

Hardwick Planning Commission  
March 9, 2021  
Via Zoom  
Minutes

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

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator (ZA);

Absent: None

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

Ken Davis moved to approve the agenda as written. Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor.

Ken Davis moved to approve the February 9, 2021 meeting minutes as written. Shari Cornish seconded. All members were in favor.

There will be a second meeting with Gary Holloway, who is the State of Vermont's Downtown Program manager. The topic of discussion will be the pursuit of the downtown designation for Hardwick's village. The meeting will be on March 23, 2021. Shari and Kristen will be attending (virtual meeting). Shari reported that the designation will allow for more funds for transportation improvements and traffic calming features (such as a lower posted vehicular speed in the village center). A downtown commission or an affiliated non-profit (501C3) will need to be created and will serve as a conduit to the efforts. Shari has a variety of business owners who have expressed interest in participating (Galaxy Bookstore owners, Front Seat Coffee for example). The HPC will be kept apprised of the downtown designation application process and members are welcome to assist with the downtown commission/non-profit.

Prior to the meeting, Kristen checked with Geoff Sewake and no new requests for review or support were necessary for any upcoming grants. The HPC is currently awaiting news on the previously submitted grant proposals. Kristen will ask Geoff for a forecast of the pending grants.

Dave informed the Commission that there are potential opportunities for future funding of traffic/transportation improvements due to the increase in federal funding. He advised the HPC that a "shovel-ready" project may be advisable as there is a greater possibility for immediate funding.

The proposal to add the conditional use category "restaurant" to the Compact Residential zoning district will receive additional attention. Kristen will send a letter to the owners in the Compact Residential zone (with a table of the zone's current parameters) to solicit their input and to make them aware that a change is being proposed.

The HPC discussed the upcoming year. There are multiple projects/grants/etc. in process. The Better Connections Grant, possible increased federal funds for transportation projects, conclusion of Phase 1 of the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety study (implementation), Phase 2 of the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety study, and the AARP Walkability studies.

A general outline for the next 5 months of 2021 was created.

April – Prior to the Memorial Day weekend, the HPC would like to develop a list of questions and strategies for the implementation of the Phase 1 recommendations. This would be conveyed to the Select Board in late April (before the parking spaces are re-painted). The Better Connections Grant will be announced on March 19, 2021 – a planning session may be needed at this meeting.

May – With warmer weather, returning to the Walkability Study would be feasible. The HPC will reach out to neighborhoods for assistance and review sidewalks, etc with field work.

June – Phase 2 and the Better Connections Grant and Traffic calming items.

July – A portion of this meeting will be needed for planning the August hearing.

August – This meeting will be targeted for the Zoning bylaw update hearing. This will include statutory requirements, possible changes to district uses, and any bylaw changes necessary for the Downtown designation program.

Shari reported that possible charging spots (EV) in Hardwick could also be reviewed. The Select Board has been in discussion with HED but nothing has been solidified. With electric bikes in future use on the LVRT, there may be an opportunity for creating LVRT locations in parking areas.

Michael Haveson moved to close the meeting at 7:45. Shari Cornish seconded. All members were in favor.

The next HPC meeting will be on April 13, 2021 by Zoom.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA