

Hardwick Planning Commission
March 8, 2022
Via Zoom
Minutes

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

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator

Absent: None

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:32 pm. Jim Lewis moved to approve the agenda. Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor. Shari Cornish moved to approve the February 8, 2022 meeting minutes as written. Ken Davis seconded. All members were in favor.

The town meeting ballot contained two questions regarding the inclusion of retail cannabis within the Town of Hardwick. The relevant questions were Article 20 (retail cannabis) and Article 21 (integrated sales). Both articles passed on March 1, 2022.

State laws set forth a required 500 feet buffer around school properties. Dave Gross provided maps of the two exclusion zones around Hazen Union and Hardwick Elementary. A large portion of downtown Hardwick will be within that buffer. The exception is the area around the Lamoille River Bridge on North Main Street in Hardwick. The former bank building, the former Buffalo Mountain School, and the Laundry are all outside of the two buffer zones. Currently, Hardwick has two zoning districts which allow retail sales by Conditional Use – Central Business and Highway Mixed Use. Both zoning districts are located within and close to the village centers of Hardwick and East Hardwick. The Unified Development Bylaws also include a category called “Agricultural and Forest Processing” which allows retail for the product that is being “processed”. This use is allowed by Conditional Use in the Village Neighborhood, Highway Mixed-Use, Compact Residential, Industrial, Rural Residential, and Forest Reserve. The State of Vermont does not identify cannabis as an agricultural product. If that is changed in the future, this category may need to be examined by the Planning Commission.

In an effort to address affordable housing issues, the State of Vermont and the federal government are encouraging towns to update their Accessory Dwelling Unit rules. The State has passed new statutes which increased the maximum size of an ADU to 900 square feet (800 sq feet was the previous threshold). Other possible updates to Section 4.2 Accessory Dwelling include: the addition of the option to have a multifamily structure or a single family dwelling (currently only a SFD), the shift of the words “owner-occupied” to identify the lot, the removal of the words “owner-occupied,” the shift of the setbacks from principal structure to accessory structure, change of the amount of off-street parking required (2, 1, or none), and exclusion from the minimum lot are per unit in the VN, RF or RR districts. After discussion, the Commission decided to abstain from adopting any proposed changes and to revisit the question at a future meeting.

Shari Cornish has spoken to Casey Rowell about the crosswalk painting in downtown Hardwick. Tom Fadden will be repainting the crosswalks before the paving work is accomplished. Kristen Leahy will communicate with David Upson about the painting of the parking spots. The lines should be upgraded to match the reduced parking that will result from the new paving work.

East Hardwick is working with Local Motion to create a schematic for parking and crosswalks in East Hardwick. Future HPC meetings will include review of their suggestions.

Michael Haveson spoke to David Upson and there will be 3-season speed bumps installed on West Church Street. This will be a temporary solution to the ongoing speeding on that road. The hope is that West Church will ultimately receive a permanent solution with speed humps integrated into the pavement and new sidewalks, etc.

New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC d/b/a AT&T has filed a motion to dismiss their petition for a Certificate of Public Good for installation of a wireless telecommunications facility on an existing tower on Hopkins Hill. AT&T informed the Zoning Administrator of the motion and requested that the Planning Commission provide suggested locations for a new tower. The Commission declined to recommend any locations as they do not have a list of possible cell tower location sites. (*This information was conveyed to AT&T – Kristen*).

Shari Cornish informed the Commission that the Rescue Squad is seeking a location for a new, expanded space (5,000 square feet). They have outgrown their current location on Creamery Road.

The next HPC meeting will be conducted by Zoom and in person (hybrid approach). The date will be April 12, 2022 at 6:30 pm.

Ken Davis moved to close the meeting at 8:01 pm. Michael Haveson seconded. All members were in favor.

The next HPC meeting will be by Zoom and in person on April 12, 2022.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA