

Hardwick Planning Commission
December 13, 2022
Zoom Meeting
Minutes

HPC Members Present: Joyce Mandeville; Shari Cornish; Ken Davis; Michael Haveson; and Dave Gross, Chair

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator; Tracy Martin, Community Development Coordinator; Bill Chidsey, Facilities Manager at Buffalo Mountain Market; Cheryl Michaels; Meredith Holch; and Erich Stephens.

Absent: Jim Lewis

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:32 pm. Joyce Mandeville moved to approve the agenda as written. Michael Haveson seconded. All members were in favor. Shari Cornish moved to approve the November 8, 2022 meeting minutes as written. Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor.

Updates from the Community Development Coordinator:

Tracy Martin, the Community Development Coordinator, provided an overview of the Connector Loop Proposal which was created by Local Motion. The Town of Hardwick pursued a 2020 Better Connections grant which sought to bring cyclists from the LVRT to the Hardwick Downtown with access over the pedestrian bridge. The grant was not funded but the need has now increased with the impending opening of the entire LVRT (*February 1, 2023 is the current date of complete access*). Local Motion agreed to provide technical assistance and to examine the pedestrian and bike traffic on North Main Street, South Main Street and Brush Street.

A 24 page report was delivered to the Planning Commission. The Commission will review the report in January /February 2023. Findings on the feasibility of the implementation will be forwarded to the Select Board for their consideration. Local Motion has agreed to meet with the HPC to answer any questions. Dave requested that Commission members read the report and send their feedback to the zoning office. (*Paper copies are available – ZA*).

Tracy Martin also reviewed the possibility of applying for a Downtown Transportation fund grant. The grant is due on January 31, 2023 and Hardwick will (hopefully) receive their downtown designation on January 23, 2023. Heather Carrington, the consultant who has provided assistance on the Downtown Designation pursuit, has offered to write the grant proposal. Ms. Carrington has recently joined the Rural Economic Development Initiative which assists municipalities with grant writing functions. Ms. Carrington recommended focusing the grant application on money for the pedestrian bridge project.

Motion: To support the Downtown Transportation Fund grant program application for the Pedestrian Bridge if the Select Board votes to support said application.

Ken Davis made the motion and Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor.

Other Grant Summary: Tracy also has the opportunity to write a Better Connections Grant (due date February 17, 2023). NVDA has offered their assistance with this grant funding application. The current concept is to utilize the grant funding to hire a consultant to create a master plan for the East Hardwick Village Center. East Hardwick has a Local Motion study; a Planning Commission sidewalk safety audit; and a scoping study for a

LVRT trailhead. The East Hardwick Fire District is in the midst of village planning which could potentially be incorporated into the master plan. If East Hardwick receives a Better Connections grant, then the Village Center becomes eligible for Downtown Transportation Grant monies.

Cheryl Michaels from East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization (EHNO) reported that EHNO wishes to move forward on sidewalk, drainage and safety issues. EHNO supports Tracy's concept and the organization may have funds which could be utilized for matching resources.

Motion: To support the Better Connections grant application for the creation of a village master plan in East Hardwick if the Select Board votes to support said application.

Shari Cornish made the motion. Michael Haveson provided the second. All members were in favor of the motion.

Cheryl Michaels expressed her gratitude for the Hardwick Planning Commission.

Phase II:

Bill Chidsey, the Facilities Manager at the Buffalo Mountain Market, joined the meeting to discuss Mill Street access and parking. In particular, Bill wished to report that the Hardwick Development Review Board had amended the previous condition on the 91 Mill Street property. This condition had denied access to the parking area from the eastern edge of the property. The Buffalo Mountain Market will be creating two access points with a one-way flow of traffic. Pedestrian paths will be delineated and barricaded from vehicles.

Bill also noted that the eventual location of the sidewalk currently includes the GRACE sign and the former Brochu Garage sign post. He inquired about the construction of the sidewalk near the Buffalo Mountain Market. Any construction within the town's 25 foot ROW will need to be coordinated with the Town Manager's office. Dave Gross recommended that Bill speak to David Upson.

Bill would like to build a coalition to improve pedestrian safety on Mill Street. He believes that the green space at the Buffalo Mountain Market will become a destination for families due to its access to the Lamoille River. The Hardwick Planning Commission will communicate with the Buffalo Mountain Market as plans are in process.

Bill Chidsey expressed his gratitude for the Hardwick Planning Commission.

Motion: N/A

The Planning Commission will review the Local Motion report and then review the Phase I and II recommendations. There may be the need for new recommendations from the Local Motion report. The HPC will also make note of which tasks have been accomplished and/or abandoned due to extenuating circumstances.

Updates from Commission Members or the Zoning Administrator:

The ability to have a completely virtual meeting will end on January 15, 2023. The HPC will need to move to a hybrid version of their meeting. The current technology in place at the Memorial Building will need to be improved to allow for better audio connections.

Motion: Ken Davis made the motion to conclude the hearing at 8:00 pm. Joyce Mandeville seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

The meeting ended at 8:00 pm.

The next HPC meeting will be at 6:30 pm on January 10, 2023 by Zoom.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA