jay Mitiguy (via Zoom, arrived at 5:46 PM).

1. Begin Recording and Open Meeting – D. Smith opened the meeting at 5:33 PM.
 1. Introduction of attendees – introductions were made.
 2. Public Comment on issues not on agenda – none.
 3. Discuss additions or deletions to agenda – D. Smith moved up item 7, section b, approval of the minutes for April, May, and June 2022.
 - **L. Dees-Erickson made a motion to approve the minutes of April 18, 2022, as presented. Second by A. Burleson. Minutes approved at 5:36 PM.**
 - No quorum to approve May minutes, this meeting's minutes have been referred to the August 2022 meeting for approval.
 - **L. Dees-Erickson requested a fix on a typo in her name for the June 20, 2022, minutes. L Dees-Erickson made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Second by M Gawne. Minutes approved at 5:38 PM.**
 4. Assignment of Alternates – C. Seale was assigned as a voting member for this meeting.
2. Consider delayed motion to approve and refer amendments concerning Dwelling Unit definitions.

C. Sawyer explained that the Commission needs to vote on a motion to approve and refer amendments concerning Dwelling Unit definitions to City Council before it can be put on the Council's agenda.

L. Dees-Erickson made a motion to move the amendments concerning Dwelling Unit definitions to City Council. Second by M. Gawne. Motion carried at 5:43 PM with A. Burleson abstaining.

3. Discuss proposed amendments to Defined Terms.
M. Gawne suggested moving the discussion to later in the meeting, after discussion of the warned amendments in Item 4, sections a & b. Commission members agreed to move this discussion until later in the meeting, depending on time.

This discussion was reintroduced by C. Sawyer at 6:56 PM.

M. Gawne presented the Commission with a proposal of edits he drafted to clarify existing dwelling unit definitions. There was some discussion regarding the differences in definition between Bed and Breakfast, Boarding Houses, and Lodging House, with M. Gawne suggesting putting them all together under the umbrella of "Inn." C. Sawyer said he believes that Bed and Breakfast is unique and different from the other types of structures mentioned and should be continued to be zoned separately. D. Smith asked if there are any specific definitions for Air BnB. C. Sawyer said no that there is no specific zoning definitions or regulations for Air BnB.

There was discussion of the differences in definition for Congregate Housing, Community Residence, Assisted Living, Hospice House. C. Sawyer referred Commission members to a chart that he drafted with a brief summary of residential uses.

D. Smith said she feels like there may be too many definitions but that she understands why each type of structure needs its own definition.

Discussion was made to change Community House to Transitional Community House. Congregate Housing was changed to Communal Housing. D. Smith, C. Watkins, and L. Dees-Erickson all agreed to the change.

C. Sawyer said that, under the current plan, this subject will come back for discussion in the September 2022 meeting.

M. Gawne made notes for future edits to the definitions prior to the September conversation.

4. Warned amendments to Land Development Regulations.
 - a. Compliance with Act 182 and Related Changes – D. Smith introduced the discussion.
 - i. Presentation of proposal – C. Sawyer explained the proposal, which would edit exiting regulations to eliminate expiration dates for certain permitted projects. In place of expiration dates the regulations would refer the reader to section 903, which concerns all permits and approvals. C. Sawyer detailed the process for appealing and explained that any administrative decision is appealable, with expiration timelines dependent on the appeal process conclusion.
C. Sawyer explained that this makes the City in compliance with new state law and it also consolidates the language for use by the Zoning Administrator.

- ii. Public Hearing – none.
- iii. PC discussion and revisions – none.
- ii. Consider approval and referral to City Council. – M. Gawne made a motion to approve and refer to City Council. Second by L. Dees-Erickson. Motion passed at 5:58 PM.**

b. Reformat Zoning District Descriptions and Standards – D. Smith introduced the discussion.

- 1. Presentation of proposal – M. Gawne mentioned approving the reformat proposal without discussion as the subject has been heavily discussed at previous meetings.
- 2. Public Hearing – none.
- 3. PC discussion and revisions – none.
- 4. Consider approval and referral to City Council – **M. Gawne made a motion to approve the Reformat Zoning District Descriptions and Standards, as presented, and refer to City Council. Second by L. Dees-Erickson. Motion passed at 6:02 PM.**

5. Discuss zoning amendment request at Main and Lower Newton.

C. Sawyer presented the Commission with a memo that summarizes the situation at hand and presents a City analysis of the subject. He explained that there has been a request to increase the capacity for a multi-family dwelling at the corner of Lower Newton Street and Main Street. C. Sawyer brought a map of the area in discussion up on the screen for the Commission to review. C. Sawyer explained that there are 16 housing units spread among five properties. J. Mitiguy is requesting to redevelop a couple of the properties to increase capacity and nearly double the number of housing units. C. Sawyer explained the rules for that area of town. He requested that the Planning Commission respond to this request with an amendment. He suggested there are three paths the Commission could take – 1. Approve an amendment just for these five properties; 2. Change the rules for that entire zoned area; 3. Amend the PUD to allow the DRB to approve a higher density for this particular development.

C. Sawyer then presented an analysis that he conducted for the Commission of similar properties in the area and explained how those neighboring structures are broken up into different housing types, ranging from single family homes to multi-unit buildings. C. Seale asked for clarification on if there would be 29 new units in one building. J. Mitiguy clarified that yes, he is looking to increase the number of units to 29 in one building.

