

**MEETING MINUTES  
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NO. MAIN ST.  
6:00 PM MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2019**

*Approved December 19, 2019*

**Board Members Present:** David Barber, Chair; Denise Smith; Luke Richter; Stan Bradeen

**Board Members Absent:** Michael Gawne; Amy Paradis

**Staff Members Present:** Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning Development

**Public Present:** Kiersten Bourgeois

- 1. Open Meeting – Chair Barber called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.**
  - a. Introduction of attendees – Kiersten Bourgeois was attending, representing Dairy Farmers of America.
  - b. Public Comment on issues not on agenda – There was none.
  - c. Discuss additions or deletions to agenda – There was none.

2. Approval of Minutes

**Motion by S.Bradeen to approve the minutes of September 16, 2019, as presented.  
Seconded by D.Smith and approved with all in favor.**

3. Other Business
  - a. Planning & Development update.

S.Bradeen asked if permitting issues were holding up the work across the Street at the Congress & Main project. C.Sawyer answered that the bulk of work currently was in dealing with stockpiled soil and clean soil testing and that the project would continue through the winter.

- b. Other.

C.Sawyer reminded D.Barber that his PC term would end on December 31. D.Barber acknowledged this and said that he may entertain other volunteer opportunities after his term expired.

4. Discuss City Council request for Service-Industrial height limit amendment

C.Sawyer presented an amendment to the Land Development Regulations referred by the City Council, which would allow the DRB to raise the height limit of structures in the Service-Industrial District to 105 feet. The Planning Commission would need to warn a

hearing in order to provide their input on the amendment. He explained that the St. Albans Creamery had said that their property would require increased storage space in the near future. For context, the two grain elevators in the City are currently around 120 feet in height.

S.Bradeen suggested the term “operational maintenance,” instead of “routine maintenance” in the proposed amendment. He also stated that he was interested in looking at setback requirements and the angle of view of the taller structures.

D.Smith asked if the amendment should go higher than 105 feet, in order to accommodate future structures needs in the district. C.Sawyer answered that the City fire truck ladder extends to 100 feet, and he would recommend sticking with a new 105-foot limit for now.

L.Richter asked how tall church steeples in the City were, for context and for future needs. D.Barber mentioned that he recalled a court case somewhere in the country where a church steeple was allowed to be taller than a local zoning rule allowed. S.Bradeen suggested that the City save church steeple height limits for a future change and keep this conversation focused on the referred amendment.

S.Bradeen asked to see the map of the S-Ind District for context.

There was a discussion about the height of the current grain elevators and how that came to be.

K.Bourgeois discussed the need for the creamery to increase their storage capacity with new 70,000 gallon siloes and that they typically came up to a 105-foot height.

D.Smith pointed out where increased setback conditions are currently allowed in Section 513 of the Regulations. There was a discussion on how increased setbacks could mitigate the aesthetic effects of taller structures.

S.Bradeen asked if increased setbacks should be based against property lines or against the actual S-Ind District boundary regardless of property lines. There was general consensus that the Planning Commission would like to consider requiring a setback from the S-Ind District boundary.

The Planning Commission also discussed increasing the current 40-foot administrative height limit in the S-Ind District for a future change.

**Motion by D.Smith to recommend that the words “operational maintenance” be used in the proposed amendment, as well as a condition that “any structure between 85 and 105 feet will be set back from the boundary of the Service-Industrial District by a distance equal (at a minimum) to the height of said structure.” Seconded by S.Bradeen and approved with all in favor.**

5. Continue discussion on proposed corridor and business districts

C.Sawyer presented his latest analysis on the discussion items for the business/corridor district proposals. This included what the PC had straw-voted for at the last meeting.

For the “B4” District, the PC was generally in favor of a front setback on the easterly side of North Main as the greater of either 30 feet or 75% of the average of front setbacks within 200 feet of both sides of the subject property. For the westerly side of North Main the front setback would be the greater of either 15 feet or 100% of the average of front setbacks within 200 feet of both sides of the subject property.

The PC would like to explore the new rule for lots divided transversely by district boundaries. This would apply Low Density Residential rules to the backyards of several properties. C.Sawyer said the next step would be to do an analysis of how much “down-zoning” this would represent.

The PC would like to move forward with district boundary concepts that do not ALWAYS contain entire parcels and may bisect deeper parcels on a street. C.Sawyer will look into that.

The PC would like to re-zone to the Low Density Residential District the LaSalle St. lot portion of the Handy Lake St. property.

There was general consensus to re-zone some the B2 properties on New St., Lower Gilman, Locke Terr, and Nason as High Density Residential, as depicted on the maps.

Next month the PC would like to address how to approach the City Council and the community with any proposed changes and to continue the discussion on density bonuses for rehabbing and preserving historic homes.

There was a discussion about the Handy Lake St. property. Issues included the lack of positive aesthetics, especially the chain link fence. C.Sawyer stated that the fence would not be able to look like that if proposed under current Design Review rules. There was also talk about the cost/benefits of eliminating the Maple St. curb cut from the property and changing the LaSalle St. portion of the property to the Low Density Residential District.

There was a brief discussion on the need for sidewalks and beautification on Lemnah Drive. C.Sawyer stated that road was on his list to address someday soon. It also needs a new bridge.

6. Adjourn

**Motion by L.Richter to adjourn at 8:04 PM. Second by S.Bradeen and approved with all in favor.**