

Hardwick Planning Commission
October 11, 2022
Zoom Meeting

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

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator; Tracy Martin, Community Development Coordinator.

Absent: None

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:34 pm. Ken Davis moved to approve the agenda as written. Shari Cornish seconded. All members were in favor. Ken Davis moved to approve the September 13, 2022 meeting minutes as written. Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor except Shari Cornish who abstained due to her absence at the September 13 meeting.

Zoning Updates:

The Select Board held the public hearing for the proposed zoning bylaw updates on October 6, 2022. The Select Board voted to approve the entire slate from the Hardwick Planning Commission. The changes will be effective as of October 27, 2022.

Updates from the Community Development Coordinator:

Tracy Martin, the Community Development Coordinator, revisited the Bylaw Modernization Grant. The grant could 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. After the September meeting, Tracy forwarded links about Neighborhood Development Areas for the HPC to review.

Dave Gross noted that the NDA program is relatively new. After much discussion, three main topics were identified for the Bylaw Modernization Grant. The main topics were as follows:

1. Creation of Housing in Hardwick
2. Form based Code
3. Neighborhood Development Areas

These topics were distilled into the following motion.

Motion: To grant permission to the Community Development Coordinator to pursue a Bylaw Modernization grant proposal that will focus on the zoning bylaw changes that will encourage expanded housing stock in Hardwick.

Shari Cornish made the motion. Joyce Mandeville provided the second. All members were in favor.

The request for support will need to be sought from the Select Board at their next meeting. (*KL – the Town Manager’s office has added the request to the October 20 meeting agenda*).

Tracy also reported on the grant funding that focuses on the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. In East Hardwick, a trail head committee began planning for their trail head access during the summer months. The committee was waiting for the release of the State LVRT Management Plan which was issued in August 2022. NVDA provided transportation funds to the committee for a scoping study and a consultant was hired to review East Hardwick for potential locations. Four sites were reviewed and the Committee settled on one option.

Hardwick has already established the trailhead near the Depot and the Town House.

The Town of Hardwick has the most miles on the LVRT and needs two trailheads.

Tracy has proposed writing a LVRT development grant for design and construction in Hardwick. As the town needs two trailheads, she would request a larger investment from the State (in excess of \$120,000). NVDA will be pursuing a consortium based scoping study for the NVDA towns on the LVRT. They have requested the inclusion of Hardwick in this consortium and the resulting grant.

The Select Board has not yet rendered a decision on pursuit of either grant.

Motion: To support the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Community grant program applications if the Select Board votes to support both or either application for a) Design and Construction in Hardwick and/or b) A Scoping Study through NVDA with a consortium of neighboring towns.

Shari Cornish made the motion and Michael Haveson seconded. All members were in favor.

The Zoning Administrator will provide written support with Municipal Plan references to the Community Development Coordinator if the Select Board votes to affirm either or both applications.

Phase II:

A new temporary speed sign has been installed on Slapp Hill.

The speed bumps on West Church Street have been removed for the winter months. Michael has noticed an immediate increase in traffic speeds.

The “No Parking” areas on Main Street are not being enforced and Mill Street requires attention due to the continuing traffic/pedestrian/parking issues.

The Commission will focus on Phase I and Phase II in their November meeting.

Motion: N/A

Updates from Commission Members or the Zoning Administrator:

Vermont is hosting an in-person State Government Municipal Day. If Commission members are interested in attending, please speak to Kristen.

Motion: Ken Davis made the motion to conclude the hearing at 8:05 pm. Michael Haveson seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

The meeting ended at 8:05 pm.

The next HPC meeting will be at 6:30 pm on November 8, 2022 by Zoom.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA