

Hardwick Planning Commission
Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Task Force
January 14, 2020
Hardwick Memorial Building
Minutes

HPC Members Present: Jim Lewis; Joyce Mandeville; and Dave Gross, Chair

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator (ZA); Elizabeth Dow, Select Board Member; and Shaun Fielder, Town Manager.

Absent: Diane Grenkow and Ken Davis

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Jim Lewis moved to approve the agenda as published. Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor.

Joyce Mandeville moved to approve the November 5, 2019 meeting minutes as written. Elizabeth Dow seconded. All members were in favor. Elizabeth Dow moved to approve the December 10, 2019 meeting minutes as written. Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor.

Stakeholder interviews:

Rehair Shop (Dave Gross): The employees have permission to park behind Richard Brochu's Service station (across the street). They have 4 clients at a time – average 2 hours each. Clients park in front of shop, across the street in front of the former bank building or in the public parking lot across from the Village Market. Deliveries (FedEx or UPS) will park in the PO parking lot. Owner walks in the downtown – the crosswalks need more paint. Notices that people will dart across the street – jaywalk. Suggested a light/crosswalk sign on the crosswalk between the Clip Joint and the Laundrymat and also by the 14/15 intersection. Owner does not bike but believes that there should be a bike symbol or other indicators that the lane will be shared with bikers. Believes that the handicap parking spot in front of her shop should be away from the support cable on the telephone pole. The spot should be moved down the street toward the Clip Joint. Parking spots should be eliminated in the 14/15 intersection to assist with visibility. Bump-outs should be considered to **stop people from parking on crosswalks**. The parking spots in the North Main intersection should be kept but there should be something to control the intersection traffic. The crosswalk across from the P.O. drops you into the parking lot – should be reconsidered. Notices that vehicles speed – especially from the West. Has seen 3 accidents in front of the Post Office.

Galaxy Bookstore (Jim Lewis): Employees park on South or North Main Street. Customers may stay up to an hour – utilize 2-3 spaces on the street. Many customers visit other businesses as well. They receive complaints about parking from their customers. Special events do not have problems with parking because they are scheduled either early in the morning or in the evening. Deliveries sometimes will not stop if there is no room on the street for parking. Owners walk in the downtown – sidewalks can be slippery. Suggested that there be signs alerting pedestrians to the tilted aspect of the sidewalks. (Caution?) Crosswalks need better signage and blinking lights. Customers would like to see more bike parking and bike lanes. The owners were mixed on removing parking from the 14/15 intersection – need parking in the downtown but the intersection is not safe. Mixed on the bump-out proposal as well – difficult to plow well but would help make the crosswalks safer, especially in front of the Co-op. Leave the parking in the North Main Street intersection. Would like to see a sidewalk connecting the former bank building and the Village Market/Jiffy mart area.

Suggested that the sidewalks be leveled. Suggested that the Town purchase the former Flood zone property and install a bus parking lot.

Hardwick Gazette (Kristen Leahy):

Staff use the parking area across the swinging bridge. Customers/clients visit briefly and park across the bridge or on the street. They do not host special events. UPS/Fedex will make deliveries and will park on the sidewalk in front of the Gazette building. The staff members walk frequently in the downtown. Vehicles travel too quickly and do not stop for pedestrians in the crosswalks. The paint in the crosswalks is too faded to be seen. Vehicles traveling from the east seem to be going faster. Weekends can be like drag racing. Biking is not currently safe in the downtown – needs to have slower speeds. Staff members hear general comments consistently about the lack of pedestrian safety – “almost killed in the crosswalk” is common. The swinging bridge parking lot has recently had issues with cars double parking. Staff were not in favor of eliminating parking spots in the intersection of 14/15. They were in favor of installing bump-outs in crosswalks (like those that are near the elementary school). They were in favor of eliminating parking in the North Main Street intersection – currently pedestrians cannot be seen in the crosswalks. Inclusion of a sidewalk on the north side of Mill Street was favored. Suggestions included lowering the speed limit; Place flashing light in the crosswalks; and install a speed sign on Wolcott Street / near the Jiffy Mart. The intersection at 14/15 is very confusing. Signs are too small to impact. Parking is definitely a problem in the downtown area, especially with the addition of deliveries for businesses.

Hardwick Elementary (Kristen Leahy):

The employees (50+) park behind the school. The parents use St. Norberts for drop off and pick up. When they host special events, parking can become difficult. Deliveries are made in the small parking area near the cafeteria. School supplies and buses use the rear parking lot. Students and staff walk in the downtown. There is a good placement of crosswalks but visibility is hampered. When classes go to Hazen, staff use a member as an actual crossing guard. Co-Op crosswalk seems to be the most dangerous due to the delivery truck blockage. No concerns about the sidewalks. Several children walk to school. Principal worries about the safety in crosswalks. No comments about previous study suggestions. Feels that parking can be a problem in the downtown. When the school has extra people visiting, it can be difficult to accommodate everyone. Comment: parking is at a premium, eliminations may shift problems.

The committee/planning commission will review ideas from stakeholders at the next meeting. The ideas will be forwarded to the Road Foreman and the Police Chief for their input and then the ideas will be sent to the selectboard.

Possible Short-Term Suggestions:

- Adjust sight lines near crosswalks (adjust parking spots)
- Remove the handicap parking spot adjacent to the Post Office parking area.
- Repaint the crosswalks in a high visibility color (yellowish green?).
- Install flashing crosswalk signs.
- Add stop signs.
- Install a speed sign before the village (prior to the Glenside intersection).
- Install signage to direct cars to alternate parking.
- Add a street decal that reminds people that bikes can be in the roadway.
- Install a crosswalk between the Hardwick Inn and the Laundrymat.

- Educate younger riders about sidewalk safety.
- Make a 4-way stop at Church /North Main and install crosswalks in all 4 directions (Shaun will request input from department heads on this idea).
- Install a fence near the Village Diner to prevent people from traveling over the bank and through the intersection.
- Add a crosswalk to the Cherry Street area.
- Install bike racks at the library and in the downtown area.
- Create a designated spot for delivery trucks.

Elizabeth Dow made the motion to adjourn at 8:00 pm. Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor.

The next HPC meeting will be on February 11, 2020.

The meeting ended at 8:00 pm.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA