

Hardwick Planning Commission
February 13, 2024
Hybrid – In Person and Via Zoom
Minutes

HPC Members Present: Joyce Mandeville (Zoom); Shari Cornish (Zoom); Larry Fliegelman; Michael Haveson (Zoom); Ken Davis; Kole (2nd Alternate) and Dave Gross, Chair

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator, Valerie Valcour, VT Department of Health

Absent: Jim Lewis (Kole assumes his vote for this meeting); Bud Stevens (1st Alternate).

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:30 pm. Ken Davis moved to approve the agenda as written. Larry Fliegelman seconded. All members were in favor. Ken Davis moved to approve the January 9, 2024 meeting minutes with a minor change to the year. Larry Fliegelman seconded. All members were in favor.

Updates from the Community Development Coordinator – Tracy Martin

Dave Gross presented the update from the CDC. The Better Connections grant had an organizational meeting on February 7, 2024. The meeting was well attended by both the State connections and the East Hardwick Steering Committee. There were four responses to the RFP for a consultant. The goal is to start in March and the work needs to be complete by 2025.

Motion: N/A

Special Presentation – Valerie Valcour, Vermont Department of Health (nurse) and the 3-4-50 program.

Valerie Valcour explained the States 3-4-50 program. This is an effort to address three behaviors

1. Lack of movement
2. Poor nutrition
3. Tobacco use

Which contribute to four conditions/diseases

1. Cancer
2. Diabetes (Type 2)
3. Stroke/Heart Disease
4. Lung Disease

Which lead to 50% of all deaths in Vermont

Hardwick is already meeting many of the program goals and the State would like to recognize the work that is being accomplished. There are sponsorships to help fund projects and programs to obtain signs and cigarette disposal containers. The Town would set their own goals. The program is essentially a quality improvement tool.

Motion: To recommend that the Town of Hardwick apply for 3-4-50 partnership at the Gold Level if possible.

Larry Fliegelman made the motion and Kole seconded. All members were in favor.

The Zoning Administrator will complete the application and forward it with the HPC recommendation to the Select Board for their review.

Updates from the Bylaw Modernization Consultant – Heather Carrington was not scheduled to attend this meeting.

In September, the Zoning Administrator proposed adding the following two permitted uses to the Industrial zoning district:

1. Accessory Structure less than or equal to 500 sq. ft. (to a Conditional Use).
2. Addition to an existing Conditional Use that is less than or equal to 500 square feet.

At the time, the Planning Commission provided general support for the proposal. The Development Review Board supported the change at their October hearing.

Motion: To include the proposed Industrial District changes as presented in the draft version of the Bylaw Modernization update.

Kole made the motion and Shari Cornish seconded. All members were in favor.

The Zoning Administrator presented the new category of Natural Burial Ground and advised the Planning Commission to address this possible development situation.

The following bylaw changes were suggested:

1. Add a definition for Natural Burial Ground from the State Statute (“a cemetery maintained using ecological land management practices and without the use of vaults for the burial of unembalmed human remains or human remains embalmed using nontoxic embalming fluids and that rest in either no burial container or in a nontoxic, nonhazardous, plant-derived burial container or shroud.
2. Add Natural Burial Ground as a Conditional Use to the districts with Cemetery as a Conditional Use : Village Neighborhood, Highway Mixed Use, Compact Residential, and Rural Residential.
3. Make Cemeteries and Natural Burial Grounds prohibited in the Flood Hazard Area Overlay
4. Add Natural Burial Ground as a Conditional Use in the Forest Reserve district.

Motion: To include the proposed Natural Burial Ground and Cemetery changes to the draft version of the Bylaw Modernization update.

Joyce Mandeville made the motion and Shari Cornish seconded. All members were in favor.

Phases I and II:

A list of recommendations was made the Town Manager. These six recommendations are the remaining items from the 2020 findings of the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Task Force and the Hardwick Planning Commission.

1. Repainting the crosswalks in a high visibility color – **Town Manager, David Upson, has requested that Tom Fadden complete this task. The crosswalk by the Co-op will also be repainted.**
2. Install a speed sign before the village (prior to the Glenside intersection). **The speed sign is currently broken. The location near the Co-op has better sun exposure for the solar charging aspect.**
3. Install signage to direct cars to alternate parking. **The State of Vermont will be placing wayfinding signage to direct cars to the Creamery Road parking area.**
4. Educate younger riders about sidewalk and crosswalk safety (outside the Select board jurisdiction) **The local bike program is open to adding information into their presentations.**

5. Install a crosswalk near the bridge on Main Street (north or south?) **The height of the sidewalks in this area precludes a crosswalk that is accessible to all. This may need to be further examined and planned versus quickly accomplished. The need for a crosswalk in this area is acknowledged.**
6. Stop, wait, and wave signs. **Again, the Town Manager has requested that Tom Fadden complete this task.**

Motion: N/A

Short Term Rentals:

The suggestion was made to table the conversation and gather further information and data on the topic. In particular, HPC members were interested in how many towns have pursued rules for Short Term Rentals. What have been the outcomes and/or the costs (personnel hours, etc)? The suggestion was also made that a directory might be useful as the town currently lacks a motel/hotel for visitors.

Motion: N/A

Flood Hazard Area Overlay Bylaw Update:

An extensive update of the current Flood Hazard Area Overlay zoning bylaws was provided to the HPC for their consideration. The update merges the lessons from the July 2023 flooding with the language provided by the State of Vermont's model floodplain bylaw. The draft version is still being reviewed by the State of Vermont

Motion: To include the Flood Hazard Area Overlay zoning bylaw updates with minor edits in the draft version of the Bylaw Modernization Update.

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

Updates from Commission Members or the Zoning Administrator:

The Zoning Administrator reported that the Hardwick Conservation Commission will be hosting a Natural Resources Inventory meeting on Saturday, March 23 at 2 pm in the Memorial Building. The meeting will present the foundation document to help the Town plan wisely for development and protect its natural resources.

The Zoning Office has newly created surveyor and wastewater designer lists – both lists also include wetland consultants. The lists can be found on the Town website and in the Zoning Office.

Motion: N/A

Motion: To conclude the Hardwick Planning Commission Meeting.

Larry Fliegelman made the motion and Kole seconded. All members were in favor.

The meeting ended at 7:35 pm.

The next HPC meeting will be at 6:30 pm on March 12, 2024 on the 3rd Floor of the Memorial Building and via Zoom.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA