

**Town of St. Albans
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 17th, 2021
6:00 p.m.
Via Zoom Teleconferencing**

On Monday, May 17th, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., the Town of St. Albans Selectboard met at Town Hall.

Official and staff attending site visit: Chair Brendan Deso, Vice Chair Jessica Frost, Erin Creley, Jonathan Giroux, Bryan DesLauriers, and Town Manager Carrie Johnson.

Public: Hunter Gomez with Peterson Consulting.

Chair B. Deso called the Selectboard meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. The Selectboard started their meeting with an executive session to discuss a contractual matter.

Executive Session

MOTION: B. DesLauriers made a motion to go into executive session at 6:04 p.m. to discuss legal, contractual, or personnel issues where premature general public knowledge of the subject matter would place the Town (or person involved) at a substantial disadvantage. It was further moved to enter into executive session to discuss legal, contractual or personnel issues under the provisions of Title 1, section 313(a)(1) of Vermont Statutes and to invite Town Manager Carrie Johnson and Hunter Gomez of Peterson Consulting. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: J. Frost made a motion to come out of executive session at 6:41 p.m. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Regular Meeting

Official and staff in attendance: Chair Brendan Deso, Vice Chair Jessica Frost, Erin Creley, Jonathan Giroux, Bryan DesLauriers, Director of Operations Corey Parent, and Town Manager Carrie Johnson.

Officials and Staff participating via Zoom Teleconferencing: Director of Public Works Alan Mashtare, Facilities Manager John Montagne, Stormwater Coordinator Emmalee Cherington, and Recording Secretary Jenn Gray.

Public Participation via Zoom Teleconferencing: Jackie Brown, David Schofield, and Amanda Giroux.

B. Deso called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Payroll

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to approve the payroll warrants dated May 7th, 2021 in the amount of \$19,915.34 and May 14th, 2021 in the amount of \$21,690.63. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

General Warrant

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the general warrant dated May 17th, 2021 in the amount of \$71,165.53. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Infrastructure Development Warrant

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to approve the Infrastructure Development warrant dated May 17th, 2021 in the amount of \$1,230.00. Seconded by Bryan DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Industrial Park Warrant

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to approve the general warrant dated May 17th, 2021 in the amount of \$3,187.34. Seconded by E. Creley. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Minutes

E. Creley had one correction to the meeting minutes.

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from Monday, May 3rd, 2021 as amended. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Park Rental Fee Waiver

St. Albans Town Education Center (SATEC) Summer Camp Program

SATEC would like to hold a summer camp for up to 60 kids on weekdays in July. The cost to use the Bay Park for the month is \$4,000. C. Johnson recommended the Board waive \$2,000 of this fee and explained that she suggested to SATEC if they plan to offer this program in the future to budget for the full \$4,000. The Board was in consensus to waive the \$2,000.

MOTION: J. Frost made a motion to authorize Town Manager Carrie Johnson to reduce the Bay Park rental fee \$2,000 for SATEC's summer camp program. Second by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

St. Albans Historical Museum Volunteer Event

B. Deso explained this is an annual event to honor the volunteers. Normally the cost is \$200 for Cohen and the event runs from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The Board agreed to reduce the fee \$100.

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to authorize Town Manager Carrie Johnson to reduce the Cohen Park rental fee \$100 for the St. Albans Historical Museum volunteer event. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Stormwater Draft Budget and ERU (Equivalent Residential Unit) Fee

C. Parent reviewed the draft stormwater budget and stormwater Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) fee with the Board. The ERU fee will be \$50. He stated that some impervious surface had been missed in the initial count and Stormwater Coordinator Emmalee Cherington has since updated that count. We are not billing private roads in the first year. C. Parent continued saying that the way the budget is structured, it will pay back the Town's general fund with the money it used to start up the Stormwater Utility.

