

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
5:30 PM MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2023

Approved May 15, 2023

Commission Members Present: Denise Smith, Chair; Carl Watkins, Vice Chair; Michael Gawne, Alternate; Courtney Seale, Alternate; Janis Appel;

Commission Members Absent: Amy Burleson

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

Members of the public present: None

1. D. Smith began the meeting at 5:34.

No new guests, so there were no introductions.

There was no public comment.

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

There was a brief discussion on how the PC will need to vote due to only having four members present.

J. Appel arrived at 5:36.

Both M. Gawne and C. Seale could vote as alternates.

2. Approval of Minutes

D. Smith moved onto the approval of minutes

Motion by M. Gawne to adopt the minutes of March 20, 2023, with the term “City Council” capitalized and several bulleting issues fixed. Seconded by C. Watkins. There was no discussion. Motion approved by a vote of all in favor.

3. Discuss Update of City Plan

- a. C. Sawyer began a discussion on new focus areas for the city plan in 2025.
- b. There was more discussion on safety. J. Appel believes safety should be addressed in the city plan beyond just firearms.

- c. D. Smith mentioned that there's a big swing in safety depending on the housing situation in St. Albans. (between renters and buyers). She mentioned a history of public safety issues in her own neighborhood.
- d. C. Seale brought up public transportation being needed since it has a major impact on the city. C. Sawyer said that the state won't be helping with transportation, the city is going to have to take care of that itself.
- e. C. Sawyer said that the City Plan doesn't need to have the solutions to problems (like how we're going to get more public transportation), but it should have a collection of good ideas the city can come up with and support.

4. Update on land use-related legislation in Montpelier.

- a. C. Sawyer gave an update on the S-100 bill passing through the state legislature. C. Sawyer believed that the city will need to make some changes in response to the state law that comes into effect.
 - i. C. Sawyer was most concerned with the parking rules of the bill, but everything else can be dealt with on a city level.
 - ii. M. Gawne believed the state representatives should have a conversation with zoning officials in Franklin County.
- b. There was further discussion on parking and quality of life for renters in the city. Pros and cons were listed for having a high parking space limit.

5. The Planning Commission went back to discussing the City Plan

- a. D. Smith began reviewing Chapters 2 and 3 of the 2017 plan. There was a discussion on cooperating with the BEI committee. J. Appel mentioned that there are additional groups that the city can cooperate with when looking for public input on the city plan.
- b. Discuss ideas for the 2025 plan.
 - i. The Planning Commission wanted to add the idea of an assessment of access to Hard'Ack for the future in the city plan.
- c. J. Appel wanted to add more accessibility ideas for the city plan.
- d. The PC reviewed the City Plan chapters 2 and 3. There's a brief discussion on the Neighborhoods section in Chapter 3.
- e. J. Appel wanted to add language in chapter 2 about accessibility, age-friendliness, family friendliness, and being friendly to those who live alone.
- f. There was a discussion about including language like "collaboration with the school system" to help with youth needs.
- g. There was a discussion about the history of St. Albans and prevailing prejudices. D. Smith believed that there are still biases that the city is dealing with internally. While the history still has an impact (J. Appel uses the term "hovering"), they're not as prevalent to the present day as they used to be.

- h. C. Sawyer asked about how the PC felt about “historic preservation.” The PC seemed to be unanimously in support of historic preservation. There was another discussion about supporting events that bring awareness to different historically marginalized groups of the community.
- i. C. Sawyer asked if the PC would support tearing down an old “historic” building to put something new up. D. Smith said that, in her opinion, it depends on the new building being built. C. Sawyer firmly believed that no historic building should be protected “at all costs,” when something new and more useful is needed by the community.
 - i. The PC believed that there should be flexibility with historic buildings being redeveloped, but there are pros and cons to keeping a historic set of buildings.
- j. The PC moved on to discuss regulations on what should be allowed to be built in the first floor of a building (i.e. only retail or allowing flexibility)

6. Review workplan and other regulatory amendment proposals.

- a. The PC would discuss definitions in a future meeting.

7. Motion by M. Gawne to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 PM. Seconded by C. Watkins. No discussion. Motion passes and meeting is adjourned with all in favor.