

**NOTES OF INFORMATIONAL MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
5:30 PM MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022**

Commission Members Present: Denise Smith, Chair; Zachary Nuse.

Commission Members Absent: Lauren Dees-Erickson, Vice Chair; Michael Gawne; Amy Burleson.

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

No quorum present - informational meeting only.

1. Open Meeting.
 1. Introduction of attendees. - no introductions necessary.
 2. Public Comment on issues not on agenda - None
 3. Discuss additions or deletions to agenda - None; informational meeting only.

2. Discuss priorities and workplan.

C. Sawyer presented commission members with a color-coded packet of priorities that the Commission had voted on in February as items that should be the focus of 2022. Many of the items on the list are ongoing and have been worked on by the Commission in previous years, while several others were added in February 2022.

C. Sawyer reviewed the Residential-Professional District Proposal packet. He explained that the public outreach part of this proposal will take some effort and time. Contacting all property owners will take time. He said he believes it's still a worthy proposal but that it won't be without controversy, although not too controversial. Z. Nuse said there could be a kneejerk reaction or negative perception in changing the zoning for residential neighborhoods. D. Smith asked what the next steps are. C. Sawyer said to bring it up to City Council and then send notices to property owners letting them know there would be hearings on the matter. Then, hold the hearings. D. Smith asked if there should be a meeting with walkthrough of the neighborhood in the spring. C. Sawyer said they don't have to make any decisions and can bring it up when more members are present at a later meeting.

C. Sawyer then introduced the next six items on the list of priorities. All of them are subjects that came up during the Residential-Professional District discussions.

 - Item 1 - "Provide definitions for all uses in Section 304." D. Smith asked if the Commission needs input from City Council to create a draft. C. Sawyer said the Commission can go ahead and do it on their own and then

send it to City Council for final approval. D. Smith suggested waiting until M. Gawne is present in the meeting to further discuss this item. Z. Nuse asked about how different definitions would be decided on. For example, what makes something an art gallery vs. what makes it a music venue. C. Sawyer said it doesn't hurt to have a specific use noted and that it's better to have a lot of uses defined rather than not enough and then have someone try to stuff something into one use when it could be something else. D. Smith said she doesn't think it would hurt to have more definitions and it would be better to have more than not enough.

- Item 2 - "Update the names of residential districts." High density and low density would become 7500 and 9500. Z. Nuse said he thinks it's nice to make it easier but that making it too specific can make it harder down the road if you need to change it again in the future. D. Smith suggested making it Residential 1, Residential 2, etc. instead of using the 7500 and 9500. C. Sawyer suggested Residential A, Residential B, etc.
- Item 3 - "Proposed changes to Article 7 Design Review." This proposal is broken into two sections - Proposed Global Changes and Proposed Design Review for Gateway and Residential-Professional Districts. C. Sawyer said some of the changes on this list would be easier to make than others. For example, removing the rules that apply to north section of Federal Street would be easier. D. Smith said she would like to make sure this item gets on the agenda for further discussion and exploration by the whole Commission, along with the recommendation to prioritize a change to remove Federal Street rules north of Hoyt Street and add South Main rules. Z. Nuse said he believes that Federal Street should be considered as a part of downtown. He explained that a lot of development in other towns includes streets surrounding Main Street, placing Federal Street in a good position to be a good place for people to park and walk around, if it were further developed.
- Item 4 - "Clarify uses by number of dwelling units." C. Sawyer explained that the current language includes some words that describe the type of property and some that describe their use. He proposes rather than saying "two family dwelling" or "duplex," the language would say "Dwelling units - up to two." Others could include "Dwelling unit three or more." D. Smith said she thinks this can move forward as well.
- Item 5 - "Transverse Divided Lot Rule for zoning district boundaries." This applies to properties that straddle different districts because they have larger lots. Z. Nuse said the Commission has discussed this in the past and he believes it might be a hard subject to explain. C. Sawyer said this doesn't necessarily need to be addressed on its own as a standalone policy. D. Smith asked if this should be done before the Residential Professional District goes through, to address concerns before they arise. Z. Nuse said

he thinks it might be easier to separate it away from the Residential Professional District as a small first section to take care of first. C. Sawyer said there are several smaller items that can be checked off in anticipation of the Residential District Proposal.

- Item 6 - "Reformat Section 304 of Permitted and Conditional Uses." C. Sawyer introduced a written version that he created to replace the existing table. Z. Nuse suggested keeping the existing table for this subject with an asterisk - a catchall phrase that says regulations supersede the table. C. Sawyer recommended removing the table altogether and including the written language but attach the table as a quick reference or cheat sheet that people can pick up in the office in person. Z. Nuse said it doesn't hurt to include it. C. Sawyer said if it's included it could lead to confusion. D. Smith said she wants it to be as easy as possible. D. Smith said she feels like this subject and the definitions could be done at the April meeting.

After item 6, the list of priorities as laid out jumps to number 15. C. Sawyer introduced it - "Modernize Parking Requirements." He said he believes this item could take a bit longer than others. There are different opinions regarding how many parking spaces should be required by property type. C. Sawyer said he believes the Commission should explore looking at the current regulations and making them more flexible. Z. Nuse said this would be a hard subject to discuss now and that it could get complicated very quickly. C. Sawyer said under the current rules a four-unit structure would require 10 spots. D. Smith asked if there were any experts in the field that could do a presentation before the entire Commission on parking to explain the issues and subject more in-depth. C. Sawyer said a lot of it would be the different sides of the issue and that the City Council would most likely err on the side of more parking for every structure. D. Smith said she would like to look at data before the Commission makes decisions - census data, etc. D. Smith said if the Commission is passionate about the subject it would be a good idea to do the research on it and create a document to present to City Council. C. Sawyer said it is not an issue for regulations but one to clean up issues for buildings that have been grandfathered in and don't have enough spots for all of their units. C. Sawyer said this would be an item to get Council approval before working on it further.

C. Sawyer introduced item 18 - "Technical corrections and typos." He said it would take some work. The corrections are not critical but helpful. C. Sawyer said there are other items on the list that should be done first. D. Smith said if the Council doesn't approve the parking item then they could move this further up the priority list.

C. Sawyer introduced item 21- "Process for enforcement of permitting violations via tickets" item. In the case of zoning enforcement issues, such as parking in the setback, there are no ways to enforce the rules until the City takes the property owner to court. The City would like to enter a judicial bureau section for

enforcement. This would allow for ticketing the vehicle itself rather than going after the property owner, as is the policy now. Z. Nuse explained it would have to be a special clarification in order to allow for ticketing on private property. C. Sawyer asked if the Commission wants him to put something together for this. Z. Nuse said he believes they could get the City Council to go along with it.

C. Sawyer introduced the final item, # 22 - "Retail Cannabis" and said it's something to leave alone for now and keep in mind for the future if it comes before the voters on a ballot. C. Sawyer explained they can't have retail cannabis unless the voters approve it. State regulations dictates that marijuana retail is not to be zoned separately, it has to be allowed in any area where you have retail. He said it's something that stays at the end of the list with the acknowledgement that it will most likely be something that comes up in the future.

D. Smith said she doesn't see anything on the list regarding energy or climate and that might be something this Commission can discuss and add to the list of priorities at some point in the future, probably not in 2022. She requested adding it as a footnote.

3. Approval of Minutes. - **no quorum, minutes for January and February 2022 still pending approval.**
4. General Business.
 - a. Review next meeting date and format - **Next meeting on April 18, 2022.**
 - b. Other - None.
5. Adjourn.
Meeting ended at 7:21 PM.