

**Meeting Minutes for Hardwick Downtown Partnership - Quarterly Meeting
Memorial Building
Tuesday, November 14, 2023, 9 a.m.**

Present: Shari Cornish, Gary Michaels, Bethany Dunbar, Emily Hershberger, Tobin Porter, Katie Tandy, Sandy Scott, Tracy Martin, Nora Lakhani, Jenn MacLean

Item 1: Approve minutes from May meeting - Gary motions to accept, Tobin seconds, motion passed.

Item 2: Jenn MacLean presents Small Business Saturday proposal

- Main Street Crawl, discussed prior to meeting with several Main Street merchants, will involve a punch card that shoppers can get stamped by each participating business they visit on Small Business Saturday (November 25, 2023). A certain number of stamps will earn an entry in a drawing for one of three prize baskets. The prizes are being donated by participating businesses. Abrah Griggs is on board to design the card and an advertisement. She is donating some of her time and work, and her discounted fee will be \$100.
- There are nine businesses on Main Street that will participate: Clip Joint & Co., Flower Basket, Galaxy Bookshop, Cork & Fork, Whistle, Village Restaurant, Positive Pie, Birdsong, and Front Seat Coffee. These businesses will be asked to donate \$10 each.
- Advertising in the Caledonian Record, Hardwick Gazette, and News & Citizen will result in advertising costs of \$670.
- Discussion: Let's leverage the HDP's Front Porch Forum account and Facebook page and sending press releases to local papers for free advertising. Cut down paid ads to one paper - News & Citizen?
- Sandy makes a motion to support the Main Street Crawl with \$200 toward marketing, with mention of HDP as a sponsor. Gary seconds. Motion carries.
- We will ask Jenn & Abrah to share press release(s) and ad to share more widely, via HDP and our own businesses.

Item 3: Treasurer's Report

- Current balance is just under \$15,000 (official statement unavailable due to bookkeeper's illness)
- We have received our first payment from the Downtown Vibrancy Grant, for \$11,250. The second payment, also for \$11,250, will arrive in January following our submission of a midterm report. The third payment, of \$2,500, will be delivered in July after our final report is submitted.

Item 4: Petitions for Appropriation Request

- We need 81 more signatures by the beginning of January.
- Bethany will take the petitions to collect signatures when she is collecting signatures for the Center for an Agricultural Economy.

Item 5: Hiring for Executive Director position

- We have received two local applications and one more person who expressed interest.
- Do we need to advertise further? So far, we have not spent any money on advertising this position.
- Tobin will post the job to Front Porch Forum and Indeed, giving a deadline for applications of December 1.

- Tobin, Bethany, Emily, and Shari will form the hiring committee and will coordinate further via email.

Item 6: Follow-up on Communities Caring for Canopy Grant

- There is no match required for this grant, and it is targeted toward underserved, small, lower income communities, of which Hardwick is one.
- There are environmental and health benefits to having more trees in a downtown area.
- The application is due January 8, 2024 - Tracy has already begun filling out the application form.
- Shari has scheduled a meeting with Ceilidh and Jeff of EcoTone to consult about an estimate for the purchase and planting of trees. This meeting will be held at the Memorial Building on Monday, November 27, at 11 a.m. Please attend, if you are available.
- The Conservation Commission will be invited to attend, also, in hopes of collaborating with them on this project.
- Suggestion to include one year of maintenance and advice to landowners on the care of trees in the grant proposal.

Item 7: Marketing and Promotions

- Our website is live! Hardwickdowntown.org
- We need to hone in on the purpose of and audience for this website.
- The site needs more photos of downtown - please share if you have any!
- We'd like to see a map and calendar page added.
- Emily suggests consulting with Mary Admasian for marketing help, down the road. Mary has done a lot of work with Montpelier Alive and is also working with the Buffalo Mountain Market.

Item 8: Downtown Beautification

Banners:

- Abrah designed "Four Seasons" of designs, using different color palettes on the original banner design.
- Overall, the designs are met with approval, but we'd like to ask if the Winter design could be given more contrast, to make the word HARDWICK more visible.
- Green Screen Graphics quoted \$1930.50 for 15 banners (we may only need 13) and could be ready in about a week.
- The money is available in the Downtown Vibrancy Grant, as this was included in a line for marketing.
- Tobin makes a motion to purchase one set of banners (design TBD, approval will happen via email after Abrah comes back with a modified Winter design). Emily seconds the motion, and the motion carries.

Holiday Tree

- Could be put up next to the bridge on Main Street.
- Shari will pursue this idea. Perhaps a tree could be donated by a local farm.
- Lynn Delerichelier has offered space and an outlet at the Village Restaurant - a bit farther from the bridge.
- Consideration will have to be made for wind/stability of the tree. We would like a permanent spot for holiday tree included in the park design.

Item 9: Other business

- Would Hardwick like to participate in an Airstream Rally next summer?

- This is an event organized by an Airstream Club and does not require space for camping, water, sewer, or electric hookups.
- It is a weekend long event - campers are parked on a Friday, and the public is invited to tour the campers Saturday and Sunday.
- Atkins Field might be an ideal spot for this to take place. Shari will check with Bethany, who had to leave early.
- We are in support of putting Hardwick in the running for hosting next summer's event. (This does not mean that we are going to host, only that we are willing to be considered as a spot by the Airstream Club.)
- The old bank building and gas station lot on Mill Street are up for sale.
 - The Preservation Trust is doing a building assessment tomorrow (November 15)
 - Possible uses include first floor retail, second floor hostel (VT Huts has expressed interest), and third floor housing.
 - The asking price will need to come down for any of this to move forward.
 - Potentially, sometime in the future the HDP might be involved in purchasing the gas station parcel, which could be turned into municipal parking. Permits could be sold, generating income to pay for the purchase. EV charging stations could be installed.
- Tracy shares that the Planning Commission wants to apply for a transportation grant to study pedestrian infrastructure along Mill Street and through the intersection with South Main Street, up to the Civic Standard.
 - The HDP board is in support of this proposal.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Next meeting will be held at the Memorial Building on Tuesday, January 30th, at 9 a.m.