

Hardwick Planning Commission
June 8, 2021 - Via Zoom
Minutes

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

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator (ZA); Ran Lahav; Jan Bodendorf; Jim Kelty; and Stephanie and Mathew Best.

Absent: Jim Lewis

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:35 pm.

Joyce Mandeville moved to approve the agenda. Michael Haveson seconded. All members were in favor.

Joyce Mandeville moved to approve the May 18, 2021 meeting minutes with a minor editorial change to the date. Shari Cornish seconded. All members were in favor.

No new information regarding the proposal on Hopkins Hill (AT&T expansion) was received prior to the meeting. Chair Gross invited the attending neighbors to convey new concerns and comments to the Hardwick Planning Commission.

Jan Bodendorf – neighbor - reported that Daphne Kalmar had spoken directly to the Cloud Alliance owners and they would be willing to meet with the neighbors to discuss their concerns.

Jim Kelty – neighbor – inquired as to whether the Planning Commission had considered or discussed the points raised by Daphne Kalmar in her May 18, 2021 email. The Planning Commission had received a copy of the email but specific discussion did not occur. Several of the points in Daphne Kalmar’s email were presented by Daphne at the May 18, 2021 meeting.

Dave Gross – Chair of HPC – stated that he felt that the Commission was sympathetic with the concerns of the neighbors but cautioned that the HPC would need to form their opinion based on the Town Plan. The Town Plan does call for an increased availability of telecommunication access. Chairman Gross acknowledged that the Commission would be able to express an opinion but would not have “veto” power over the Public Utility Commission.

Jim Kelty – neighbor – reiterated his concern for the wildlife corridor surrounding the existing tower. The additional construction may negatively impact the wildlife in the area.

Matthew Best – neighbor – asked for a clarification as to why the tower was not being held to the height limit set forth by the Hardwick Unified Development Bylaws.

Dave Gross – Chair of HPC – agreed that the proposed addition of ten feet will be more exposed due to the recent logging operation surrounding the tower.

Jan Bodendorf – neighbor – inquired as to when the Environmental Court could receive an appeal of any decision. Kristen will research and respond to Jan.

Chair Dave Gross indicated to the Zoom call that the Planning Commission would be proceeding to other business for the remainder of the meeting. Neighbors were invited to remain on the call.

Dave Gross reported that the parking spots next to the Clip Joint have been painted through with a notation about “no parking.” Physical impediments have not yet been placed. No other parking spaces have been removed. Shari conveyed that the crosswalk paint (terracotta color, rather than all white) is still on order and has not yet been received by the Town. She will inquire about the removal of additional spaces to correct the setbacks from the crosswalks at the next Select Board meeting (June 17, 2021).

Shari also reported that Eric and other members of the Select Board met with VTrans regarding the repaving of Hardwick’s downtown. Route 14 and 15 will be repaved in the fall of 2022. This will be a “curb to curb” project. The crosswalks will be spaced in compliance with state statute. There are questions about drainage and bump-outs that will need to be addressed. Sidewalk ramps will be brought into compliance. The Pedestrian and Traffic Safety study was shared with VTrans. There will be a public information process at some juncture in time. This project has the potential to yield positive changes in the downtown area.

On Saturday, July 17, 2021, there will be a public engagement process for the Pedestrian Bridge. The process will transpire between 1 and 5 pm. There will be a tent for cover (sun and/or rain), children’s activities and food. David Raphael, landscape architect, and Bob Neeld, Engineer, will be assisting in the process. They will consider both sides of the bridge, as well as future potential aspects (Riverwalk, etc).

Shari reported that the Downtown Commission has been formed by the Select Board. The Select Board appointed 7 members to the Commission in June. The first task will be to complete the application for the designation. The Commission will be examining the possibility of pursuing a MPG grant to fund assistance with this process.

Dave suggested that the HPC shift the focus of Phase II to short term projects such as speed reducing bumps on artery roads and pedestrian/parking needs in East Hardwick. Phase III will have the more long term projects such as Mill Street sidewalks, etc. The commission was amenable to this change in project planning.

Michael suggested that the removable speed bumps be returned to the consideration of the Select Board.

Geoff has provided email recommendations regarding the Better Connections grant. The Planning Commission considered the recommendations and decided to place the grant pursuit on the proverbial “back burner.”

The next meeting will be conducted in person on the third floor of the Memorial Building. The date will be July 13, 2021 at 6:30 pm. *(The room has been acquired for the purpose of the meeting – ZA)*

Joyce Mandeville moved to close the meeting at 8:00. Ken Davis seconded. All members were in favor.

The next HPC meeting will be on July 13, 2021 in the Memorial Building.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA