

**Town of St. Albans
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 2nd, 2019
6:30 p.m.**

On Monday, December 2nd, 2019 at 6:30 p.m., at Town Hall the Town of St. Albans Selectboard met.

Officials and staff present: Chair Brendan Deso, Stan Dukas, Jessica Frost, Al Voegele, Director of Public Works Alan Mashtare, Zoning Administrator Becky Perron, Town Manager Carrie Johnson, and Recording Secretary Jenn Gray. Absent was Vice Chair Bruce Cheeseman.

Public: St. Albans Messenger Reporter Michael Frett, William King with SolarSense, Andy Bechard Owner of Northeaster Contracting, and Mitch Montagne.

Chair B. Deso called the Selectboard meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

General Warrant

MOTION: S. Dukas made a motion to approve the general warrant dated December 2nd, 2019 in the amount of \$29,483.02. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Payroll

MOTION: J. Frost made a motion to approve the payroll warrants dated November 22nd, 2019 in the amount of \$19,608.76 and November 29th, 2019 in the amount of \$34,504.96. Seconded by A. Voegele. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Impact Fees Warrant

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to approve the Impact Fee warrant in the amount of \$7,817.50. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Industrial Park Warrant

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to approve the Industrial Park warrant in the amount of \$251.85. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Infrastructure Development Fund Warrant

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to approve the Infrastructure Development Fund warrant in the amount of \$459,331.71. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Minutes

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from Monday, November 18th 2019 and the 'special' meeting minutes from November 20th, 2019 as written. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Proposed St. Albans Community Pool

C. Johnson provided the Board with a frequently ask questions (FAQ) sheet regarding the proposed municipal pool. These FAQ's will be posted on the Town's website and Facebook page. B. Deso explained that the cost for the proposed pool is \$5.5 million. This cost would be split between the City and the Town; \$2.75 million each. The costs includes moving the main access road from where the entrance near the dog park is further down Congress Street. The sidewalk from the top of Congress Street would be extend to the entrance to Hard'Ack.

S. Dukas stated he is not in support of the proposed pool. He explained there are other things in the Town that take priority such as renovations to French Hill Road or work on the Bay Dock. We would be spending \$2.75 million for this project.

A. Voegele supports the proposed pool and explained that half of the children using the current pool are Town residents. Also, with the dome over the pool, there would be year

round programs. The \$2.75 million will mean the Town owns half of this asset with the City maintaining it. Town residents would have the same entrance fees as City residents. This is a great partnership opportunity between the Town and the City. The pool would be an attractive recreational opportunity for businesses or people looking to move here.

J. Frost stated that swimming lessons are important to families in the community, especially those located on the lake. The current pool has discount entrance fees and libraries in Franklin County offer free passes. In the summer months, the pool offers free meals. They have great staff working there who are great role models. This asset provides kids a place to go to, year round and is a huge economic development opportunity.

B. Deso explained that the Town needs more recreational opportunities for seniors. The proposed pool would provide that. Currently, seniors are doing the "mall walk" at Highgate Commons. He went on to explained that in the \$5.5 million cost there would be an "aqua van" to run within the community to pick up children and deliver them to the pool.

Town resident Mitch Montagne asked who actually owns Hard'Ack. B. Deso explained the City owns Hard'Ack, but has an agreement with the Hard'Ack Board of Trustees on the land. A. Voegele explained that the City owns the land. When the Hard'Ack Corporation sold the land to the City, they created a group called the Epi Center. The Epi Center is a board of at least 7 or 8 people that look at options on how to use Hard'Ack and what the costs to implement those options are. The board formularizes the plan and forwards it to City Council. The Council will decide whether or not it's worth while to move forward. The Epi Center Committee set up a separate group at the request of SASA (Skating Association of St. Albans) to look at what to do about making more ice time available, i.e. building a new ice rink. This then brought the interest of folks who want an indoor facility that could be combined with an ice rink. The Epi Center Committee has two Town representatives; Bruce Cheeseman and Al Voegele.

A. Mashtare stated he came before the Board not as an employee of the Town, but as a Town taxpayer. He explained that one of his concerns was that Brandon's Pool is open year round and in the winter months it's not busy. Bringing another pool into the community, he feels is not going to be sustainable. A. Mashtare went on to explain that another concern he had was the City of St. Albans doing all the maintenance. He would like to see the Town have a say in maintenance. He doesn't want the responsibility put on someone else when it's our money being spent. B. Deso stated that we could be asked to be informed of the maintenance plan.

J. Frost stated that Brandon's Pool for the family is really cost prohibitive. For her family to swim there it costs \$75. The City recreation department offers a family membership as well as all sorts of swimming programs. There could be an indoor swim team at the proposed pool. J. Frost went on to say that she believes that Brandon's Pool caters more to lap swimmers. The recreation department would cater to the whole community.

There were no other comments.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Infrastructure Impact Fee Ordinance (Sidewalks)

Zoning Administrator Becky Perron came before the Board to discuss some challenges she has encountered with implementing this ordinance with regards to the impact fees. This ordinance has stopped some permits due to unintended cost prohibitive fees. Applicants would be double charged for fees; once for the subdivision or development and then again when applying for the building permit for individual lots within the subdivision. B. Perron has spoken to the Town's attorney and his suggestion was to repeal this ordinance. It was explained then to repeal the ordinance and during the 60 day appeal period suspend the collection of impact fees for sidewalks.

