

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
5:30 PM MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2022

Approved November 21, 2022

Commission Members Present: Lauren Dees-Erickson; Courtney Seale, Alternate (via zoom); Denise Smith, Chair (via zoom); Michael Gawne (5:35)

Commission Members Absent: Amy Burleson; Carl Watkins; Zac Nuse

City Staff present: Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development; August Hawkins, Minute Taker

Members of the public present: Mitch Craib

1. Begin Recording and Open Meeting.

a. Introduction of attendees. **D. Smith called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.**

b. Public Comment on issues not on agenda. M. Craib expressed interest in regulating the northern section of town, but has thought of a few more items to consider. He is interested in walk-bike infrastructure and mentioned plans to get a walkway out to Hannaford/Walmart. He asked to extend the sidewalk to the end of the city, and work on the Rail Trail connection to get it down to Federal Street, and potentially adding a walker friendly path there.

c. Sawyer explained that it was outside of the role of the Planning commission, but recommended speaking to ward representative Timothy Hawkins. He said that the land the city has access to is still limited, but there is potential for an extension of the rail trail. He said that there is a plan to add 2 sidewalks to the sides of federal street, not a multi-use path, but that there was potential for one.

c. Discuss additions or deletions to agenda. No Discussion.

d. Assignment of Alternates.

C. Seale was assigned as an Alternate.

2. Discuss Residential-Professional District proposal and associated changes.

a. Consider warning official hearing.

C. Sawyer introduced the changes he thought of for the proposal for a new “Residential Professional” district. It would disallow some things like convenience stores and cemeteries, and require that buildings in this zone look like houses or estates. He also

mentioned enacting a rule discouraging creation of new curb cuts. He then discussed new potential zoning classifications for several neighborhoods:

- Moving Best Court to the residential 7500 district.
- Change western side of Federal Street from Service-Industrial District to B2 District, or to remove this area from the current proposal.

C. Sawyer said that public comment had been largely positive, but that some main street residents took issue with loud traffic. He explained that this specifically is a topic for the City Council rather than the Planning Commission.

Discussion of an issue with a property owner looking to sell craft products out of a property they own, but do not live in. M. Gawne suggested listing it as a gallery/art space, since it can't be used for retail use. C. Sawyer agreed to look into this.

Commission members expressed their support for the changes C. Sawyer reviewed.

L. Dees-Erickson brought up the issue with curb cuts and asked why the creation of them was discouraged. M. Gawne explained that they were discouraged because of complicated access to the street, leading to more traffic issues. C. Sawyer and D. Smith added that it's a safety issue, and that limiting curb cuts keeps spaces more walk and bike accessible.

C. Sawyer suggested an official hearing regarding the above issues. D. Smith and M. Gawne agreed with this suggestion, but M. Gawne that he thought the commission was not ready for an official hearing on curb cuts.

C. Seale and M. Gawne discussed how cafes and art galleries fit into B1 zoning, and the challenges associated with this.

M. Gawne proposed a straw vote to move forward to an official hearing but remove the curb cut language from the Residential Professional proposal for November.

All present commission members voted to remove the curb cut language from the official hearing for the Residential Professional Proposal.

D. Smith reviewed section 2a. She said the final plan would be to invite community members to the hearing and include Best Court and Federal Street as part of it.

3. Other amendment proposals.

a. Presentations and discussion.

C. Sawyer presented the current workplan.

The commission discussed retail cannabis and zoning related to it. C. Sawyer explained that retail distribution of cannabis is only allowed following a positive local vote.

L. Dees-Erickson suggested discussing Design Review. C. Sawyer introduced the old design review district. M. Gawne asked what defines a building in the design review zone. C. Sawyer explained that appearance was important, including visible entrances, front parking, lighting rules, etc. The commission discussed areas that they felt should not be subject to design

review, including Best Court and Lower Newton. They also felt that both sides of Federal Street should be subject to design review, not just one.

C. Sawyer suggested removing single family homes and duplexes from the requirements of design review.

b. Consider warning hearing(s).

The official hearing will be in October for Transverse Review and Design Review.

4. General Business.

a. Approval of Minutes.

Michael Gawne motioned to accept July minutes as presented.

Seconded by Lauren dees-Erickson. Passed unanimously.

Michael Gawne motioned to approve August minutes.

Seconded by Lauren dees-Erickson. Passed unanimously.

5. Adjourn.

Michael Gawne motioned to adjourn early.

Seconded by Lauren Dees-Erickson. Meeting adjourned at 7:19 pm.