



Manager's Report

- Communications with an installer (Brevin Systems) to discuss installation work of the Network Hardware.
- Friends of the Jeudevine requested a letter of support for their CRRP Grant Application.
- Fire Department Ladder/Pumper Truck repair....or not?
- Two future grant application opportunities; Better Connections program This would be used for designation village center master plan for E. Hardwick (NVDA offered assistance in applying for this) max request is 75K (67.5K with a 10% match), and Downtown Transportation grant for additional funding for the Pedestrian Bridge max request is 200K.
- Bridge meeting with SE Group to discuss custom features for the bridge i.e., lighting, width decking...etc. SE Group will provide us with a spreadsheet to finalize those decisions which will move us closer to being able to order the new bridge.

DWU

12/15/22

Memorandum

To: Hardwick Select Board
From: Heather Carrington, CCDS
Date: December 15, 2022
Re: Hardwick Downtown Designation

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to present the final documents for Select Board review and approval for completion of the Hardwick downtown designation application.

Approval Items

1. Memorandum of Understanding between Town of Hardwick and the Hardwick Downtown Partnership:

The Memorandum of Understanding delineates the responsibilities of the two parties and memorializes the services that the Town can expect in exchange for the funding that is being provided. The list of Hardwick Downtown Partnership responsibilities is based on the goals of the 5-year strategic plan. The full 5-year strategic plan adopted by the Hardwick Downtown Partnership board has been included in your packet for further background. The strategic plan further delineates the specific tactics that the downtown organization will utilize to meet the stated goals.

This first MOU covers FY23 and FY24 with funding already in place through the \$10,000 Town ARPA allocation and accommodates the mid-year start of the Hardwick Downtown Partnership. The ARPA funds will be divided to provide \$5,000 for FY23 and \$5,000 for FY24. These funds will be used to support the part-time executive director position which is envisioned as a shared-staffing model with the Town, potentially in combination with the part-time Town Community Development Coordinator position. In the future, an MOU should be negotiated and signed annually prior to the July 1st start of the fiscal year. The annual cycle allows for adjustments to the responsibilities and funding amount as needed.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Select Board approval of the Memorandum of Understanding.

2. Resolution to Commit Water/Wastewater Reserves to Downtown Redevelopment:

As part of the application submission, the Town is required to provide evidence that the municipality has dedicated a portion of any unallocated reserves for both the wastewater and drinking water systems, adequate to accommodate future growth in the Downtown. The municipality must show they have reviewed the anticipated growth for the Downtown and base the allocation of reserves on that estimate. The resolution to commit reserves document included for Select Board approval includes a list of anticipated development. The dedication of reserves must be made by formal action by the legislative body of the municipality. Evidence of these dedications must be included in the application for designation.

A resolution to commit reserves has been included in the Select Board materials for consideration. The resolution delineates the projected downtown developments and the associated water and wastewater capacity required for downtown revitalization.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Select Board approval of the Resolution to Commit Water/Wastewater Reserves to Downtown Redevelopment.

Next Steps in Establishing Hardwick Downtown Designation:

The application for downtown designation will be submitted by the end of December for consideration by the Vermont Downtown Development Board at their January 23rd meeting. The consultant and executive officers of the Hardwick Downtown Partnership board will attend the meeting to present the proposed designation and answer questions.

**Town of Hardwick, Vermont
&
Hardwick Downtown Partnership, Inc.**

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

I. INTRODUCTION

This memorandum of understanding (MOU) is entered into between the Town of Hardwick, Vermont, hereafter called the “Town”, and Hardwick Downtown Partnership, Inc., hereafter called the “Downtown Partnership”.

II. BACKGROUND

The Vermont Downtown Program, operated through the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), recognizes and encourages local efforts to revitalize Vermont’s traditional downtowns. Downtown revitalization is an ongoing process to improve a community’s vitality and livability. Downtown designation provides access to resources and services to help affiliated or “designated” downtown organizations preserve and revitalize historic downtowns and nurture strong communities.

III. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Vermont Downtown Program utilizes the Main Street Four Point Approach® and requires the establishment and maintenance of a non-profit organization that works in partnership with the public and private sectors to plan and implement a comprehensive downtown strategy. The Hardwick Downtown Partnership, established in 2022, serves as the non-profit, professional downtown management organization required for the Hardwick Downtown Designation. The Downtown Partnership collaborates with the Town to enhance the parties’ collective ability to develop a comprehensive downtown strategy that fosters vibrancy and community pride and encourages the growth of small businesses, employment and income opportunities, tax revenues, property values and general quality of life for all. This MOU delineates the roles and responsibilities of the Downtown Partnership and the Town in reference to the Vermont Downtown Designation.

IV. SCOPE OF SERVICES

In keeping with the Main Street Four Point Approach, the scope of services will include design, economic vitality, promotion, and organization for the Designated Downtown District. Pursuant to the applicable authorities and in the furtherance of the shared goals of the parties to carry out the purposes of this MOU expeditiously and economically, the parties do hereby agree to the following:

- a. Responsibilities of the Hardwick Downtown Partnership include the following goals and strategies (specific tactics outlined in the Downtown Partnership 5-year strategic plan shall further guide the work):

- i. **Design**

- Goal 1: Improve Downtown Hardwick’s infrastructure by acting as an ally with the Town providing energy, input and staff time to address bicycle, pedestrian

and vehicular access, wayfinding, parking, lighting, streetscaping, accessibility, connectivity and other infrastructure issues that may arise.

The Downtown Partnership will employ the following strategies to achieve this goal:

1. Advocate for and support the Town efforts to provide safe, accessible and convenient pedestrian and bicycle networks to encourage their use.
2. Improve quality and connectedness of downtown public spaces.
3. Maintain communication with downtown stakeholders to identify infrastructure issues and needs.

Goal 2: Address high-visibility vacancies in Downtown Hardwick by leveraging available State and Federal resources.

The Downtown Partnership will employ the following strategies to achieve this goal:

1. Serve as a liaison between the Town and property owners seeking to redevelop or adaptively reuse downtown properties.
2. Provide direct outreach to owners of vacant or underutilized properties.

ii. Economic Vitality

Goal 1: Bring State and Federal funding to Downtown Hardwick by writing grants and exploring other funding sources for Town priority projects.

1. Develop a strategic, methodical, and deliberate approach to leveraging grant funds.

Goal 2: Maintain and encourage downtown vibrancy by providing a “one-stop-shop” for business and property owners seeking information and technical assistance with accessing available downtown incentives.

1. Cultivate downtown staff familiarity with downtown incentive programs, benefits, and eligible projects.
2. Identify, develop, and deploy both web-based and hard copy promotional materials to familiarize eligible property owners, businesses, and developers with available downtown incentives.
3. Educate downtown stakeholders about available downtown incentives.

Goal 3: Support downtown grand list growth and infill development to augment the local tax base.

1. Work with Town staff and commissions, housing experts, developers, and residents to develop downtown housing goals.
2. Identify desired business and employment types to ensure access to needed goods, services, and jobs in downtown Hardwick.
3. Support exploration of options for changes to zoning to encourage infill development, creation of downtown housing, and business growth.

iii. Promotion

Goal: Promote Downtown Hardwick as a desirable place to live, start and grow a business, dine, shop, and recreate.

1. Work to create a positive image and a sense of community pride in Hardwick's downtown.
2. Encourage commercial activity and expanded foot traffic to support downtown businesses.

iv. Organization

Goal: Maintain the Designated Downtown status through a professional organization which regularly evaluates and reports on goals, progress, and organizational metrics.

1. Assist the Town to maintain the Downtown Designation status.
2. Facilitate ongoing communication between stakeholder groups and the Town.
3. Evaluate and update the strategic plan on an annual basis.
4. Monitor and report to the Town and the public on strategic plan progress annually.

b. Responsibilities of the Town

1. Appointed representatives of the Town staff and Select Board will serve on the Downtown Partnership board and will provide primary points of contact as liaisons between the Downtown Partnership and the Town.
2. Provide funding support for the Downtown Partnership as detailed under the heading "Funding" (Section VI).
3. Staff attendance at state Designated Downtown meetings as appropriate.
4. Employ a part-time Community Development Coordinator who will coordinate and partner with the Downtown Partnership.
5. Develop, share and distribute informational documents listing available resources and incentives for businesses and developers.
6. Collect and maintain records of community reinvestment and ongoing development projects specifically private and public investment in each of the following categories: façade renovations, new construction, public improvement projects, other building rehabilitations and new housing units.
7. Compile and serve as a clearinghouse for Town demographic information.
8. Engage in business recruitment and retention activities targeted to strengthen economic assets and diversify the economic base.
9. Communicate information about downtown events with impacted businesses and residents.
10. Assist with the development of short and long term economic and community development plans, as well as the gathering of information and preparation of studies, reports, and recommendations to achieve such goals.

V. DURATION OF MOU

The period of this MOU shall be from January 1, 2023 through June 30th, 2024 unless terminated in writing by the Parties prior to the expiration. This initial duration accommodates the mid-fiscal year establishment of the organization. Future agreement durations shall align with the Town and Downtown Partnership fiscal year.

VI. FUNDING

In recognition of the services required, Town funding for the Downtown Partnership shall be allocated as follows:

FY23 \$5,000 Municipal ARPA funds

FY24 \$5,000 Municipal ARPA funds

(\$10,000 ARPA downtown allocation approved at July 13, 2022 Select Board meeting)

VII. MODIFICATION AND TERMINATION

The terms and conditions of this MOU may be modified only upon prior written agreement by the Parties. Any Party may terminate this MOU in whole or in part by giving thirty (30) calendar days in advance written notice to the other Party.

VIII. NOTICE

The following individuals are the contact points for each Party under this MOU:

David Upson
Town Manager
20 Church Street
Hardwick, VT 05843
Phone: 802.472.5971
Email: david.upson@hardwickvt.gov

Shari Cornish
Chairperson, Board of Directors
Hardwick Downtown Partnership
Phone: 323.422.5887
Email: shari.cornish@hardwickvt.gov

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

The Parties shall comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations whether now in force or hereafter enacted or promulgated.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto have executed this MOU as of the dates set for the below as follows:

TOWN OF HARDWICK

David Upson: _____ Date: _____
Town Manager

HARDWICK DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

Shari Cornish: _____ Date: _____
Chairperson, Board of Directors

DRAFT