

**Meeting Minutes for Hardwick Downtown Commission  
Birdsong Beer & Wine, Hardwick  
Monday, September 20, 2021, 9 a.m.**

Present: Shari Cornish, Emily Hershberger, Bethany Dunbar, Gary Michaels, Sandy Scott, Tobin Porter, Katie Tandy

Item #1: Motion to approve minutes from last meeting by Gary, seconded by Tobin.

Item #2: The map of the proposed downtown area is not yet available. Shari submitted our proposal to include the motel. We hope this will be ready to work on next month.

Item #3: Forming a non-profit

- The Select Board has set aside \$2500 in funding to cover the fees involved with getting our organization set up.
- Names suggested:
  - HIVE: Hardwick Intentionally Vibrant Evolution
  - HOPE: Hardwick Organizing People for (Everything)
  - HIP: Hardwick Industries & People (offers opportunity for use of HIP HIP Hooray! in marketing)
  - HDC: Hardwick Development Commission
  - HAPI: Hardwick Area People & Industry
  - Further discussion tabled for next meeting - will have whiteboard for brainstorming
- Shari spoke with the director of NEK Chamber, who has offered to write a letter of recommendation for our Downtown Designation application.
- Shari will work on bylaws & articles of incorporation, using established language from other organizations and will send out her draft to the rest of the commission for comments.

Question about Municipal Grant deadline - November 1st; this grant will pay for Alison Lowe's work on our application, and Alison is pursuing this grant. No action needed by the commission.

- All in agreement that the non-profit should be a public benefit corporation/501c3 (as opposed to a mutual benefit corporation).
- Street address should be the town offices (Shari will confirm that this is okay).
- We will apply for a PO Box for mailing purposes. Tobin will inquire at post office.

Question from Gary - When do we stop being considered a commission? Shari says this occurs after we achieve downtown designation and non-profit status.

Item #4: Projects Ongoing

- Pedestrian Bridge:

- John Jewett has been working on ironing out various issues with NVDA funding requirements.
  - Shari hopes to have the town put in a new sign for the end of the bridge, explaining the project.
  - Design is not finalized but will be some type of suspension bridge, to maintain the historic look.
  - A potential grant from VoRec (\$700,000) could cover the last portion of funding needed for the bridge, along with wayfinding and bike stations around town.
- The first Buffalo Mountain Co-op had a successful first public informational meeting about their potential purchase and move.
    - The vote will take place in October, with an announcement by November 1.
    - Plans for renovations of the Village Market building that will benefit the town include an accessible bathroom and a new, more accessible entryway.
    - Bethany mentioned a “Little Fridge” could be installed at the larger Co-op location and that there are grant possibilities entailed.
      - A Little Fridge, similar to the Little Free Pantry in East Hardwick, offers a place for community members to pick up fresh food and meals for free, anytime. Unlike Food Pantry, no applications are necessary.
      - Shari suggests that the Co-op might approach the Food Pantry to find out if they’d be interested in moving into the Co-op’s current space.
      - Emily says that the Co-op has been approached by someone interested in opening a teen center.
      - The current space has accessibility issues, including a step up from the sidewalk. At this point in the discussion, Shari informs us that sidewalk work will not be included in the 2022 road work project.
        - Discussion: Downtown Designation will help town access funding for sidewalks. Being able to work on sidewalks and road simultaneously could save money.
- Bethany suggests that we invite the new town manager to our next meeting. Shari will extend the invitation to David Upson.
- Shari invites commission members to join her at a Downtown Retreat in Montpelier this Wednesday 11-3. Retreat is offered through the ACCD. They also hold bi-weekly calls, and anyone who is interested in joining this should ask Shari for the link.
- Katie confirmed that the Fall Festival Parade has been cancelled. However, events are still being planned for October 2nd.
    - AWARE craft fair
    - CAE cider pressing
    - Yard sale
    - Historical Society barbecue
    - How can downtown businesses participate? Passport? Sales & specials?

- How can we help promote this Fall Festival?
  - Katie will collect information about happenings, to be printed on a small flyer and distributed through town.
  - Businesses can share on social media.
  - Katie willing to create a Facebook Page for the Downtown Commission, in order to have a central location for promoting the Fall Festival events.

Secretary left meeting prior to adjournment.

Next meeting scheduled for Monday, October 18, 2021, at 9 a.m. at Birdsong.

Minutes submitted by Sandy Scott, September 21, 2021.