C. Parent said that we are a year behind and do not have a phosphorus control plan. It was due in April, but it's a year's worth of work. That is a \$50,000 expense that is built into the first year of the Stormwater Utility. The Town will have a bill of \$68,475 for all the Town's impervious surface. Every time we add a sidewalk, road, or building, the Town is going to add to this fee to pay. Every town, non-profit, and school in the State of Vermont has to pay a stormwater fee.

E. Cherington explained that the overall goal while building the budget was not to change the ERU rate for at least 2 years. The initial count of ERU's was significantly lower than what we have in town. The ERU was calculated on 10,500. However, right now, the more accurate number is just over 12,000.

E. Cherington explained the Town has the Flow Restoration Projects that are pretty heavy on designing detention ponds. The science is trending more toward gravel wetlands. That does a lot more with the phosphorus control than just a standard pond. It does increase costs slightly, but it will alleviate two different conditions; the flow restoration and phosphorus control. C. Johnson stated we put one of those in at the new Department of Public Works (DPW) garage. C. Parent explained that in those types of ponds, the phosphorus will build up and the DPW crew will need to go in and remove gravel and replace it. This keeps the phosphorus out of the lake.

E. Cherington anticipates that the Town is likely to get impaired status for Chloride in the waterways. This will change the scoping and design of some of the systems. This has not happened yet.

C. Parent explained that the billing would be a separate bill from the tax bill due to accounting software.

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to approve Stormwater Utility budget as presented and set the ERU rate at \$50. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Town resident, Dave Schofield stated that the development (Summit Place) he lives in has a stormwater permit. He asked what is happening to those. B. Deso explained the development will still have to go through the annual reporting through the State of Vermont and pay those associated fees. The homeowners association will be able to apply for a credit of up to a certain percentage off the bill. Mr. Schofield explained that his development has a relationship with the Town because the Town owns the road. The development splits the cost of the permit with the Town. Mr. Schofield went on to say that he hasn't seen any fees in the last 5 years. C. parent explained that since the Town is already paying for the impervious on the road, because it's a public road, the development isn't going to see any benefit. You'll just have the annual \$50 fee.

D. Schofield asked if there is a possibility of building a detention pond for his development at some point. C. parent said any future work, any projects needing to be built to offset any runoff would be built with the funds of the Stormwater Utility and the homeowner would only be paying the annual \$50

ERU fee. E. Cherington explained that if you have existing stormwater infrastructure that is dated from 2002 on, it is still active and valid. D. Schofield stated that they do not have anything. E. Cherington explained that Summit Place may fall into the category where if the Town has already acquired the road, we might want to roll that permit into the Town's MS4 and do a stormwater system to accommodate that neighborhood.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update

C. Parent explained the Town adopted its first Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in 2003. It was redone in 2018, and now in 2021, we're presenting a minor update to the 2018 plan to become our new Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This revision is not a wholesale change. Instead, it reprioritizes several projects to meet the future Bicycle and Pedestrian needs of the community. This revision shifts the focus from purely looking at connectivity to consider recreational, economic, and equity in prioritizing projects.

C. Parent went on to explain that the most significant change is the priority of projects from Route 7 to the future St. Albans Health Path, which will ultimately look to connect the Collins Perley Sports Complex to the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail. This builds upon a recent scoping study to create a pedestrian crossing on the SASH (St. Albans State Highway access). The Plan also prioritizes a sidewalk from the new Town Hall to Bay Park and reordered various other projects identified in 2018. C. Parent continued by saying that this plan gets the Town to a place where we can find support for projects and start bringing construction projects to voters. Voters haven't seen a bike and ped project on the ballot since 2015. That vote failed.

C. Parent stated that our goal with this new Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is to apply for a VTrans grant, due June 4th, to fund a scoping study for the St. Albans Health Path (SAHP). The Planning Commission voted to recommend this become the new Plan on a vote 5-0 on May 11th, 2021.

J. Frost stated that she's happy to see that we are starting to look at scoping, engineering, and construction of bike and ped projects. She has been advocating for this for a long time. She does understand why the Health Path is at the top of the priority list, however she and the Route 7 group are disappointed because they put so much energy into the Route 7 North project and that project has been pushed to the bottom of the priority list. J. Frost asked if the Route 7 North project could get moved higher on the list? Maybe we could do a few crosswalks. C. Parent explained that we haven't really addressed crosswalks as part of the bike and ped plan at all. Route 7 and 104 are VTrans roads and are hard to get crosswalks installed on those road. This may be something staff could work on, but to get them on the north end of town would be a VTrans matter.

J. Frost stated that the walk/bike group could be a really good community partner when it comes to getting the word out and communicating with the public on future projects.

E. Creley stated that she understands way the Route 7 North project has been moved lower down the list. However, even though we are not at a place where we have shovel ready projects, we need to figure out a way to make this politically and financially feasible.

A very lengthy discussion on this topic continued with the Board sharing their thoughts, ideas, and experiences with bike and ped projects and funding as well as pointing out that adding bike and ped infrastructure and recreational assets in the Town would be beneficial to the Town's economic development.

J. Frost asked about the impact fee portion of the sidewalk construction. It was sent to back to the Planning Commission, but the Selectboard didn't see it again. E. Creley noted it did come back to the Planning Commission, but the timing of this was spring 2020 at the pandemic start. There were also changes with the Planning Commission support (Ned Connell's departure) and many projects were put on hold or delayed. This slowed forward progress in the summer and fall of 2020.

C. Parent pointed out that the next 4 or 5 quarters of the LOT funds are going towards the new Town Hall.

Mr. Schofield explained that he raised the issue regarding impact fees years ago, that we weren't collecting enough money for sidewalks. At the time, the Town was allocating \$35/foot of frontage. A number of homeowners and developers complained about this, it went back to the Planning Commission and it wasn't resolved. B. Deso stated it was his understanding that the Planning Commission decided to utilize proceeds from the LOT.

E. Creley explained that based on previous and expected projects, the amount of funds we were collecting from impact fees were not substantial. The Planning Commission did go back to the Selectboard and said that the Planning Commission would prefer the Selectboard consider using LOT

funds. The Selectboard then said to go back and consider an impact fee. There was a back and forth conversation, but that is where it was left off. This was about the time right before the pandemic started. J. Frost commented that she just wanted to make sure the funding is there when the time comes to build these projects.

B. Deso stated that his personal preference was to utilize the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for projects then use the LOT. He suggested putting an article before the voters that would ask to put an unrestricted amount of money a year for things like sidewalks into a reserve fund. C. Johnson suggested that everyone read the plan again. The CIP is a planning document and that document lays out, in order, when we do certain projects and provides a consistent revenue source for its projects.

C. Parent explained that the funding portion of the plan was left up to the Selectboard. He asked the Selectboard if they would prefer the Planning Commission re-examine the CIP and see if there are any updates to it or have the Planning Commission do a report on funding mechanisms that other communities use to fund these types of projects? C. Parent continued by stating that the Planning Commission felt it was the job of the Selectboard to lay out how they wanted projects funded.

On the topic of scoping studies, these studies are paid for from the general fund. C. Parent stated that he no longer had a line item in the budget for that. C. Johnson stated it had been cut. B. Deso stated that that decision can be reversed. C. Johnson agreed and stated that it could be reversed at budget time. She explained that if the Selectboard approves applying for the VTrans grant to do a scoping study for the SAHP, we will need to come up with a match of \$15,000 which would be paid for from her consulting budget line item, leaving \$10,000 in FY 2022 to spend on engineering and consulting.

C. Parent confirmed that the Board wanted the Planning Commission, over the summer to look at the CIP as well as provide a study on what other communities are doing. B. Deso stated that the Board would need that in August, giving them September and October to review it and make a decision.

J. Frost pointed out that on the list of all the roadways, there's a few (Maquam Shore, Georgia Shore, Hathaway Point) where you can do a ten foot travel lane with either 2 foot or 4 foot shoulders with no sidewalk. How difficult would that be to do here in the Town, pave the roads wider? C. Johnson explained that there are a number of barriers in that we ran out of real estate in some key places. Some areas had plenty of room and others we barley have room for a good shoulder.

D. Schofield stated he understands we have the issues of finding money and getting voter support for sidewalks and paths and he didn't disagree with the paths that were being discussed. He stated that the intent of the Route 7 North group and the plan for Route 7 North plan was to try to make it easier for people to travel on what is probably the busiest road in the Town and serves most of our Commercial District. It's strange we don't put money into that plan. We spent \$60,000 into looking at it and now it's at the bottom of the list, which is unfortunate. The State is going to be paving Route 7 from the City of St. Albans to Georgia. Just getting a paved shoulder would be useful for people who are cycling. Same for the North end. We need to give some places for people to walk and bike safely. B. Deso suggested maybe asking the Route 7 North group to look at utilizing existing infrastructure such as the Rail Trail and anything that may be already obligated to be built or that could be built, to come up with a safer route to get people from the City into the Commercial District and use any opportunity to work with VTrans on implementing a crosswalk. Mr. Schofield pointed out that people are not going to divert to go further east in order to get to the shopping area. They will still want to walk on the road (Route 7).

After further discussion on projects, how to fund them, and when LOT funds would be available, the following motions were made:

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to approve the revised Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan as presented. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: J. Giroux made a motion to authorize Selectboard Chair Brendan Deso to sign a letter of support for the VTrans grant. Seconded by B. DesLauriers. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Town Manager's Report

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Aid

C. Johnson explained that at this time we do not know how much funding we will receive or when we will receive it. We also don't know how we are going to spend it. She went on to say that we are reaching out to other municipalities to see if they would partner with us on any projects.

Metal Dumpster – Stopping and Closing

C. Johnson explained that there have been issues with people abusing the use of the metal dumpster at the old Department of Public Works site and keeping it open and clean has become unsustainable. People aren't just dumping metal, but garbage as well. We want to use this property for more of a recreational area and in order to do that, we are going to close the metal dumpster at this time. The Board was in consensus.

Town Hall Update

C. Johnson explained that the ground breaking for the new Town Hall has been moved to early July. Bid documents for construction are going out at the end of next week. DEW was awarded the Construction Manager contract. Once started, it is believe the project will take 9 – 10 months, allowing for a spring 2022 move in date.

Schedule

The next regular Selectboard meetings are Monday, June 7th and Monday, June 21st, at 6:30 p.m. Butt Litter Clean ups will be downtown St. Albans on Wednesday, July 14th at 9am to 11am and the Town of St. Albans Industrial Park on Wednesday, August 11th at 9am to 11am.

Chair's Report

B. Deso asked the Board if there is a priority that has been put aside and items not showing up on the agenda to please let him know.

B. Deso stated that the parks are very busy right now with softball games, dog walkers, and a full parking lot. We need to continue this trend.

B. Deso explained that a local business owner contacted him to say is adamantly opposed to the affiliation fee by the City and it may cause him to put a project aside for now because of it.

Other Business

J. Giroux asked for an update on the fence size at Cohen Park. C. Johnson stated the fence will be 10 feet.

Executive Session

MOTION: J. Frost made a motion to go into executive session at 8:48 p.m. to discuss legal, contractual or personnel issues where premature general public knowledge of the subject matter would place the Town (or person involved) at a substantial disadvantage. It was further moved to enter into executive session to discuss legal, contractual or personnel issues under the provisions of Title 1, section 313(a)(1) of Vermont Statutes and to invite Town Manager Carrie Johnson. Seconded by J. Giroux. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to come out of executive session at 9:24 p.m. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Adjournment

MOTION: E. Creley made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 9:25 p.m. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jenn Gray, Recording Secretary