

Hardwick Planning Commission

December 9, 2025

6:30 pm

Hybrid – In-Person and Zoom options – Memorial Building – 3rd Floor

Hardwick Unified Development Bylaw Amendment Public Hearing

DRAFT Minutes

Link to HCTV Recording - <https://hctv.us/public-hearing-on-east-hardwick-zoning-bylaws-december-9-2025/>

HPC Members Present: Dave Gross, Chair; Kole; Ken Davis; Larry Fliegelman; and Gillian D’Acierno (Alternate)

HPC Members Absent: Bud Stevens (Gillian D’Acierno assumes his seat); Michael Haveson; and Jim Lewis

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator; HCTV – Lance McKenzie

Present in person: Todd Hill; Darren Richard (for Teresa Dailey); Lynn DeLaricheliere; Lynn Angebrannt; Lucian Avery; Ivan Menard; Brenda Menard; Joe Nudell; Karen Collier; Steve Collier; Norma Spaulding; Bill Richardson; Bradley Slayton (American Legion Post #7); Ed Slayton; Leesa Richardson; and Derek Richardson.

Present on Zoom: Alice Carleton, Jeremy and Leslie Michaud, and additional members of the public (not identified for the purpose of the minutes).

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:32 pm.

Hardwick Planning Commission Public Hearing:

A Presentation Slide deck was created and shown as the guiding structure of the hearing (attached as a component of the minutes). After an introduction of the Planning Commission members in attendance, Dave Gross began the review of the proposed updates. The presentation started with the Village Center Zoning District.

The background as to why the new zoning district was being recommended was provided. The new zoning district incorporates the existing Central Business District in East Hardwick and a portion of the Compact Residential area. It does not change the properties that are in the Highway Mixed Use district as the listening session in December 2024 indicated that the owners in that district were not interested in a shift to a new zoning district.

Brenda Menard inquired as to why the Molleur property on Route 16 was not in the Highway Mixed Use zoning district. This particular property has historically been in the Compact Residential district. A zoning boundary amendment could be proposed if the property owner submits a request to the Planning Commission.

Dave Gross reviewed the dimensions, permitted uses, and conditional uses in the proposed Village Center zoning district. At the conclusion of this portion of the hearing, the audience was asked if they had any additional questions. There were none. *(The Village Center Zoning District planning began with a listening session in December 2024 and incorporated several of the suggestions made by East Hardwick residents).*

The next section of the presentation covered the proposed River Corridor Overlay. Approximately 60 residents in the town would be impacted by the adoption of a River Corridor Overlay. Each property received a letter from the Zoning Office with additional information about the overlay and about the public hearing.

The official definition of the River Corridor was introduced. The impetus for this proposal is the adoption of Act 121 in 2024. This Act mandates the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to create a state-wide permitting approach to River Corridors by 2027. The mandate also includes a provision that towns may retain local control if they have implemented River Corridor Overlays. In addition, new mapping of the River Corridor is progressing and, by proposing the Overlay in Hardwick, the State prioritized the mapping in Hardwick's identified areas of concern – where the River Corridor map does not appear to match the reality on the ground (such as the downtown section of the Lamoille River).

The additional component addressed was the increase in state match for funding mitigation projects. If the Town adopts River Corridor rules, there will be an additional 5% match to local funding. This would reduce the local match to 7.5% of the cost. There are 5 elements that allow towns to maximize state funding. Hardwick currently has 4 of the 5 elements. This is the final available element. On a million-dollar project, the town would save \$50,000. With several large cost projects looming in the future (bridge repairs, etc.), this would be a financial benefit.

Ivan Menard spoke to the issue of the Town paying for mitigation projects and the impact of the proposed Overlay on property values.

Brenda Menard discussed the existing Floodplain Rules and brought information about the impact of River Corridor Easements on property values.

When a property is within the mapped Floodplain and the River Corridor, the Floodplain Rules are the overriding authority as they are more stringent and extensive.

There was extensive discussion about the flaws in the current River Corridor mapping.

Brenda Menard asked that a draft of the update of the mapping be made available online. The Zoning office will also send letters to the property owners who have changes to the mapping. Lucian Avery asked when the maps would be available. Kristen Leahy stated that she was not certain but thought that they would be available in the summer of 2026 (*Ed. The Zoning Office will be meeting with the mapping team before the holiday week to present the request for the draft and receive updates*).

Brenda Menard spoke to the high taxes that accompany property in Hardwick and stated that the River Corridor Overlay is like a handcuff for property owners. Her property is over 100 years old and has not experienced water in any of the large flooding events. She also indicated concern over the island of gravel that has accumulated on the curve next to the former Inn by the River location.

Dave Gross discussed the SLR plans that were reviewed last week. There was a Mill Pond in the location where the gravel is now deposited. The flood mitigation proposal in that area would work to address the flood velocity upstream and downstream.

Jackson Dam is being reviewed for repair or removal, and any removal would be in conjunction with channel dredging.

Leslie Michaud (Zoom) asked about the current opinion on dredging and debris in the water.

Dave Gross provided an explanation on hydrology and dredging and discussed why debris in the waterways (outside of the highly channelized downtown area) slows down the water.

Karen Collier is concerned about the status of the floodplain. She stated that dredging in the 1970s and 1980s was performed by the Army Corp of Engineers. They also installed the berm on Wolcott Street, and the granite blocks upstream of town (ice breakers). For 20-25 years there was no flooding and now, with no dredging, the sediment has filled in and we have had flooding. She also stated that she will never be convinced that occasionally dredging the river doesn't work. She purchased her house in the floodplain (on Wolcott Street – next to the Fire Station) because she thought the problem was resolved by the Army Corp work. She acknowledged that dredging and mitigation work needed to be engineered and asked about assistance with that.

Other comments were received regarding concerns about decreased value of property due to federal and state mandates and rules; large property tax bills; and rising property taxes because of the buyouts in town.

The public comment time frame will be open until the January 13, 2026 Planning Commission meeting. The HPC will be voting and reviewing the concerns from this hearing at that meeting.

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 8:15 pm.

The next HPC meeting will be at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, on the 3rd Floor of the Memorial Building.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA