

Hardwick Planning Commission
October 12, 2021
Via Zoom with Physical Location at the Memorial Building
Minutes

HPC Members Present: Joyce Mandeville; Jim Lewis; Ken Davis; 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 6:31 pm. Ken Davis moved to approve the agenda. Shari Cornish seconded. All members were in favor. Shari Cornish moved to approve the September 14, 2021 meeting minutes. Ken Davis seconded. All members were in favor.

New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC d/b/a AT&T has filed a motion to extend the comment period on their petition to receive a Certificate of Public Good for installation of a wireless telecommunications facility on an existing tower on Hopkins Hill. Originally, the comment period would end on October 15, 2021. The motion asks the Public Utility Commission to extend the ending date to December 1, 2021. Attorney William Dodge (New Cingular Wireless) requested support of this motion from the HPC. Members granted permission. The Planning Commission has heard extensive public comment regarding the tower. However, the comments were in response to the original plans which included a 10 foot extension to the existing tower. New Cingular Wireless has adjusted the plans to fit to the existing tower height.

The HPC has subscribed to this ePUC case – 21-3784-PET, but has not officially taken a position on the proposal.

Dave Gross suggested that the HPC should take a position on the amended proposal out of courtesy to the process and to the response of New Cingular Wireless. Other participants in the PUC proceedings may potentially approach the HPC early in the process if the HPC participates and provides commentary. Chair Gross appreciated the modification of the earlier plans which appears to conform to the community feedback and to the Hardwick municipal plan. A draft document in support of the current proposal was suggested.

Joyce Mandeville made the motion that the Zoning Administrator will draft a document in support for review by the HPC at their November meeting. Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor.

On September 17, 2021, members of the Select Board and the Planning Commission met via Zoom with the engineers from DuBois & King, as well as representatives from VTRANS. The 2022 re-paving project proposal was discussed. Final plans will be submitted to VTRANS and to the Town in October. A public hearing will be held to discuss the plans further. Currently, changes include the movement of the handicap parking spot in front of the United Church of Hardwick to the other side of the road, adding a second handicap spot and a crosswalk. Original plans removed the handicap spot or removed the additional parking across the street (width of the street does not allow for both sets of parking). Additionally, the crosswalk from the Town parking lot on Mill Street to the Hardwick Village Market will not be restored due to the lack of a sidewalk. This can be remedied by the addition of a landing pad for the crosswalk. A flashing sign for pedestrian crossing will be installed on Route 15 near Union Street. All aspects of the proposal will be discussed at the public hearing.

No action was taken on the Town of Hardwick notification regarding the laying out of a new segment of Bayley Hazen Road.

No action was taken on the proposed update to the Town of Woodbury Municipal plan.

No action was taken on the Conservation Commission's Natural Resources Inventory meeting on October 23, 2021. The Planning Commission heartily supports the endeavor. Assistance will be provided if requested by the Conservation Commission.

The draft of the West Church walk audit was reviewed by the Planning Commission. The Commission requested further identification of the Hazen walking path and clarification of the parking situation on West Church Street. Kristen will make adjustments prior to the November 9, 2021 meeting and the Commission will be able to review and approve at that meeting. The HPC will present this audit to the Select Board on November 18th (*The presentation has been added to the 11/18/21 SB agenda – KL*). The version of the audit with color photographs will be made available to Select Board members.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation issued "Guidelines for Pedestrian Crossing Treatments" which indicates that a crosswalk to meet either a sidewalk or an adequate shoulder on town roads. This would allow the installation of one or two crosswalks on West Church Street (which does not have matching sidewalks).

The HPC will conduct an AARP walk-thru on Mill Street and Main Street on October 19 (Tuesday) at 11 a.m. Commission members will meet at the public parking area across from Hardwick Village Market.

The members of the Commission would like to invite the new Town Manager – David ("Opie") Upson, Jr. to the next Planning Commission meeting (*The invitation has been extended – KL*). The issue of crosswalk colors and design patterns will be on the agenda. Dave Gross shared an overview of potential patterns from his 2020 presentation to the Select Board. This overview will be included in the information at the November meeting. The walking audits of West Church Street and the Mill Street/Main Street will also be discussed.

Shari Cornish informed the Commission that the Downtown Commission has received a NEK Funds grant to create two sets of new welcome banners for the downtown area. One set will have space to identify local entities (ie. Hazen Wildcats, the Town House, etc). The Town of Hardwick also had a letter of interest accepted for application to the new Vermont Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (VOREC) funds. A LOI was written by Helen Beattie (with assistance from Alison Low at NVDA) for an outdoor park next to the Daniels Bridge with wayfinding signage and bike parking and a covered bike parking in East Hardwick. This was a competitive LOI process with 100 letters submitted and only 37 accepted. (*Congratulations!*)

The next meeting will be conducted by Zoom with a physical location of the third floor of the Memorial Building. The date will be November 9, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

Ken Davis moved to close the meeting at 7:56 pm. Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor.

The next HPC meeting will be by Zoom on November 9, 2021.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA