

**Town of St. Albans  
Selectboard 'Special' Meeting Minutes  
Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
8:00 p.m.**

On Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 8:00 p.m., at St. Albans City Hall, the Town of St. Albans Selectboard met with the St. Albans City Council for a joint meeting.

**Officials and staff present:** Chair Brendan Deso, Vice Chair Bruce Cheeseman, Jessica Frost, Al Voegelé, and Town Manager Carrie Johnson. Absent was Stan Dukas.

**Public:** Please see attached meeting minutes from the St. Albans City Council for attendance list.

Chair B. Deso called the Selectboard joint meeting with the St. Albans City Council to order. After the individual chairs for each board called their meetings to order, they agreed on a Presiding Officer.

Presiding Officer reviews agenda for public hearing and requests motion of acceptance (D&V).

**MOTION: A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to accept agenda for public hearing. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.**

*NOTE: The following minutes were drafted by Kristen Smith, Community Relations Coordinator for the City of St. Albans.*

**Overview of Year-round Community Pool at Hard'Ack – Dominic Cloud & Carrie Johnson**

Mr. Cloud introduced Carrie Johnson, Town Manager and Kelly Viens, City Recreation Director. Both communities have agreed to request a bond for \$5.5 million split evenly to construct a municipal, year round recreational facility. It includes a pool house, associated site work, and a sidewalk extending to the pool. Generally speaking it's divided half and half between the site work and pool itself. Mr. Cloud stated that the current pool has been in service for 40 years. The proposed pool would have a zero entry area and offer a large recreational component. The biggest problem with the existing pool is that it would cost \$2 million to keep in operation and would only increase its lifespan by 15 years. A better return on investment would occur with this proposed project. The City looked at other sites such as Fonda and Public Works and everything kept pointing toward the Hard'ack Recreational facility. One of the hurdles encountered early on, was transportation for youths using the existing pool to the proposed Hard'ack facility. At the current pool, there is no parking and the City doesn't own the land. The City responded to the neighborhood access issue with an Aqua Van which will take kids to and from the pool at no charge. The proposed pool would have a competition pool as well as have ample room for free swim. With the new concept, people will be able to swim and compete simultaneously. Another issue is the need for access year round. Staff worked with an architect to design a dome that will allow for year round swimming. It will have shared parking with the Gregg Brown Lodge and will create a recreational complex that sets the community apart. Afterschool kids will have access for afterschool programming. Families will be able to gather in the winter and will be able to swim, ski and go sledding all in the same day. Mr. Cloud explained that both communities have partnered to pay for the project equally with Local Option Tax (LOT) and it will equalize membership on the Recreation Commission as well as equalize programming fees. The operations of the facility will be born by the user rates. The debt will be paid by LOT but the lifeguards, staff, chemicals and plowing will be paid by those who use the facility.

Mayor Smith asked Ms. Viens to elaborate on how many different options this project opens up. Ms. Viens reiterated that it will allow people to have public swim and will open up access in a way so that lap swim and public swim can occur every day the pool is open. They'll be able to address so many different users at the same time. In 9 weeks, over 400 lessons occur in the pool facility now and will be able to spread those out over the entire year. They will also be able to train lifeguards all season and offer a better water baby program with the zero entry pool. She stated that Isaac Bashaw is exploring different fitness programs that they'll be able to work into the daily schedule. They already do birthday parties but will be able to offer options for families to have those more frequently, expand the swim team to year round, increase the swim team training, expand the summer swim team program and will be able to increase swim levels to level 6. The added attraction will also keep all age groups happy, separating out toddlers. Ms.

Viens stated that they are also looking at working with physical therapy groups and teaching adaptive lessons during the day. They've talked with BFA PE who is looking for a way to expand their classes from the existing 10 days and have adaptive swim for BFA students as well. They've also talked to elementary schools about using the space as a field trip destination.

Ms. Johnson stated that currently, over half the users are from the Town. Ms. Viens added that the zero entry is at an incline which would allow for wheelchair accessibility. Mr. Hawkins asked if staff could speak on the term of the bond and the life expectancy of the dome. Mr. Cloud responded that the term of the bond is 20 – 25 years and the life expectancy of the dome is about 15 years. His thought is that replacing the dome can be addressed as a CIP item so there's not a big hit. His inclination is that it would be covered through the fees that are generated by the facility. Mr. Hawkins asked what the life expectancy of the pool would be. Mr. Cloud responded 40 years. Mr. Hawkins noted the parking nightmare that exists at the current pool and asked how that would be resolved. Mr. Cloud stated that there will be overflow parking in addition to new parking as well as the parking that exists there now. The challenges are that there hasn't been the management presence to fix the parking which is a cheap fix. The parking areas are gravel and the overflow parking will be on grass areas. Mr. Cloud stated that the plan is to move the entrance away from the intersection of Route 104.

Mr. Voegelé asked if a regular wheel chair is able to go into the water. Ms. Viens stated that there are different kinds of chairs and people generally know if their chair is made for water use. He asked if a chair could be borrowed or rented if someone wanted to enter the water but didn't have one.

Bruce Cheeseman stated that he wants to make sure that the Town users that currently use the pool will not be left out and make sure the Aqua Van is handicap accessible. Mayor Smith stated that kids from the Town don't have transportation now, but a van will increase the exposure for the children.

Mr. Spooner stated that people think the project is being rushed into and asked Ms. Viens to comment. Ms. Viens responded that the pool is clean and the water is clear. 12 years ago the filters were replaced because the water wasn't clean. An automatic chemical dispenser and pump was replaced. All along that time and over the last 12 years, there has been a section of the pool where it attaches to a stainless steel gutter and has issues with the wall. Now, there is not one part of the concrete that is not disintegrating. Last year Public Works cut down a foot of the wall of the pool and luckily it lasted through the summer. The hydrostatic pump in the ground below the pool also failed and the valve failed. Groundwater was surging into the pool and again, Public Works was able to prolong the problem. The pump and valve are not manufactured anymore. There is a plug in it currently and hoping that when the spring comes, the walls are still intact. The surface of the deck is also heaving and cracking.

Mr. Cheeseman asked Mr. Cloud what the new pool is made of. Mr. Cloud responded that it is gummite. Mr. Hawkins stated that everyone loves the idea of the dome but asked if it would be able to withstand VT conditions and asked if any exist in the area. Mr. Cloud responded that Smugglers Notch has two domes. The company that the City has selected is Farley and is out of Canada. They have been around for 50+ years.

Mr. McCarthy asked how the capacity with the new design compares with the existing pool. Ms. Viens responded that Vermont doesn't have any regulations in the pool world but the existing pool has a capacity of 125-150 people. This pool would increase that significantly. Mr. Cloud stated that it doubles it and the number being used for bathroom planning is 350 people.

Mr. Pelkey asked if there will be bleachers or seating for swim meets. Ms. Viens stated that there are portable bleachers and the concrete deck beside the competition pool is where they are set to be located. The dome would be adjusted so they can be there in the winter. There will also be comfortable seating around the pool.

Mayor Smith asked if there was any public comment in the audience. Mr. Charlie Moore introduced himself. He asked how this project could not be approved. It's such a great opportunity for the community and its children.

Erin Creley from St. Albans Town asked if there is a proposed fee schedule and how it compares to the fee schedule for the current pool. Ms. Viens responded that it is the same but there will be a fee schedule that allows larger families to get a discount. There will be family memberships so they can pay one rate. The rate is \$35 per month for an individual or \$49 for non-residents. The fees are exactly the same with much more to offer. Ms. Frost added that every library in Franklin County has a card for families to swim for free. Mr. Cheeseman asked what the cost is for swim meets. Ms. Viens

responded that it is free. He asked if they charge for the teams. Ms. Viens responded negatively.

Mayor Smith stated that currently if you are a member of the swim team you get an individual pass. Mr. Moore asked if there will be chairs around the pool. Ms. Viens responded that there will be chairs and bleachers and are talking about adding cabanas. Mr. Moore asked if food will be allowed around the pool and if there's space in the building to eat. Ms. Viens responded affirmatively and stated that there will be an eating area outside the concession stand which will benefit the social aspect for seniors.

