

Hardwick Planning Commission  
March 12, 2019  
Hardwick Memorial Building  
Minutes

HPC Members Present: Jim Lewis; Joyce Mandeville; Ken Davis; and Dave Gross, Chair

HPC members Absent: Cynthia Grant and Diane Grenkow

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator (ZA); Alison Low, NVDA; and Shaun Fielder, Town Manager.

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:33 pm.

Ken Davis moved to approve the January 8, 2019 minutes as written. Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor.

Alison Low presented the current status on the Yellow Barn project. She provided the attached schematic drawings. These are a work in progress and will continue to shift. The Yellow Barn project was initially funded by a Municipal Planning Grant (MPG). The MPG reviewed the available properties in Hardwick and recommended the Yellow Barn location as the best possible site for the proposed industrial/retail space. The concept was recommended as a benefit to the Hardwick economy.

The final plan is to have four vendor spaces (1,000 sf each) in the existing Yellow Barn. The new 25,000 sf building will be 80% hard cheese aging for Jasper Hill Cheese, an additional 3000sf of Bakery and Retail (Bien Fait Bakery), and a second story space for programs. The second story space will also have a glass wall which will enable visitors to view the process of aging the cheese (agritourism).

A Letter of Map Amendment was procured from FEMA and the new structure will not be in the flood zone overlay. A wetlands permit is currently being pursued. A Brownfields assessment was previously conducted and no contaminants were identified. A second assessment has been requested and will be conducted as soon as possible. The question was asked as to what the parking area will have for materials and staymat was indicated. Dave Gross pointed out that asphalt could serve as a cap if contaminants are found. Vermont Agency of Transportation is meeting with the design team and the curb cuts will be formalized soon (VTRANS would like to see one curb cut rather than 2).

The Town cannot acquire the land and building until an environmental review has been completed. A transfer of ownership would render the current environmental review ineligible for completion (and the project ineligible for the funds).

The potential tenants for the Yellow Barn structure include a business which makes Windsor Chairs. The tenants would have a retail component, be from the local economy, and have a sense of place. The Yellow Barn will retain its current aesthetic on the road side. A loading dock will be included on the rail side. The determination was made that the Yellow Barn is eligible for the National Historic Register (there are actually two barns inside the structure). The project management is not certain as to whether they will pursue the certification.

The new structure would have roof solar panels and they hope to use a closed-loop geo-thermal system for heating/cooling. The structure will be an example of environmental sustainability. The project is currently

estimated to cost approximately 10.6 million. They are focused on having a lease rate that can be sustained by local companies.

Additionally, a review discovered that the pole barns which attach to the Yellow Barn should be removed due to their deteriorating condition (current snow load may accomplish demolition).

Alison Low also verified that the Town Plan will expire in September of this year. She suggested that the action steps have either time frames or categories such as “short term, mid-range, and long term.” Possible mile stones and resources should also be included.

Joyce Mandeville made the motion to support the Better Connections grant which was previously approved by a separate email vote. Ken Davis seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

Jim Lewis made the motion to hold a May 14, 2019 Public Hearing for the amendment to the zoning boundary district in Tax Map 5, Lots 62.4, 62.3, 62.2, 62.1 and part of 63 from Compact Residential to Highway Mixed Use and for the statutory change to the Group Home language in the Zoning Bylaw. Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor.

Ken Davis made the motion to nominate Kristen Leahy for the position of Zoning Administrator for three years and to make the recommendation to the Select Board. Joyce Mandeville seconded the motion. All members were in favor. The nomination and recommendation will be forwarded to the Select Board.

The owner of The Scale House, Sven Olson, is interested in converting two parking spaces on Main Street into a parklet. The parklet would house additional outside seating for The Scale House. Mr. Olson provided a possible Parklet Ordinance for the consideration of the Planning Commission. Parklets are utilized in Montpelier and are being introduced in Burlington. The Commission reviewed the ordinance and other supporting information (attached).

The initial response was that this would be a removal of two parking spots in a location where parking is already limited. Ken Davis felt that this would not negatively impact on passing freight or log trucks as they are already contending with parked cars which have a similar space constraint. Jim Lewis would want to hear what other businesses think about the proposal. The intersection in front of Positive Pie might be a better location or North Main Street. Dave Gross felt that there would be safety concerns generated by the busy street. Other concerns included aesthetics and the impact on the storm run-off.

The Zoning Administrator suggested that a trial weekend or two (a pop-up approach) could be utilized before adopting an ordinance. Another suggestion included an update to the seating at the park near the swinging bridge (tables with umbrellas). The Commission did not vote on whether or not they support the proposal. They directed the Zoning Administrator to forward the concerns and the positive aspects to the Select Board (with the supporting information).

The Commission conveyed the following concerns to the Select Board:

- Loss of parking when the parking is currently not always adequate;
- Safety issues with the sight lines on the road;
- Safety issues with additional congestion on the sidewalk;

- Impact on the storm water run-off after rain events;
- Impact on other businesses adjacent to the location;
- Remuneration for the space;
- Liability concerns for the business; and
- Major thoroughfares are typically not utilized in other towns when parklets are allowed.

The Commission saw the following positive aspects:

- If the space could be utilized by the public during the day, it would be a pleasant addition of open space to the Village Center.
- The concept could be a benefit for the future Rail Trail plans (especially with additional visitors on bikes or walking).
- Perhaps this concept could be implemented at another location in town.

The editing of the 2014 Town Plan framework will continue in the April meeting. Due to Hazen's Middle School concert, the next meeting of the Hardwick Planning Commission will be on Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 pm.

The motion to adjourn was made by Ken Davis and seconded by Joyce Mandeville. All were in favor.

Board adjourned at 8:20 pm. ~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA