

The Town of St. Albans
SELECTBOARD & PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Meeting held via Zoom Conference Call
April 27th, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes

Present: Brendan Deso (Selectboard Chair), Jessica Frost (Selectboard Vice Chair), Jonathan Giroux, Erin Creley, Stan Dukas, G. Henderson (Chair), E. Creley (Clerk), Casey Toof, Anne Pomeroy, Hannah Rounds, Grant Henderson, Casey Toof, Al Voegele

Staff Present: Carrie Johnson, Ned Connell, AJ Johnson

Public Present: Sarah Larner

Zoom Meeting ID: 7395793-6923

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.

- Introductions

B. Deso called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATES

- Capital Program
- Sidewalk Plan / Prioritize Projects for Action Plan

G. Henderson provided a brief overview of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP is balanced against current proposed projects. The Planning Commission (PC) meeting of 4/21/2020 was utilized to study how the CIP would fair against an economic downturn (loss of Local Options Tax money received), due to the COVID-19 pandemic. G. Henderson advised the Selectboard that the LOT funds are still in “good shape”, but to be cautious about what the funds are being spent on.

N. Connell explained the funds previously earmarked for the proposed municipal pool would need to be removed from the CIP since the pool had been voted down.

A. Voegele recommends having projects that are “shovel ready”, so when the Town can access infrastructure funds once the pandemic slows down nationally. He feels the Town is obligated to help the local economy by funding projects that will employ local people and spur the economy.

B. Deso asked for an update on the Sidewalk Master Plan. G. Henderson stated the latest recommendation had no changes to the prioritization, but the big change was caused by a “wrinkle” with funding. The previously adopted Sidewalk Impact Fee Ordinance proved to be unsuccessful; one example was applying large fees to individuals who were doing simple projects and not necessarily “developing”. Ultimately the PC ended up recommending that sidewalks funding be folded into the CIP.

J. Frost thought the Sidewalk Impact Fee should be revisited and that there should be some fees collected from developers. B. Deso stated the Town already collects Impact Fees that other municipalities do not. G. Henderson reminded participants that the Sidewalk Master Plan was intended for arterial sidewalks; not sidewalks within developments per se. E. Creley explained the PC had struggled with a way to make the Sidewalk Impact Fee “fair”; should Residential lots be charged the same as Commercial lots? There was some conversation about the different options.

The Selectboard requested the PC revisit the Impact Fee Ordinance and try to find a solution.

SELECTBOARD UPDATES

- Town Hall Relocation

C. Johnson stated that on Town Meeting day the voters approved funding for the “soft costs” for expenditures of a new Town Hall. The Selectboard agreed to hire a project manager and bids went out.

A. Pomeroy asked why the Selectboard was jumping to a relocation of Town Hall when it could be a

renovation of the current building. C. Johnson explained the relocation debate has been going on for a long time. A steering committee and a consultant identified 3-5 locations and the cost of each option moving forward. All the options to relocate were more attractive than renovating. If the current Selectboard decides to not look at long term options, renovating may be an option, but right now the recommendation is to relocate. C. Johnson stated there are reports that she can share. A. Pomeroy stated she is concerned what will happen to the current building if Town Hall relocates. C. Toof reminded participants that voters also approved keeping Town Hall in the St. Albans Bay area.

CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

- Master Sidewalk Plan Review
- Prioritize Projects for Action Plan

C. Johnson gave an update on the Department of Public Works salt shed. Bids for the project will be received in May. The project manager, Matt Young, is the same person who managed the DPW Garage relocation to Brigham Road.

There was discussion regarding the Route 36 intersection and the possibility that the Town may take it over. The Selectboard approved moving forward on this, and for C. Johnson to begin negotiating with the State. The State has paused on this during the pandemic.

There was discussion regarding the St. Albans Bay Village Designation. The boards agreed that the St. Albans Bay Village Designation is still a priority. An update in the Town Plan was required to move forward. The Selectboard approved the update on April 20th. N. Connell will take steps to complete the Town Plan Update.

The Sidewalk Master Plan does not need more action. The Selectboard agrees with the way the sidewalks are prioritized. Funding will be discussed by the PC.

The Selectboard discussed their prioritization list and goals. A. Voegelé suggested the Town should have plans in place to begin projects post-pandemic and should be prepared financially.

The Health Path – next step is getting the health path across the SASH. N. Connell is working with a consultant to achieve the goals VTRANS has laid out for the Town. The Town received a \$30,000 grant. Town staff will continue to work on this project; the grant work is expected to be complete by June.

The Route 7 North Project – Grant applications will be required in the near future. The Town is trying to “connect the dots” for pedestrian traffic. J. Frost stated it is on the schedule to be paved in 2023. If there are things we need to do to plan for pedestrian traffic, now is the time. There is an advisory group that meets monthly who are interested in talking to businesses along Route 7 North to drum up support for pedestrian infrastructure. J. Frost explained that Route 7 is a safety priority vs a recreation priority. N. Connell will work with the committee.

MS4- N. Connell spoke with the consultant last week and will circulate a spreadsheet of the proposed Stormwater Utility. N. Connell feels the proposed fee is in line with other communities who also have fees, and the utility fees will generate sufficient funds for the Stormwater work that needs to be completed. N. Connell anticipates the study will be done in 8 weeks and enough justification can be provided to have the Utility approved by the Selectboard this summer.

Town Hall Relocation Project – The Selectboard will be reviewing bids for a project manager. The participants discussed how fast the project should be moving right now. Should plans be developed in time for a vote in November, or should the process be slowed in time for a March vote? The Town could double in population in 40 years, so the Town Hall needs to have sufficient room for that growth. All participants agreed that the public should be a part of the discussion.

Stonehouse Renovation – Electric work is supposed to be done with existing funding. The exterior doors have been refinished. A. Pomeroy wondered if the pool is being removed from the CIP, why not put that money into the Stonehouse. B. Deso explained there is already \$100,000 earmarked for Stonehouse work. There is currently a grant to finish the cupola. B. Deso asked participants to think of fundraising ideas.

The Bay Dock – The dock will be very expensive to raise. The public has been happy with the park-lette that DPW has put on the dock. The dock was not in the top five priority for Selectboard members this year.

Collins Perley Cross Walk – Tim Viens approached C. Johnson and B. Deso to discuss a cross walk between the Complex and the Jolley gas station. Most of the pre-planning is complete, the project needs funding. The anticipated cost is around \$85,000. C. Johnson will touch base with T. Viens. They planned

to request public/private partnerships with 2-3 businesses.

Town Forest Master Trail Plan – J. Frost announced trail work will be done within a month or two. A. Mashtare has purchased signs. A trail naming contest will be held to name the final four trails. There was a discussion regarding winter access to the Town Forest. The Town attorney did some research on the Right of Way to the parking area at the Forest but had not find adequate information yet. J. Frost wondered if the Town could reclassify the road from a Class 4 to a Class 3. G. Henderson wondered if there were other access points to the Town Forest that could be utilized.

French Hill – There are four major sections of French Hill that need improvement. C. Johnson stated there hadn't been a lot of support to improve these sections at a previous budget meeting, and wondered if there was support to do a section now. The improvements will be costly. Town staff will get fresh numbers for each section and provide the information to the Selectboard.

DPW – A. Mashtare is working with SASA (St. Albans Skating Association) to allow them to utilize the old salt shed for skating. The building will require lighting and electric upgrades. The Selectboard supports an analysis of the old DPW site. They also expressed support to finish the salt shed project in a timely manner.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: J. Frost made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m. E. Creley seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
AJ Johnson, Administrative Assistant