

Hardwick Planning Commission
May 13, 2025
Hybrid – In-Person and Zoom options
Minutes

HPC Members Present: Dave Gross, Chair; Jim Lewis; Kole; Gillian D’Acierno (Alternate); and Michael Haveson (Zoom)

HPC Members Absent: Ken Davis; Bud Stevens; and Larry Fliegelman. *Gillian D’Acierno assumes Ken Davis’ seat for the meeting.*

On April 17, 2025, the Select Board officially appointed Kole to the full position that was available with Shari Cornish’s departure.

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

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:33 pm. Kole moved to approve the agenda as written. Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor. Jim Lewis moved to approve the April 8, 2025 meeting minutes as written. Kole seconded. All members were in favor.

Updates from the Community Development Coordinator – Tracy Martin

Transportation Alternatives – The Town has hired VHB to conduct the feasibility and scoping study for the Mill Street and Main Street area. A liaison from the Hardwick Planning Commission will be beneficial. Tracy will have more information after the initial meeting in May when the next steps will be outlined. After the conclusion of this study, the Town will be able to apply for an implementation grant for the recommended improvements.

Downtown Transportation Grant - The Town received a second Downtown Transportation Grant to complete the Swinging/Pedestrian Bridge project across the Lamoille River. The second grant is the final piece in the funding puzzle. The work is anticipated to begin in June.

Municipal Planning Grant (update provided by Kristen Leahy) – The Town also received a fully funded (\$30,000) Municipal Planning Grant for a Flood Resilience study of the Granite Street Historic District. This project will be a collaboration of the residents of the Granite Street Historic District (Andrea Phelps has agreed to serve as a neighborhood liaison), the Town (Kristen in her Flood and Adaptation Coordinator role), and CAE (Katt Tolman). As the study progresses, there will be reports to the Planning Commission and invitations to participate in the planning process. Additionally, there is a potential correlating project with the Town (Tracy Martin), NVDA (Alison Low), Preservation Trust of Vermont (Ben Doyle) and the State of Vermont that will seek to provide updates and dry flood proofing to impacted historic homes.

Better Connections – The final draft is now available. The work was completed and initially presented to the Select Board on April 17, 2025. No motions to accept or approve were made since the State needed to provide any revisions. The revisions have now been received and incorporated into the report. This final version is intended to be an appendix or addendum to the Municipal Plan. The HPC has been asked to provide a recommendation on the plan to the Select Board. After discussion, the Commission members

agreed to revisit the final version at the June meeting. Kristen will provide a comparison of the Better Connections plan and the Municipal Plan (*done, attached - KL*). By Vermont Statute, the Planning Commission is tasked with identifying whether or not a plan supports the Municipal Plan. A recommendation will be made at the June meeting.

New Zoning Bylaw Changes:

The Zoning Administrator provided a list of possible adjustments for the next Zoning Bylaw update. The following changes were agreed upon at the April 8, 2025 meeting:

1. Add “Contractor Yards” to the Conditional Use List of the Highway Mixed Use zoning district.
2. Add “Transfer Stations” to the Conditional Use List of the Highway Mixed Use zoning district.
3. Change Single Family Dwelling to Single Unit Dwelling throughout the Unified Development Bylaws.
4. Change Two Family Dwelling to Two Unit Dwelling throughout the Unified Development Bylaws.
5. Change Multi-Family Dwelling to Multi-Unit Dwelling throughout the Unified Development Bylaws.
6. Change the definition of “Dwelling Unit” to “means a single unit providing complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation.” Current definition references “family” – see language in 24 VSA 4412 (courtesy of Act 181).
7. Section 4.15 Protected Public Uses now needs to include “Hotels and motels converted to permanently affordable housing developments” in districts CB, VN, HMU, CR
8. The school section in 4.15 should say “Agency of Education” not “Vermont Department of Education.”

The Zoning Administrator provided an updated version of the Hardwick Unified Development Bylaws for the next proposed update. The following proposed changes were agreed upon at the May 13, 2025 meeting:

1. The Village Center (VC) Zoning District was included as Table 2.9 on page 21.
2. The new VC district will be added to the CB district language on parking (page 30) – only off-street parking will be for employees, etc.
3. The new VC district will be added to the Loading and Service area language that currently applies to only the Central Business District (page 31).
4. The sign size for the Village Center district will match the Central Business and Village Neighborhood – 16 square feet (Page 32).
5. The new Village Center district will be included on the Protected Public Uses in Public and Private Hospitals, Public and Private schools, Churches, Emergency Shelters, and Hotels/Motels that are converted (Table 4.1 – page 47).
6. The District Standards (page 59-60) will include Village Center with the Central Business District standards. (*This section will be reviewed in the future by the Planning Commission*)
7. Barring any new information from VLCT, Section 5.5 Local Act 250 Review will be removed from the Bylaws (page 69-70). (To respond to Act 181 and the reformation of Act 250).

The Section 4.13 Mobile Home Park language also currently has a minimum of five acres. State statute requires that no bylaw shall have the effect of excluding mobile home parks, as defined in 10 VSA Chapter 153, from the municipality. The minimum area requirement will be reviewed at the June meeting. The Zoning administrator will seek outside assistance with possible language or approaches.

Short Term Rentals:

N/A

Motion: N/A

Updates from Commission Members:

N/A

Motion: N/A.

Updates from the Zoning Administrator:

N/A

Motion: To conclude the Hardwick Planning Commission Meeting.

Kole made the motion and Gillian D'Acierno seconded. All members were in favor.

The meeting ended at 8:15 pm.

The next HPC meeting will be at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, June 10, 2025 on the 3rd Floor of the Memorial Building.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA