

Hardwick Planning Commission
July 18, 2023
3rd Floor, Memorial Building, Hardwick
Minutes

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

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator; Heather Carrington, CCDS, LLC Consultant (by Zoom); Kole, community member; and Larry Fliegelman, community member.

Absent: Ken Davis

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:30 pm. Jim Lewis moved to approve the agenda as written. Shari Cornish seconded. All members were in favor. Shari Cornish moved to approve the June 13, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor.

Updates from the Community Development Coordinator – presented by Dave Gross:

Better Connections

The State of Vermont visited East Hardwick to review the area under consideration. Tracy Martin has provided a draft version of the consultant Request for Proposals (RFP) to the state.

Homes for All – Infill Design Case Study

Hardwick has submitted an application to be included in the Infill Design case study.

Motion: None.

Updates from the Bylaw Modernization Consultant – Heather Carrington

Heather Carrington provided an overview of the recently signed HOME act (Act 047).

- Lowers allowable parking requirements for residential units (begins 12/24)
- Requires that multi-family buildings are allowed uses in districts where residential is an allowable use (began 7/1/23)
- Sets building and lot standards for residential units (began 7/1/23)
- Establishes emergency shelters as a protected public use and places limits on what municipal bylaws can regulate in relation to shelters (begins 9/1/23).

Heather reminded the Commission that these changes will be statutory and they will impact other aspect of the zoning bylaws. There are interconnected components that will need to be updated.

The zoning district which was discussed at the July 18, 2023 meeting was the Village Neighborhood district.

Village Neighborhood Recommendations:

- Minimum lot size doesn't match the current sizes in 26% of the properties in the Village Neighborhood (minimum lot size is 7,500 square feet). The current density cap is 1 unit per 3,500 square feet. A new statute requires 4 units per 1 Single Family Dwelling site if there is Town Water and Sewer. If the Town reduces the minimum lot size to make more parcels in compliance, we will still need to allow 4 units per lot. **The HPC did not make a choice on this recommendation as the Commission wishes to know what size would bring the most parcels into compliance. The Commission verbally agreed to instruct**

Heather to provide a size recommendation that would affect the highest percentage possible without including the truly non-conforming parcels.

- The HOME act mandates the placement of 4 units on Class 1 (town water and sewer sites). Heather provided 4 options on the question of density per unit. The Planning Commission wishes to pursue the recommendation to reduce the density requirement

Motion: To reduce the Minimum Lot Area per unit in the Village Neighborhood – Class 1 zoning district from 1 per 3,500 square feet to 1 per 1,000 square feet in the draft version of the Bylaw Modernization Update.

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

Motion: To reduce the Minimum Lot Area per unit in the Village Neighborhood – Class 2 & Class 3 zoning districts from 1 per 7,500 square feet to 1 per 3,500 square feet in the draft version of the Bylaw Modernization Update.

Shari Cornish made the motion and Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor.

- Act 047 (HOME Act) requires towns to further reduce their density limitations for affordable housing development. **Hardwick will need to update the affordable housing development definition. In addition, the town will need to permit any affordable housing development, including mixed-use development, to exceed density limitations exceeding maximum height limitations by one floor, provided that the structure complies with the Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code.**
- Parking – currently there are 3 standards for parking requirements in housing situations. 2 spaces are required for a Single Family Dwelling or a Two Family Dwelling; 1.5 spaces are required for a Multi-Family Dwelling; and 1 space is required for an Accessory Dwelling Unit. Heather provided choices but the Town must adjust to match the HOME Act.

Motion: To set the parking per residential unit rate for the Town of Hardwick at 1 space per dwelling unit in the draft version of the Bylaw Modernization Update. This change will bring Hardwick into compliance with the new State regulations (Act 047 – HOME Act).

Jim Lewis made the motion and Shari Cornish seconded. All members were in favor.

- Allowable uses are limited. The new state standards require changes to the Hardwick bylaws.

Motion: To move Multi-Family Dwelling from Conditional Use to Allowable Use in the Village Neighborhood (Class 1, 2, & 3) in the draft version of the Bylaw Modernization Update.

Shari Cornish made the motion and Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor.

- Street standards – complete streets standards should be considered by should receive more attention in the Central Business zoning district and the East Hardwick village center.

The Hardwick Planning Commission also discussed the Central Business zoning district at the July 18, 2023 meeting.

- The current zoning bylaws allow limited flexibility for the DRB to consider on-street parking spaces for housing. The current DRB has never utilized this flexibility. Each Conditional Use Review that has

included housing in the past 5-7 years has required the demonstration of available off-street parking for housing units. **An update to this aspect may need to be incorporated.**

- Dwelling units are currently a Conditional Use in the Central Business zoning district.

Motion: To move Single Family Dwelling, Two Family Dwelling and Multi-Family Dwelling from Conditional Use to Allowable Use in the Central Business zoning district in the draft version of the Bylaw Modernization Update.

Joyce Mandeville made the motion and Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor.

Phase II:

None at this time.

Updates from Commission Members or the Zoning Administrator:

Shari Cornish requested a Letter of Support from the Hardwick Planning Commission for a Hardwick Town House grant application. The Town House is submitting an application for a T-Mobile Grant for Revitalizing Small Towns. This grant would support the Egress and Accessibility project at the Hardwick Town House.

Motion: To provide a Letter of Support for The Hardwick Town House's T-Mobile Grant application.

Joyce Mandeville made the motion and Michael Haveson seconded. All members were in favor.

Kristen will write the letter and Dave and Shari will review the draft letter prior to the submission.

Due to the extensive damage caused by the Flood of 2023, the Select Board will consider interim zoning bylaws to allow for expedited work to Substantially Damaged structures in the Flood Plain and in the Floodway. The interim bylaws are being reviewed by the State and their legal teams and will be ready in the next week. **The HPC gave their support for interim flooding rules.**

Motion: To conclude the Hardwick Planning Commission Meeting.

Joyce Mandeville made the motion and Michael Haveson seconded. All members were in favor.

The meeting ended at 8:00 pm.

The next HPC meeting will be at 6:30 pm on August 8, 2023 on the 3rd Floor of the Memorial Building.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA