

**MINUTES**  
**ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET**  
**5:30 PM MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2023**

*Approved November 20, 2023*

**Commission Members Present:** Denise Smith, Chair; Carl Watkins, Vice Chair; Dan Rohrbach; Ray Stahl; Janis Appel; Michael Gawne, Alternate

**Commission Members Absent:** None.

**City Staff present:** Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning and Development; Paul Clapps, Minute Taker

**Members of the public present:** Mary Harbaugh

**1. D. Smith began the meeting at 5:30 PM.**

- Introduction of Attendees
- M. Harbaugh introduced herself and began a discussion on the Climate and Energy Plan which is similar to the City Plan. She mentioned that there should be alignment between the two plans. There were three ideas she specifically mentioned: geothermal energy (ground source heat pumps), rooftop development (solar, green rooftops, greenhouses, recreation), resilience hubs (hubs for extreme weather circumstances).
- There was a brief discussion on the purpose of the plan and mentioning these important points. The timelines of each plan might not totally line up.
- M. Harbaugh proposed having a draft of the plan finished by the end of February as other projects line up. The plan is not going to be a “fixed” plan but it will change and grow over time.
- **M. Harbaugh left the meeting at 5:52.**
  
- No Additions or Deletions to Agenda
  
- Assignment of Alternates. M. Gawne would not be voting for this meeting, unless needed for a vote on minutes.

**2. Discuss Proposed Revisions to the Land Redevelopment Regulations**

- C. Sawyer began this topic with the context around the regulation revisions. There would be a warning of an official public hearing with the regulation revisions once the Planning Commission had reviewed them.

- C. Sawyer also gave the committee a brief review on how typical regulation revisions are made (through the city council, petition, or other methods with a public hearing). He then went into the existing parking regulations, and the details of a situation with a trailer being parked on the front setback.
- M. Gawne asked about how long a temporary parking situation should take to be grandfathered into the regulations. C. Sawyer said unless you've been parking a car in nearly the same spot for 15 years, it wouldn't be grandfathered in. This would be considered "legally nonconforming."
- J. Appel brought up the fact that there are many properties that violate front setback regulations in different ways, so it feels like picking on one particular violation. C Sawyer gave a few methods the city can take to alleviate other concerns.
- C. Sawyer began the review of the parking regulation changes.
  - M. Gawne asked about the term "vehicle" and whether that includes a bicycle. C. Sawyer updated the term to "motorized vehicle."
  - C. Sawyer explained the justification for defining the term "public parking."
  - R. Stahl asked about the "150 feet of the St. Albans City and Town political boundary" part of the regulations. This was specifically related to the parking at Northwestern Medical Center. C. Sawyer also gave reasoning behind the "18ft measurement" rule.
- C. Sawyer then began reviewing the performance bonds and financial guarantee provisions.
- M. Gawne gave a few details on what a performance bond covers.
- C. Sawyer moved on to the final section of the regulation changes that had to do with the Design Review District and residential properties.
- There was a discussion about the changes and why the "90%" rule was added, as well as whether residential properties should get a pass on this regulation.
- C. Sawyer brought up that property owners going up to a Zoning Administrator might bring a much faster turnaround and could be a good option. If a property owner has a problem with the Zoning Administrator's decision, then they could appeal to the DRB.
- There was a strawpoll of people who believed whether the city should regulate the color of houses in some way, with most votes agreeing. D. Smith decided to end the conversation and revisit it at a further date.
- There was general agreement to warn the proposed changes, minus the design review changes, for an official hearing at the next PC meeting.

### 3. Discuss City Plan Update

- C. Sawyer gave an update on the city plan and public input survey. He mentioned the next steps on where they will be given out. There should be a conversation in the coming months about what to do to get more renters' input.

- C. Watkins brought up that the BEI Committee wanted to collaborate on the city plan as well. There is not currently a BEI section of the city plan, but D. Smith specified that it probably should be added. D. Smith believed the wording of the plan should at least be more intentional in supporting belonging, equity, and inclusion.

#### 4. General Business

- Approval of Minutes.
  - **R. Stahl motioned to approve 9/18/23 Minutes. Seconded by J. Appel. M. Gawne and D. Smith both abstained from the vote. The motion passed with all in favor.**
  - **J. Appel motioned to adopt the minutes for 6/19/23, as presented. Seconded by C. Watkins. The motion passed with all in favor. D. Rohrbach and R. Stahl abstained. No additional discussion.**
  - **M. Gawne motioned to adopt the minutes for 8/21/23, as presented. Seconded by J. Appel. The motion passed with all in favor. D. Rohrbach and R. Stahl abstained. No additional discussion.**
- Review Next Meeting Date and Format. No discussion.
- Other. There was none.

#### 5. D. Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:29 PM.