

**MINUTES**  
**ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET**  
**5:30 PM MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2022**

*Approved July 18, 2022*

**Commission Members Present:** Lauren Dees-Erickson, Vice Chair (Acting Chair); Amy Burleson; Zachary Nuse; Michael Gawne.

**Commission Members Absent:** Denise Smith.

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

**Members of the Public Present:** Tim Doyle (via Zoom).

**1. Open Meeting - L. Dees-Erickson opened the meeting at 5:34 PM.**

- a. Introduction of attendees - introductions were made.
- b. Public Comment on issues not on agenda - none.
- c. Discuss additions or deletions to agenda - none.

**2. Discuss priorities and workplan.**

L. Dees-Erickson introduced the topic and invited C. Sawyer to give a brief overview of the conversation so far. C. Sawyer discussed potential work items for the Commission to focus on in the coming year. He gave a short history of the progress so far, including an information-only meeting that was held in March 2022 with D. Smith and Z. Nuse.

C. Sawyer reviewed all of the items on the list line by line and gave a brief history and insight into each subject. C. Sawyer also reminded the Commission that the City Plan needs to be rewritten by August 2025 and recommended that it be included on the list of priority to-do items in January 2023.

C. Sawyer then introduced the Commission to a new timeline for each of the items, starting with the next regularly scheduled meeting in May 2022. L. Dees-Erickson said she had concerns about whether or not some of the items could be fully addressed starting as early as May. C. Sawyer said he thinks it's a mostly doable schedule and the only thing that might throw a wrench in the schedule would be a possible vote on Retail Cannabis added to the ballot this year.

A. Burleson asked if Burlington did any parking regulation updates on their most recent plan and wondered if it might be helpful for this Commission. C. Sawyer said they could

research parking regulations based on other communities, or they could do a site survey within the City community and discover what the use currently is and what is needed.

L. Dees-Erickson asked the Commission members if they are comfortable with the proposed schedule. A. Burlson said she is comfortable with it but that the Commission should remain flexible in case of changes. Z. Nuse mentioned the possibility of moving the parking priority further up in the schedule, as it is currently listed to be addressed in fall 2022. C. Sawyer asked if he would feel more comfortable if parking was assigned a specific month and suggested August or September. C. Sawyer said they will need at least three months to work on the Residential Professional District proposal. L. Dees-Erickson asked Z. Nuse if August or September would be ok. Z. Nuse said yes and that having a specific schedule for it makes it look like it's a higher priority. C. Sawyer suggested switching it with other priorities on the list and said they're all important and need to be accomplished at some point, but some don't need to be done right away.

L. Dees-Erickson said she likes having the priority items 0 - 6 accomplished at the same time. C. Sawyer said the one thing on the list that could kill any proposed development is the parking requirement. L. Dees-Erickson said she is comfortable with it being moved up in the schedule. M. Gawne suggested asking City Council if they would be ok with the Commission focusing on the parking requirement. C. Sawyer said he thinks the Council may be reluctant to lower parking requirements for residential areas, but may be more open to lowering the requirements for some business facilities.

L. Dees-Erickson agreed to move parking up in the schedule but to break it up into multiple meetings, as an agenda item or chunk of time dedicated to it for multiple meetings. C. Sawyer suggested moving the renaming of residential districts further back on the schedule. The Commission agreed to move the discussion of parking requirements up in the schedule to the regular May 2022 meeting.

C. Sawyer said the Commission could also start at this meeting on some of the easier subjects. L. Dees-Erickson asked if anyone felt strongly or well-read enough on any particular priority to start discussing it tonight. M. Gawne mentioned that he put some work into the priority regarding definitions of types of properties, and that he made some notes on the current definitions, but that he would prefer to talk one on one with C. Sawyer about some of his notes, before the Commission discusses it as a priority. There was discussion regarding the definitions and what separates Air BnB, VRBO, lodging house, inn, bed and breakfast, etc.