Patty Porter from the Town asked for the width of the decking. She asked if a splash pad was considered for toddlers. Ms. Viens responded that it was but was too expensive. She asked how many showers are in the bath house. Ms. Viens responded that there are 6-8 stalls and 3 showers. The architect went to code for an aquatic facility based on the bathing load and what was required. She asked if kids would wait outside if the pool was at full capacity. Ms. Viens responded that this pool will have a much larger capacity but have had a couple of days when there were kids that had to wait at the existing pool. She asked how many lifeguard stations there would be. Ms. Viens responded that with this pool, the lifeguard stations would be mobile. In the zero entry area, there will probably be lifeguards walking around. If every quadrant was in use, there would be a lifeguard at every area. Mr. Cloud stated that the dome is 130' x 136'.

Mayor Smith noted the picnic shelter at the existing pool and asked if there is a plan to get out of the sun at this location. Ms. Viens stated that the structures at the existing pool are movable and could likely be moved to the greenspace but envisions the addition of umbrellas and cabanas.

Sherry Moore asked what the gallon capacity is for the pool. Ms. Viens responded that it is around 275,000 gallons which is 50,000 gallons more than the existing pool. Mr. Pelkey asked if there is lighting. Ms. Viens responded that there is lighting around it, in it and over it.

Casey Toof from the Town introduced himself and thanked everyone for their efforts and work. He asked what the hours of operation would be year round and how staffing would occur. Ms. Viens responded that now the pool is open at 7 am every day and envisions keeping a similar schedule, closing at 7 – 8 pm. As far as staffing, she stated that the City has one of the most highly regarded training programs and trains lifeguards for Smugg's. Staffing has not been a problem in the past. Mayor Smith stated that a lot of the kids on the swim team want to progress and become lifeguard certified and there is a very captive audience. He would not foresee that to be a problem going forward.

Ms. Laddison noted that Rec serves as a summer meal site and asked if this new location would serve that as well. Ms. Viens responded affirmatively. She asked how many kids are served per day. Ms. Viens responded 50. Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud and Ms. Johnson to talk about what would happen if LOT doesn't pass in the City or if this doesn't get approved in one of the municipalities. Ms. Johnson stated that the Town already has LOT. They have a MOU to iron out the ownership of Hard'ack which is owned by the City. What they'll have to do specifically is create a committee with reps from each entity and agree on the terms. Mr. Cloud stated that the Hard'ack Trustees are in favor of this project. Mr. Cloud stated that Hard'ack donated the land to the City but retained an oversight and partnership role. One of their main obligations is to raise funds for capital projects. The City does what it does best which is to provide administrative balance and the Hard'ack Trustees do what they do best which is to raise philanthropic dollars and volunteers. All of that will continue.

Mayor Smith asked Ms. Viens if Hard'ack would become ground zero for day camp. Ms. Viens responded that they would start the day at Barlow and spend the afternoon at the new pool.

Will Manahan of Hill Farm Estates noted that this is a great project but is concerned about the extra traffic. He noted that it can be tricky exiting the upper Hill Farm Estates. He asked if the parking will be paved. Mr. Cloud responded that it calls for crushed gravel. He stated that in the summer time it creates a fog of dust. He asked if there have been any traffic studies or assessments done. Mr. Cloud responded negatively and stated that it may come up in the Development Review process but can have a conversation with the engineer.

Bobby Howell from the Town introduced himself. He asked if geothermal heating had been looked into and what the environmental impact would be. Mr. Cloud responded that Efficiency VT has been plugged in from the get go. The biggest expense is the heating and glowing of the dome and need natural gas on site for that. Staff is always in conversations with solar developers as well. Mr. Howell asked if it's a saline system. Ms.

Viens responded that it will be chlorine. The formula will be different in the dome and the HVAC system will ensure that fresh air is coming into the dome.

Mr. Deso stated that this sends a shock wave throughout the State that the Town and City are not suing each other but building something together for all ages and are headed in the right direction. Ms. Johnson stated that the Town info session is March 2<sup>nd</sup> and the City's is February 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjournment**

**MOTION: B. Deso made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 9:03 p.m. Seconded by B. Cheeseman. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.**

**MOTION: A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to adjourn meeting for City at 9:03 pm. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Carrie Johnson