

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
5:30 PM MONDAY, JUNE 19, 2023

Approved October 16, 2023

Commission Members Present: Denise Smith, Chair; Carl Watkins, Vice Chair (Via Zoom); Courtney Seale, Alternate (Via Zoom); Janis Appel;

Commission Members Absent: Michael Gawne, Alternate; Amy Burleson;

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

Members of the public present: Daniel Rohrbach

1. D. Smith began the meeting at 5:32 PM

- a. Introduction of attendees.
 - i. C. Seale mentioned briefly that she is moving away and this is the last meeting she will be attending in St. Albans.
- b. C. Seale was assigned as an alternate for this meeting.

2. J. Appel motioned to approve the 5/15/23 minutes, as presented. Seconded by C. Seale. There was no discussion. The motion passed with all in favor.

3. Discuss Neighborhood Walk with City Council

- a. C. Sawyer began with a separate conversation about a neighborhood walkthrough with the City Council. This idea came from the Mayor himself, and the scope still needs to be discussed.
- b. D. Smith wondered if the public would be invited to this meeting. C. Sawyer confirmed that it would be a public meeting. D. Smith wanted to hear more about the **2023 Land Use Legislation**, so the PC moved onto this topic of the agenda.

4. Discuss 2023 land use legislation.

- a. C. Sawyer began the discussion on the 2023 Land Use Legislation and the Memorandum to the PC. C. Sawyer went over the 5 most important changes this legislation brings. Two major changes will go into effect July 1st of this year.
- b. D. Rohrbach asked for a brief overview of the mission and scope of the Planning Commission.

- c. C. Sawyer gave an example of this legislation in action with specific lot sizes.
- d. J. Appel brought up her own neighborhood and how the addition of duplexes might change the feeling and could even double the amount of people in a neighborhood. There was further discussion on subdividing lots and what could potentially happen in the city.
- e. J. Appel brought up “not exceeding the city’s capacity” in the city plan. Adding a large number of new people to a neighborhood, or increasing the density, can impact the capacity. She asked how capacity is decided.
- f. D. Smith suggested adding something to the city plan about “Capacity Analysis.”
- g. D. Rohrbach asked for specifics on who creates an analysis for the city plan. D. Smith answered, stating that it would be hired out by the city to create a report.
- h. C. Sawyer went over a table with suggestions of possible responses to the legislation changes. The discussion moved into parking requirements.
- i. The PC continued discussing the remaining legislation changes with the city staff’s suggestions.
- j. The PC briefly went back to the topic of the neighborhood walk proposed by the City Council.
 - i. C. Seale brought up her property on High Street which shares a driveway and gives a good example of an area affected by the legislation changes.
- k. D. Smith asks the PC for any further input before moving onto the next topic.

5. Discuss City Plan Update.

- a. The PC moved on to discussing the full list of goals, objectives, policies, programs, and activities.
- b. There was a discussion on the narrative of the city plan (i.e. what the community will continue to work on in the next several years).
- c. C. Sawyer began by showing the PC the points he added (which have been discussed in previous PC meetings). J. Appel asked how the BEI can be included in some of these goals and objectives.
- d. C. Watkins clarified that, as a member of the BEI, this wouldn’t just include gender identity and race, but focus on all facets of marginalization and poverty. The BEI could help address these parts of the city plan.
- e. C. Sawyer specified that the PC didn’t need to define this in the city plan, but they could mention that “they are working on defining it.”
- f. J. Appel brought up a number of examples of how the language needs to support multiple marginalized communities in the city. (For instance, is the city supporting women-owned businesses?)
- g. There was a discussion about opportunities for the public (as well as other committees) to give input on the city plan.
- h. C. Sawyer recommended that the PC discuss the approval of the city plan’s goals/objectives next month, and they move onto the public input campaign.

- i. C. Sawyer began with a discussion on the public input campaign proposal. The PC discusses the questions.
- j. D. Rohrbach asked for specifics on how the city will be collecting data on the questions listed on the proposal. D. Smith said that the PC will be on the lookout for common or important themes that the public might bring up. D. Smith brought up the Health Needs Assessment done by the hospital as an example. C. Watkins mentioned that without a deadline, these answers will trail in and it will take a longer time to complete.
 - i. There was a discussion on whether there should be a question asking if the participant is a resident of the city or not.
 - ii. D. Smith brought up some interesting ways to bring this data to the community, and to ask the community if this data resonates with the public.
 - iii. D. Rohrbach stated that questions with prompts are easier for him to answer and perhaps for other members of the community as well.
- k. There was a discussion on the timeline of the survey. C. Sawyer thought that there should be data available for people to react to on Town Meeting Day or even for the 2024 election.
- l. This topic would be revisited in August where the final draft will be approved and the PC can start working on getting the survey out.

6. D. Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:36