C. Sawyer recommended this discussion be held over and said this type of project would be best in other sections of the city. L. Dees-Erickson explained that she is sensitive to the need for increased housing but that this request is outside the norm for that area of the city, explaining that the need for more housing needs to be balanced with the area.

W. Morrill was invited to testify on the subject as a direct neighbor. She explained that this would double the volume of traffic at an already busy intersection. She explained that personally she doesn't think it would fit into the area.

M. Gawne said he is open to discussion but that this would be a drastic change for the neighborhood and would wholly depend on what exactly is being proposed. He explained that PUDs should be encouraged, but that he's not sure a 29-unit would fit. He explained that he would most likely not be in favor of one large 29-unit structure but would be more open to units spread out over multiple buildings.

A. Burlison said she is not opposed to approving amendments to consider the increased housing for this area and that adding housing is an important consideration. She explained that she would most likely abstain from discussion and would hope that the DRB would do their due diligence examining traffic in the area and impact on the neighborhood.

D. Smith asked C. Sawyer how current construction on Lower Newton Street would impact that intersection and explained that she is interested in housing in the city but that impact on the neighborhood has to be considered. C. Sawyer explained that the construction site on Lower Newton is a commercial project. C. Sawyer also explained that the construction project on Lower Newton is not a part of the gateway into the city, whereas the intersection of Newton and Main Street is a part of the gateway.

C. Sawyer explained that there are plenty of lots in the city where this type of development would be welcome and that there are projects to increase capacity going up all over the city. He said that this project seems like a stretch for this neighborhood but that there are other places in the city where it would work.

C. Seale explained that this subject is personal to her because she works in real estate and lives near the property. She explained that one building with 29 units would seem like a big stretch for that particular area and intersection.

D. Smith asked if this subject tonight is for discussion or vote. M. Gawne said he believes that it is a discussion-only subject for this meeting. C. Watkins recommended saving the discussion for a future meeting. C. Watkins said he feels like that is not the right location for a large project. L. Dees-Erickson explained that she also doesn't feel like it's the right location for a 29-unit building. M. Gawne said if J. Mitiguy doesn't like the fact that the Commission is passing on the discussion then he can get a petition with 5% of voter signatures and that forces the Commission to discuss it. C. Sawyer explained that the City Council can also approve it and send it back to the Planning Commission.

J. Mitiguy said he doesn't anticipate making this project contentious and that these are just ideas that he and his business partner have been floating. He explained that he doesn't want to step on toes or force anything through, but they are invested and interested in helping the City bring more housing. D. Smith thanked him for his

commitment and encouraged him to come to the Commission with more creative ideas in the future.

6. Other possible amendment proposals – C. Sawyer introduced the Planning Commission Workplan items and the schedule that the Commission came up with in a previous meeting.
 - a. Presentations and discussion – D. Smith asked about scheduling a neighborhood walkthrough as part of the discussion on the Residential-Professional District. C. Sawyer said it might take more than one meeting as there are multiple neighborhoods to walk through. C. Sawyer explained that this subject will take at least one full meeting.

A. Burleson asked if this subject would be controversial for residents. C. Sawyer said there are a couple of neighborhoods where people would protest if those districts changed and allowed new types of businesses.

D. Smith asked if the walking meetings would be spread over August, September, and October to break the walkthroughs up. D. Smith asked about meeting for the walk first and then moving the City Hall for an in-person meeting. C. Sawyer said holding the in-person meeting could be held elsewhere in a public place instead of going back to City Hall. C. Watkins said he likes the idea of breaking it up into multiple meetings.
 - b. Consider warning hearing(s) – see discussion above.
 - c. Discuss workplan going forward – C. Sawyer suggested scheduling a walk of North Main Street for August 15, 2022.

M. Gawne suggested sending an invitation to people in the neighborhood to get more people to show up. C. Sawyer said the discussion would change if the neighbors showed up, with input from the community vs. a discussion between just Commission members. L. Dees-Erickson said it would open the channels of communication with the local residents. D. Smith said she is in favor of sending fliers to the neighborhood and inviting members of the public. C. Watkins and A. Burleson agreed to include voices from the community in the discussion as early as possible.

L. Dees-Erickson said she likes the idea of having a debriefing meeting elsewhere. The Commission agreed to meet at 14th Star and walk down to the end of the Residential-Professional District on Main Street and then back again for a debrief meeting at The Room in 14th Star.

D. Smith asked if the other two neighborhoods (Lake Street and Fairfield Street) would be walked through in the spring. C. Sawyer said that those areas can wait and be included in the new City Plan, which the Planning Commission will have to start rewriting section by section in 2023.
7. General Business.
 - a. Discuss North Route 7 pedestrian connections – Discussion tabled until a later meeting.

- b. Approval of Minutes – see discussion above, item 1, section C.
- c. Review next meeting date and format – Monday, August 15, 2022, meeting at 14th Star Brewery (133 North Main Street in St. Albans City) for a walk of the neighborhood, followed by an in-person debrief meeting back at the business.
- d. Other – none.

8. Adjourn.
M. Gawne made a motion to adjourn. Second by L. Dees-Erickson. Meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM.