

**MEETING MINUTES  
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NO. MAIN ST.  
6:00 PM MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2019**

*Approved April 15, 2019*

**Board Members Present:** David Barber, Chair; Amy Paradis; Michael Gawne; Luke Richter; Stan Bradeen

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Members Present:** Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development and Minute Taker

**Public Present:** See sign-in sheet.

- 1. Open Meeting. Chair D.Barber opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.**
  - a. Discuss additions or deletions to agenda. There were none.
- 2. Approval of Minutes – Motion by A.Paradis to approve the minutes of February 18, 2019, as edited. Seconded by M.Gawne and approved with all in favor, except for S.Bradeen abstaining.**
3. Public Hearing on Proposed Amendments to Land Development Regulations

**Chair D.Barber opened the hearing.**

- a. Presentation of proposal for boundary change for 17, 25 and 31 Congress St.  
  
C.Sawyer presented the proposed amendments and gave background on the process.
- b. Commission and Public Comment.

S.Bradeen stated that he would need to be convinced of this change. He was reluctant to considering B1 Business District status for properties that do not front Main St.

D.Barber acknowledged S.Bradeen's point and stated he was in favor of only changing the district for 17 Congress.

M.Gawne stated that he was never in favor of the Business-Neighborhood Transition District in the first place. He felt that the proposed change tonight best reflects the surrounding commercial uses. All of the City's other churches are in the B1 District.

L.Richter stated that the proposed change best reflects what is currently happening in the area.

S.Bradeen stated that this change is not consistent with what is happening on Congress St. He said that the church is not a commercial space.

A.Paradis stated that she favored the change for 17 Congress.

S.Bradeen said that he is not opposed to that.

D.Barber opened up the hearing for public comment.

Cindy Adair stated she favors the change for 17 Congress. She and owners are trying to market the property and facing challenges, because it can't be sold as a single-family home, based on the way it has been renovated. No dentists are interested in using the existing space.

Edna North stated that she would rather see it sold as a place for a business.

C.Sawyer said that he doubted a traditional retail store would go in the ground floor; probably value-added retail, an office, or personal services. Also, the upstairs should probably be more than one dwelling unit, which would be allowed in the B1 District.

S.Bradeen reiterated his favor for making the change for 17 Congress.

Kerry Griswold, church trustee, stated he was there to understand what the change to either property would be.

M.Gawne said that they would have an easier time subdividing in the B1 District than in the BNT District.

K.Griswold and M.Gawne discussed that all the other churches are in the B1 District.

Bill Simmons talked about the great changes coming to St. Albans. The church has had a good relationship with the Norths and sharing the driveway. He is concerned with safety for sharing that driveway into the future. Traffic off of Maiden Lane does not help. The current shared driveway does not serve 2-way traffic very well.

C.Sawyer gave some background on how the Development Review Board may take those driveway concerns into account if an intensive use were proposed for those properties.

C.Sawyer also stated his staff opinion on the low likelihood of incompatible uses developing on the new proposed B1 District properties and his opinion that the proposed change at least must be made for 17 Congress.

The was general discussion on how the Planning Commission seems split on the issue.

L.Richter stated that the St. Albans Shopping Center is probably never going away. It puts pressure on surrounding properties. He sees this proposed change for both properties being a reflection of the commercial properties surrounding them.

M.Gawne said that the church doesn't have much other use than as a church. If it ever enters disuse, it would likely come down.

S.Bradeen said that the area is offices and residential and then residential farther west. He does not see the need to extend the B1 District past 17 Congress.

A.Paradis asked M.Gawne what he would change for districts in the area. He replied he doesn't see any change happening at the Baptist church in the next several years, and adding it to the B1 District would make it more consistent with its current use and other churches. He does not see the change to the B1 District leading to changes on the property.

C.Sawyer stated that there are plenty of microcosms in the B1 District that would never attract an incompatible use from the private market. But the B1 District could allow for transitions to similar uses that can ensure viability.

S.Bradeen said that the true solution here would be a new version of the B1 District for the areas that C.Sawyer is mentioning.

- c. Close hearing.

**The hearing was closed.**

- d. Consideration of any motions to revise the proposed amendments and PC report.

See motions below.

- e. Consideration of motion to approve amendments and refer to the City Council.

**Motion by M.Gawne to approve the proposal as submitted tonight. Second by L.Richter. Motion failed with M.Gawne and L.Richter in favor and the three others against.**

**Motion by A.Paradis to approve an amended proposal adding only 17 Congress to the B1 Central Business Subdistrict and to submit the edited amendment and Planning Commission Report to the City Council. Second by S.Bradeen. Motion passes with A.Paradis, D.Barber and S.Bradeen. in favor, L.Richter opposed, and M.Gawne abstaining.**

There was lengthy discussion about the need for an intermediary zone with the density of a B1 District. And what is next on the PC's plate.

f. Consider waiver of \$500 re-zoning fee.

**Motion by S.Bradeen to waive the \$500 fee, since the change is in fulfillment of the City Plan. Second by A.Paradis. Motion passes unanimously.**

4. Discuss proposals and ideas for Land Development Regulations

a. Area analyses: Main, Federal, Lo. Newton/Sunset Meadows

C.Sawyer presented analyses, maps and scenarios for areas of North Federal St. and Lo. Newton / Sunset Meadows that are in the Service-Industrial District, including whether they could be switched to the B2 Transition Business Subdistrict.

There was general agreement that Sunset Meadows and North Federal are not the same situation or need.

There was discussion of how much residential do we need vs industrial uses? How much residential is in the area? Can the commercial/industrial uses on Sunset Meadows be turned into residential?

D.Barber said that he is hearing more of a need for residential space in the City.

There was discussion about how brownfield clean-up would be an issue.

C.Sawyer opined that “the die is cast” for Sunset Meadows, and the eastern lots are unlikely to ever be anything other than residential, even if combined.

There was general discussion about the number of underutilized commercial spaces in the area.

While no-action would still leave the 48 Lo. Newton use restriction issues unresolved, the PC members generally favored doing nothing for Sunset Meadows.

There was general favor for changing North Federal to the B2 District and also exploring adding a new “Design Review Lite” to both sides of the street.

b. Discuss surface parking in the business districts

D.Barber stated that he feels that the 14 Stebbins St. project was allowed too much surface parking. S.Bradeen stated agreement.

L.Richter countered that the new project is a vast improvement over the property as it existed before. S.Bradeen agreed with that point as well.

D.Barber said that the amount of parking is not in keeping with the intent of the B1 District.

A.Paradis countered that redevelopment in the B1 District adds to parking pressures and that many new projects need to provide parking in order to avoid detriment to the area.

S.Bradeen wondered what the balance should be and asked what the proposal was. D.Barber would like to look at surface parking limits in the B1 district.

Next month, the PC would like to see a professional/commercial/residential district as an intermediate to the B1 and B2 Districts. And then get back to discussing the residential districts as well.

5. Other Business.

- a. Planning & Development update. There were no questions or comments on the last email update.
- b. Other. There was none.

6. Public Comment. There was none.

**Motion by S.Bradeen to adjourn. Second by A.Paradis and approved with all in favor at 8:30 PM.**

**THANK YOU FOR COMING. PLEASE SIGN IN.**

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