

**Meeting Minutes for Hardwick Downtown Commission  
Birdsong Beer & Wine  
Monday, October 10, 2022, 9 a.m.**

Present: Heather Carrington, Bethany Dunbar, Katie Tandy, David (Opie) Upson, Shari Cornish, Gary Michaels, Tracy Martin, Emily Hershberger, Darcie McCann, Sandy Scott, Tobin Porter

Gary motioned to approve minutes from last meeting, Bethany seconded; motion passed.

Heather's agenda is to get details about the proposed non-profit organization and proposal to Select Board squared away.

\*Please note that materials discussed in this meeting are linked at the end of these minutes.

**Item #1 - Downtown Designation materials**

- Proposed bylaws will be reviewed by the town attorney.
- Staffing needs are anticipated to be met by the town's community development coordinator - a shared position, to be paid for 10 hours of work per week by the Downtown organization. Staff will not be required in the bylaws, in case funding is unavailable at any point.
- Gary suggests adding "vehicular" to goals, in order to cover all modes of transportation.
- Bethany motions to approve bylaws as written, to present to the Select Board; Shari seconded; motion approved.
  
- Revised downtown boundaries
  - Heather advises against including the Health Center
    - Downtown transportation funds will be eligible for parcels that connect to the designated downtown, so it is not necessary to extend the boundaries that far. It will be difficult to argue for including that parcel, due to the distance from the rest of the proposed downtown. Including the Health Center would necessitate including a number of residential parcels.
  - We will keep the Dental Center in the proposed map, along with all of the area north of the rail trail.
  - There will be opportunities in the future to expand boundaries, if desired. The Downtown Designation must be renewed every 8 years. There will also be opportunities to apply for neighborhood development areas.
  - Atkins Field will continue to be an important piece of the proposal - this is the parcel we are all willing to fight for.
  - Gary motions to accept the proposed map, Sandy seconds; motion is approved.
  
- Community Reinvestment Agreement
  - Bethany motions to approve this agreement, Tobin seconds; motion approved.
  - Discussion of list of organizations & businesses to invite to be partners/allies
    - The list of stakeholders presented to Heather in the spring can be used as the basis for outreach.
    - Opie recommends adding the Legion as a stakeholder.
    - Heather may ask for assistance from commission members in speaking with potential partners & allies.

- Discussion of budgetary needs will be postponed till next meeting.
- The Select Board will appoint board and staff liaisons to the future Downtown organization; these liaisons will probably be Shari and Opie, to begin.
- Review of Draft of 5 Year Plan
  - 1. Design
  - 2. Economic Vitality
  - 3. Promotion
  - 4. Organization & participation in statewide Downtown Program
  - Gary suggests including regular communication with partners as an part of the plan.
  - Emily motions to approve the draft to present to the Select Board, Tobin seconds; motion approved.
  - Heather and Shari will make sure that all materials are shared with the Select Board prior to their meeting on the 20th, when Heather will present the proposal for approval.
- Board members (for the Downtown organization) will be appointed at our next meeting.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be drafted and presented to the town for written confirmation of agreements between the organization and town about shared resources, use of town space, etc.

Item #2: Vote on organization name and mission statement

- Shari shared suggestions for both name and mission statement via email prior to meeting, and commission members indicated their preferences.
- Discussion of those choices led to the choice of Hardwick Downtown Partnership as an organization name.
- Emily motions to approve this name, Gary seconds; motion approved.
- Bethany suggests that we use “Heart of Hardwick” as a tagline in communications & marketing.
- Discussion of mission statements led to some edits, with the following language decided upon:
 

“The Hardwick Downtown Partnership provides leadership to support the economic, social, recreational, and cultural vitality of downtown Hardwick.”

  - Gary motions to approve this mission statement, Katie seconds; motion approved.

Item #3: Darcie McCann, director of the Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce, discussion of efforts on behalf of the NEK Chamber to take over Heart of Vermont website (site formerly run by Heart of Vermont Chamber) and grant funding procured by Lamoille Housing Partnership (LHP)

- Darcies application for grant funding to revamp the Heart Vermont website was denied, but she is still interested in finding a way to bring the website up to date, as it continues to receive hits on the order of hundreds per week.
- LHP has a USDA Community Facilities Grant that is running up against a deadline. (This deadline date is unknown to anyone present.)
- LHP hired a marketing consultant, Ken Parker, who presented an early draft of a marketing plan that has been found lacking by this group.
- LHP wants to hold a business summit to work on a marketing plan for the greater Hardwick area and is asking Downtown Commission to partner with them on this project.
- The proposed date of the summit is December 2.
- There is a need for partnership between downtown Hardwick and LHP in order to create a unified message and access grant funds.
- There should be a collaborative effort between this group, Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, NEK Chamber, and town of Hardwick to present the “face” of Hardwick.
- Darcie is interested in partnering with Ken Parker to work toward an improved marketing plan, and Ken has expressed to Opie an interest in working more closely with the town to do this work.
- It is decided that this group is unable to commit to a partnership until we have realized incorporation as a 501(c)(3) and Downtown Designation is approved.
- Heather thinks that March might be a reasonable goal for committing to work with LHP on a business summit. It might be possible in January, but it is expected that the first board meeting of the Hardwick Downtown Partnership will take place in January or February.
- Question - Could Jim Lovinsky (LHP) find a way to employ Heather and Darcie under the umbrella of the USDA grant?

Next meeting will be at Birdsong Beer & Wine on Monday, November 21, at 9 am.

Materials presented and voted on:

[Select Board Resolution](#)

[Hardwick Downtown Bylaws \(DRAFT\)](#)

[Downtown Designation Boundary Map](#)

[Downtown Community Reinvestment Agreement \(DRAFT\)](#)

[5-Year Strategic Plan \(DRAFT\)](#)