C. Sawyer set a new schedule for the priorities, including starting the parking requirement discussion in May 2022. C. Sawyer asked if the Commission had any questions regarding the priorities and the timeline. L. Dees-Erickson suggested putting the priorities on the screen and then Commission members could ask questions as they pop up. C. Sawyer went in-depth on each item going line by line, including a history and the progress so far of the Residential Professional District proposal. C. Sawyer said there could be some people who live in the proposed District that might have concerns or questions for the Commission at future meetings.

L. Dees-Erickson asked what next steps would be for Residential Professional District. C. Sawyer said the first step would be to tell the City Council and then plan to alert people who live in those areas and prepare to have them come to future meetings to learn more and ask questions. A. Burleson asked if there was a way to gauge how the City Council feels about it before they do a lot of work on it. Z. Nuse asked if City Council members would visit the neighborhoods with them for a walkthrough. A. Burleson asked if it would be possible to break it up into chunks, see if something such as the Main Street section could pass first and then do the harder areas that might be more difficult to pass. L. Dees-Erickson said her initial feeling was no and that they should do the entire proposed District all at once, but that on further discussion it might be a better plan to break it down into different areas. L. Dees-Erickson suggested that it would be good to get a few easy wins on the plan, just in case the other areas are more contentious. C. Sawyer agreed that would be a good idea. M. Gawne also agreed, but Z. Nuse dissented.

L. Dees-Erickson agreed to move the Residential Professional District plan to summer, breaking it up into different areas and meetings.

L. Dees-Erickson said she likes the idea of quick wins that they could check off their list and suggested that the renaming of residential areas would be one of those quick-win priorities they could easily take care of.

C. Sawyer discussed the Design Review priority and mentioned that there are sections of the city that are currently included in Design Review that don't have to be there. He suggested taking some areas out of the Design Review requirement, including Best Court and a section of Federal Street. L. Dees-Erickson asked what are some potential arguments for keeping the Design Review area as it is. M. Gawne said it's easy and not an issue that comes up as a problem very often. L. Dees-Erickson asked if any members of the Commission have any questions. Z. Nuse said he would like to know why these areas were included in the first place because it seems to have been a deliberate decision to include Best Court and Federal Street in Design Review. A. Burleson said she has a problem with far-reaching Design Review, especially when it includes paint color. L. Dees-Erickson said Design Review is a good place to enforce future regulations on materials. L. Dees-Erickson said she has a hard time releasing existing regulations. A. Burleson said she has a hard time when there are unnecessary rules, but L. Dees-Erickson said she wants to see some rules still in place. A. Burleson said it's another barrier to completing maintenance on a property. M. Gawne said that when he bought his house, he didn't have to ask for anyone's permission to change the color of his house and said it's hard to come up with a solution to every possible problem that might come up. C. Sawyer suggested the Commission determine what the purpose of the regulation is and then determine if it's strictly necessary that these areas should be included. C. Sawyer said to weigh what it is they're trying to prevent by keeping Design Review in those areas and what other tools the City has to prevent them, such as the prominent front entry rule or sign rules.

C. Sawyer said the Design Review discussion could end up being substantial and involved.

L. Dees-Erickson proposed that, at some time in the future, the City could decide to move forward with requiring environmentally friendly, green building materials, and she wondered what types of rules could they use to enforce it if not Design Review. C. Sawyer said incentivizing the use of green materials would work better than rules and that current City Council would most likely not get on board with that type of regulation at this time.

3. Approval of Minutes.

**M. Gawne made a motion to approve the January 17, 2022 meeting minutes as amended. Second by A. Burleson. Minutes approved at 6:58 PM.**

**M. Gawne made a motion to approve the February 21, 2022 meeting minutes as presented. Second by A. Burleson. Minutes approved at 7:01 PM.**

a. Comments on March meeting notes - C. Sawyer said the Commission does not need to approve the March 2022 minutes because there was no quorum, and the meeting was informational only. L. Dees-Erickson asked if anyone had any notes or comments on the minutes. There were none.

The Commission accepted the minutes on the informational meeting of March 2022.

4. General Business.

- a. Review next meeting date and format - Monday, May 16th, 2022.
- b. Other - none

5. Commission photo - Photo of Commission was taken for the *St. Albans Messenger*

6. Adjourn - **L. Dees-Erickson adjourned the meeting at 7:10 PM.**