Andy Bechard, owner of Northeastern Contracting and the applicant for a two-lot subdivision, came before the Board to discuss his issues with this ordinance. Mr. Bechard explained that it would cost him \$40,000 in impact fees to do the two-lot subdivision for a \$270,000 house. It is cost prohibitive.

Erin Creley, Planning Commissioner explained that the Planning Commission has only just starting the conversation on this ordinance again in their meetings. They do not have a clear idea yet as to how to make changes. E. Creley did state that the Planning Commission found there were unintended consequences and agreed to work on a

solution. A. Voegele stated that with all the advice and consultants we have, no one saw this coming down the line. Nobody double checked the language in the ordinance. How are we going to be assured the next ordinance will not get us into worse trouble?

It was decided to repeal the current ordinance and during the 60 day appeal period suspend the collection of impact fees. After the 60 days, the ordinance is void. The Planning Commission will begin its work on amending the current ordinance.

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to repeal the Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Impact Fee Ordinance and suspend the collection of fees during the 60 day appeal period. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Town Manager's Report

William King – SolarSense VT XXII, LLC – Rewes Properties – Tom Hungerford – Lower Newton Road

William King came before the Board to explaining he was seeking conceptual support on a proposed solar project. This is a 500kw project located near the Army National Guard and owned by Rewes Properties as part of their 100 acre parcel. Mr. King explained that his next step is to meet with Northwest Regional Planning Commission to get their approval. After that, he will request letters of support from both the Planning Commission and the Selectboard for Preferred Site status. A. Voegele asked for whom the customers were the electricity was to be generated. Mr. King explained they have been working with several customers, some within the St. Albans community. The Board was in consensus to support this solar project.

VTrans Route 36 & SASH – White Paper Evaluation – Schedule work Session

C. Johnson explained that the Board should schedule a work session to discuss this in January. S. Dukas would like to see the pros and cons of taking over the 2.7 miles of Route 36/Lake Road. A. Mashtare explained that Jim Cota with VTrans recommended the Selectboard draft a letter of intent stating the Town would like to move forward with obtaining ownership of this section of Lake Road. He went on to say that Mr. Cota explained to him previously that it would take anywhere from a year to a year and a half for the Town to have ownership of the road. The Board should do this now or else we would have to wait until next December.

When asked about the SASH, the Board decided to only move forward with Route 36 at this time.

Mr. Montagne asked why the Town would want to take over another road? B. Deso explained that the Town would like more local control in order to do improvements such as intersection work and additional parking. When we take over a Class 1 road, the State will give us \$12,000 - \$13,000 per mile per year to pay for the maintenance as well as pave the road on a 15-20 year schedule. However, as part of our negotiations, we'd like to do it on a 15 year schedule.

MOTIN: A. Voegele made a motion to authorize the Selectboard Chair to sign a letter of intent to VTrans outlining that the Town is interested in a State owned section of Lake Road within the Town and being to the satisfaction and approval of the Selectboard. J. Frost seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Schedule

The next regular Selectboard meetings are Monday, December 16th and Monday, January 6th. Town offices are closing at noon on Wednesday, December 24th and are closed Thursday, December 25th for Christmas.

Chair's Report

None.

Other Business

C. Johnson explained that she was approached by Police Chief Gary Taylor to support a community food drive for Martha's Kitchen and having Town Hall as a drop off point for items. This information will be added to the Town's website and Facebook page. The Board was in consensus.

Go Fund Me Page – Help out Community Residents

B. Deso asked the Board if they were in a position to advocate for community members when something like a house fire occurs. Case in point, Jake Smith, a Town resident who just lost his home in a fire. C. Johnson stated that a couple of pages in social media have already been created to assist the family. J. Frost stated that clothing is being collected at the Blooming Minds Enrichment Center in St. Albans as well. B. Deso stated that he feels the Town should start advocating for its residents more. A. Voegele and S. Dukas agreed as long as it was legal. S. Dukas asked how are we to determine whether a Go Fund Me page is legal? C. Johnson stated that we would need to make sure we are consistent. We don't have an employee on staff 24/7. What if something like this happened on a Saturday afternoon and there was no response from the Town? But, on a Monday morning, there is a robust response from the Town. She went on to say that she didn't want someone to feel slighted. Whatever the Board decides, it must be consistently applied. The Board agreed not to make the decision at this time.

Town Hall Honor Wall

B. Deso explained that the Board voted to create a "Honor Wall" here at Town Hall with pictures of folks we thought were instrumental in the Town and who deserved to be honored in perpetuity. First inductee was Frank Montagne. B. Deso addressed Mitch Montagne who was in the audience and asked him for photo of his father. Mr. Montagne agreed. Other previously agreed upon inductees include Steve Wechsler and Eleanor Goodrich. B. Deso then suggested to the Board to add Robert 'Bob' Johnson for the Honor Wall. S. Dukas suggested voting on this when a full board is present as Bruce Cheeseman was absent from the meeting. The Board was in consensus.

Adjournment

MOTION: A. Voegele made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 7:54 p.m. Seconded by J. Frost. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Gray