

**MEETING MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NO. MAIN ST.
6:00 PM MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2017**

Approved December 18, 2017

Board Members Present:

David Barber, Chair; Michael Gawne; Stan Bradeen; Jackie DesLauriers; Luke Richter, Alternate; Amy Paradis (arrived 6:30 PM).

Public Present:

Jeff Young
Nate Liese

Staff Present:

Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development and Minute Taker

1. Open Meeting – Chair D.Barber opened the meeting at 6:05 PM.

- a. Discuss additions or deletions to agenda

Some discussion about the Preservation Trust of Vermont visit to Vermont last week and how things are going at the Hampton Inn hotel.

No additions or deletions.

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion M.Gawne to approve the minutes of October 16, 2017 as presented. Second by S.Bradeen and approved with all in favor, except for J.DesLauriers, abstaining.

There was discussion about setting a Planning Commission site visit. The purpose would be to look at neighborhoods in light of the desire to revise the Land Development Regulations.

3. Input on proposed Taylor Park Master Plan

C.Sawyer gave a brief introduction.

S.Bradeen stated that he feels it is extremely important to convey to the City Council that the process of developing the plan didn't just have representatives of different places, but that they also brought a wide variety of input and expertise and also consulted with their own constituencies. He stated that this current draft represents an extremely well-done accommodation to that wide variety of input. He is concerned that some current strong

opinions could have an inordinate effect on changes made to what represents already substantial work. He said that he is concerned about the loudest voices undoing what is a good product.

M.Gawne stated he felt it was a pretty good plan. There are some things he would do differently, such as the trees along the central promenade. He is not a fan of elms and things the proposes trees are too tall. He introduced Jeff Young to talk about his knowledge base on elms. J.Young stated that elms are no longer specified in the draft plan. M.Gawne feels that there needs to be a plan for the park and that no new memorials are needed.

J.DesLauriers was concerned with lighting. She saw some lights in the plan and thought the overall design was nice.

L.Richter said he liked the plan and the walkways, including the oval, and thought that the park looked more accessible with the interior walkway. He was concerned with the performance pavilion and concerts in the park slowing traffic on Fairfield St., due to loading/unloading.

S.Bradeen stated that he was surprised by the number of comments received recently about not wanting to have child play features in Taylor Park. He thought we have a wonderful family-friendly community in the City. M.Gawne agreed that the park is for the community.

D.Barber stated that he originally felt that the park master plan was just going to be a gentle upgrade to the park. He was concerned about the loss of mature shade trees and thought he saw a drastic change on the south end, which also added a large structure and plaza for performance. He was very much in favor of a structure more like the existing gazebo. He also did not like the general increase in hard surfaces represented by walkways and plazas. He also objected to the replacement/removal of the historic round garden near the center of the park. S.Bradeen noted that other, larger, landscape areas are proposed elsewhere in the plan. D.Barber suggested finding another place for the interactive water feature, if it is to remain.

D.Barber asked why the round bandshell in the earlier park concepts was replaced with a more modern image in the draft plan. C.Sawyer and S.Bradeen replied that there had been a desire for a more modern performance stage, which could just as easily be round in final design.

S.Bradeen said that a lot of compromise and discussion went into the choices from the earlier park concept images.

A.Paradis said that she thought the performance space was great and reminded her of the successful Battery Street performance space in Burlington. She also liked seeing the ability to close Church St. She stated that closures should be well-marked for residents in the area.

There was general discussion about Church St.

L.Richter agreed with others that small gazebos are not always suitable for performances.

D.Barber asked the audience for their thoughts.

J.Young recalled the effort to choose the new City logo and how much time and compromise was associated with that, and it turned out quite well. Everything done in Taylor Park takes time to get agreement and approval. There is a lot more work that needs to go into finalizing any improvements after the master plan stage is done. He is glad to see people thinking and talking about the park. He felt the draft plan shows better use of space and respect for existing monuments.

Motion by M.Gawne to express the Planning Commission's approval of the draft plan to the City Council. Seconded by A.Paradis and approved with five in favor and D.Barber opposed.

N.Liese expressed his support for the draft plan, especially the stage for larger events.

4. Plan for revisions to Land Development Regulations

M.Gawne said he would like staff to decide which revision items get presented first.

D.Barber wondered if each commissioner could pick their top 3 to focus on first. His choices were historic structures, abandoned buildings, and demolition.

S.Bradeen asked if the Regulations needed to be rewritten entirely or if only focused changes were needed.

D.Barber was in favor of preparing three amendment packages.

M.Gawne asked if a reorganization outline could be presented, and J.DesLauriers concurred. S.Bradeen said it might be hard to do that until the other changes are contemplated.

J.DesLauriers agreed that a goal of revisions by the end of 2018 was good and suggested that a plan to worked out at the next meeting.

There was general discussion about formulating the statutory hearing process strategy after many of the revisions have already been introduced.

D.Barber stated that he thought more visuals and illustrations could help.

C.Sawyer said he would put together a schedule.

S.Bradeen asked to take on form based codes earlier, rather than later. He asked to group similar subjects together, and form based codes were a unifying item.

5. Other Business.

- a. Update on proposed stream corridor rules

There was general discussion. No action or requests.

- b. Route 7 Livability Project update

There was a general update and discussion. S.Bradeen advocated in favor of addressing the City's portion of the project that does not have a sidewalk currently and engaging the property owners there.

- c. Planning & Development update

There were no questions or discussion.

- d. Other

There was discussion about having a site visit meeting in Ward 1 on a Saturday, how to let people know about the meeting, and the need for a good conversation about ensuring the viability of the City's historic housing stock.

6. Public Comment.

J.Young mentioned requirements in other communities where apartments are only allowed in structures inhabited by the owner. N.Liese also commented on that topic.

Motion by S.Bradeen to adjourn at 7:57 PM. Seconded by M.Gawne and approved with all in favor.

PC 11/20/17

THANK YOU FOR COMING. PLEASE SIGN IN.

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