

Hardwick Planning Commission
April 12, 2022
Established as a Hybrid meeting –
Zoom option was utilized

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

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator

Absent: Michael Haveson

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:33 pm. Shari Cornish moved to approve the agenda. Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor. Shari Cornish moved to approve the March 8, 2022 meeting minutes as written. Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor.

The Buffalo Mountain Coop has begun the transition to the former Village Market. With the move to the larger space, the Coop has changed its name to Buffalo Mountain Market (BMM). BMM is in the process of renovating the existing structure and the construction manager, Chris Duff, reached out to the Zoning Office to inquire about the parking lot restrictions. Currently the lot is gravel and extends into the Road ROW. BMM will be hosting two EV charger spaces and, with that installation, they are required to pave the parking lot. As the paving will be more permanent, Mr. Duff was seeking input on future plans from the Town of Hardwick – such as pedestrian walkways, sidewalks, crosswalks, etc. The Planning Commission was asked to provide possible feedback.

The members of HPC inquired about the ROW issue – would the paving extend into the ROW? Shari Cornish reported that the Downtown paving project will be occurring in May 2022 per David Upson. With this paving project, the crosswalk will be removed between the BMM parking lot and the public parking lot across Mill Street. Shari also indicated that the Downtown Commission will be seeking to include the Inn by the River in the Designated Downtown. A sidewalk to this entity would support their inclusion.

Commission members acknowledged that new sidewalks will probably not occur in the next few years but they would prefer to see actual plans before making suggestions or recommendations. No motion was made but the distillation of the comments indicated that the Commission was uncomfortable with the idea of eliminating a possible sidewalk location. The Zoning Administrator was instructed to convey to BMM that they should avoid paving in the ROW. Chris Duff will be invited to speak to the HPC at a later meeting. David Upson will be notified of the conversation/request for information (*David was linked into the conversation – 4/13/22 –KL*)

Phase II:

As was stated earlier, the paving in Downtown will begin in May. Upon completion of the paving work and the structural additions (bump-outs, etc), the State of Vermont will delineate the parking spaces and install the crosswalks (white block version). Shari Cornish reported that the Town does not currently have an additional color to incorporate into the crosswalk pattern. There is a three-month wait time for new paint but she will be encouraging the purchase as soon as possible. High visibility paint can be used to accent the white blocks.

Chair Dave Gross stated for the record that the Town will need to adhere to the new parking schematics in future years (and in this year). He believes that any adjustments without consideration of pedestrian and

traffic safety will not be conducive to limiting town liability. David Upson has confirmed that he will not seek to add parking spaces after the completion of the paving work.

David Upson will be conducting a walking visit of East Hardwick with the East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization (EHNO). EHNO is organizing a community “clean-up” of the existing sidewalks to provide a better understanding of the sidewalk status. Local Motion is still working on a proposal for pedestrian and traffic safety updates in East Hardwick’s village center.

Zoning Updates:

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. After discussion, the Commission decided to shift the owner occupied language from the word structure to an “owner-occupied lot.” Commission members did not support completely removing the owner-occupied requirement. The HPC abstained from adopting other proposed changes until the State of Vermont adopts new statutes which are currently under consideration in the House.

The 500 feet buffer map around the Hardwick Elementary school will need to be changed to reflect a reduced amount of school property. A section of the school’s property has been surveyed and is shown to belong to Ruth and David Gaillard.

Updates from Commission Members:

Heather Carrington has been hired to work with the Downtown Commission to submit the application for a Designated Downtown and to create a non-profit to support the vitality of the Hardwick Downtown. Currently, the application to the state is slated to be submitted by December of 2022.

The Town of Hardwick received VOREC community grant funds (\$200,000) for the creation of a park on the Daniels Block side of the pedestrian bridge over the Lamoille River. Funding has been received for the reconstruction of the pedestrian bridge. Once a design has been completed, the project will be sent out for bids.

The search for Community Development Coordinator is progress but there may be a positive outcome in the near term. Shari Cornish recommended that Commission members watch for ARPA fund meeting announcements.

The next HPC meeting will be conducted by Zoom and in person at Atkins Field (hybrid approach). The date will be May 10, 2022 at 6:30 pm.

Ken Davis moved to close the meeting at 7:40 pm. Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor.

The next HPC meeting will be by Zoom and in person at Atkins Field on May 10, 2022.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA