

Hardwick Planning Commission  
September 13, 2022  
Zoom Meeting  
Minutes

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

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator; Tracy Martin, Community Development Coordinator; Cheryl Michaels, EHNO; and Mike Lance, EHNO.

Absent: Shari Cornish

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:31 pm. Ken Davis moved to approve the agenda with the corrected meeting date for the October meeting (10/11/22). Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor. Ken Davis moved to approve the August 9, 2022 Public Hearing minutes as written. Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor. Ken Davis moved to approve the August 9, 2022 meeting minutes as written. Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor.

**Zoning Updates:**

The Select Board will hold the public hearing for the proposed zoning bylaw updates on October 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm. The hearing will be hybrid with Zoom and in-person options. Kristen will be attending the hearing. Commission members are encouraged to attend. The Zoom link will be forwarded to the Planning Commission prior to the hearing date.

**Updates from the Community Development Coordinator:**

Tracy Martin, the Community Development Coordinator, provided an overview of the Bylaw Modernization Grant. The grant would provide funding for a consultant to review the feasibility of Neighborhood Development Areas around the Village Centers and/or the Designated Downtown areas. Currently, only 9 communities in Vermont have the Neighborhood Development Areas (NDAs). The goal of this designation is to encourage workforce housing within historic downtowns. The NDAs provide developers with a streamlined permitting process and reduced fees.

Hardwick has professional housing and low-income housing but is missing the middle component – work force housing. The Bylaw Modernization grant would pay a consultant to review and locate the areas which could be utilized for work force housing.

The grant has a maximum amount of \$25,000 and requires a 10% cash match (not in-kind). If amendments are made to the zoning bylaw and the NDA is created, then the 10% is covered by the State of Vermont.

Tracy has communicated with the State's contact and he has been very encouraging about Hardwick's pursuit of the grant.

Ken Davis inquired as to how much low-income housing is needed in the Hardwick community. Recent assessments indicate that the middle segment of the rental housing is a more pressing need for Hardwick.

Tracy will forward links about Neighborhood Development Areas to the Zoning Administrator for the HPC to review.

The HPC will discuss and vote on the Bylaw Modernization Grant proposal in October.

**Motion:** N/A

**Phase II:**

Local Motion has submitted a proposal for pedestrian and traffic safety updates in East Hardwick's village center. This is a preliminary examination of the crosswalks and intersections in East Hardwick. The draft was reviewed at the annual meeting of the East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization (EHNO).

The following intersections/crosswalks were highlighted in the Local Motion report:

- 1) Main Street and Brickhouse Road
  - Add a crosswalk
  - Include a low curb extension on the west side to streamline the intersection
- 2) Cedar Street and Main Street (Version A)
  - Add a crosswalk across Main Street
  - Install grass on both sides of Cedar Street
  - Possible sidewalk installation and on-street parking
- 3) Cedar Street and Main Street (Version B) (*preferred by EHNO*)
  - Add 2 crosswalks across Main Street
  - Add a crosswalk across Cedar Street
  - Install green space on the North Side of Cedar Street
  - Parking and/or parklet on the store (South) side of Cedar Street
- 4) Main Street crosswalk
  - Add a crosswalk near the daycare (*this was previously painted but has not been recently*)
- 5) School Street and Main Street
  - Consolidate the intersection into a T shape
  - Add a crosswalk across School Street
  - Install green space on either side of the School Street segment

Ken Davis commented that the proposals are not "truck friendly." The changes would hopefully encourage trucks to travel from Route 16 along Main Street (bypassing School Street and Cedar Street).

School Street has the Mini Mart store which results in larger pedestrian and bike traffic counts. The speeds on School Street are a concern to the neighborhood. Installation of a sidewalk on School Street would be a potentially challenging and expensive project. A short-term proposal from Local Motion suggested the installation of chicanes on the road. This suggestion has not been supported by the general public in East Hardwick.

Additionally, speed tables (bumps) could be placed on Cedar and Main Street. Noise impacts should be considered as this is a residential area.

The East Hardwick roads are not wide enough for bike lane installations.

The Commission will examine these suggestions in October as a component of the Phase II Pedestrian and Traffic Safety work. Phase II recommendations also include Mill Street, Wolcott Street and the connection of the LVRT to Main Street.

**Motion:** N/A

**AARP Walkability Audit in East Hardwick:**

The EHNO Annual Meeting reviewed the AARP walkability audit that was created by the Hardwick Planning Commission. The additional suggestion was made regarding the sidewalk surfaces. The sidewalks should be periodically cleaned to remove the rock debris and ice/snow build-up. ENHO asked is the Town has a written policy regarding sidewalk snow removal – where will it occur and under what conditions? The HPC did not elect to include this suggestion in the East Hardwick audit as the issue is one which affects all of the sidewalks in Hardwick. The issue will be forwarded to the Town Manager's office.

**Motion:** N/A

**Updates from Commission Members:**

No additional updates were received.

**Motion:** Ken Davis made the motion to conclude the hearing at 8:10 pm. Michael Haveson seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

The meeting ended at 8:10 pm.

The next HPC meeting will be at 6:30 pm on October 11, 2022 by Zoom.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA