

Hardwick Planning Commission  
June 10, 2025  
Hybrid – In-Person and Zoom options  
Minutes

HPC Members Present: Dave Gross, Chair; Kole; Ken Davis; and Larry Fliegelman

HPC Members Absent: Jim Lewis; Bud Stevens; Gillian D’Acierno (Alternate); and Michael Haveson

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

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:33 pm. Ken Davis moved to approve the agenda as amended (shifting the timing of the Act 181 discussion). Kole seconded. All members were in favor. No quorum was present from the previous meeting and, as such, the May 13, 2025 Draft Minutes were not approved and will need to be reviewed at the July 8, 2025 meeting.

**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. The scope of the study is still under consideration, yet the initial meeting with the Town has occurred. VHB will generate a working base map of Mill Street and Main Street (to the crosswalk by the swinging bridge). After the base map is created, a local concerns meeting will occur to solicit input from the various stakeholders. The meeting was tentatively scheduled for July 22 at 6pm (Hybrid) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Memorial Building. This may be changed if additional time is needed to generate the existing conditions information. Once the input has been received, the goal is to have several options for the community’s consideration and chosen options will have cost estimates.

*Better Connections* – The final draft is now available. The HPC was asked to provide a recommendation on the plan to the Select Board. Kristen provided a comparison of the aligned goals and components in the Better Connections plan and the Municipal Plan. No conflicts were identified between the two plans. The plans align on six sections. The Better Connections Task Force recommended dedicating the Better Connections plan to Meredith Holch. Meredith served on the Task Force and brought her energy and enthusiasm to each meeting for the last 1.5 years as the plan was created.

***Motion: To recommend to the Hardwick Select Board the adoption of the 2025 Better Connections Plan as an addendum to the 2019 Hardwick Municipal Plan. Furthermore, the HPC supports a dedication of the 2025 Better Connections Plan to Meredith Holch.***

Motion made by Larry Fliegelman. Second provided by Kole. All members were in favor.

The final plan will be provided to the Select Board at their June 26, 2025 meeting with the information regarding the comparison between the two plans (via a Zoning/Planning Memo).

## **Act 181**

The Commission reviewed the initial map from Liam Abbate at NVDA . The map reflects the future land use for NVDA's regional plan. NVDA had also provided updated maps of East Hardwick and Downtown Hardwick. Tracy and Kristen provided an overview of the complex aspects of Act 181. The act creates changes in the Act 250 planning process and shifts the five current designations to a 2 designation (Neighborhood and Center) approach.

At this time, Downtown Hardwick (the current designated downtown) will become a Tier 3 Center – (Advanced Center). The Planned Growth Areas and the Village Areas will become “Neighborhoods.” East Hardwick's Village Center will become a Tier 2 Center (Intermediate Center) with Planned Growth Areas and Village Areas as the Neighborhood classification. The Tier 3 Center and the Tier 2 Center are dictated by the legacy map lines created by the current (but expiring) designation system. The Planned Growth Areas and the Village Areas are noted and created by NVDA on their Future Land Use maps.

Downtown Hardwick is eligible for Tier 1A status – which eliminates Act 250 permitting on all levels within the Tier 3 Center and associated Neighborhood (Application due to the LURB in January 2026). Downtown Hardwick and East Hardwick are also eligible for Tier 1B status – which eliminates Act 250 permitting for housing projects of certain parameters. The Future Land Use map must demonstrate the Tier 1B status for it to be accepted by the State of Vermont.

Application for Tier 1A would require Hardwick to adopt River Corridor bylaw rules. These draft rules will be reviewed at the July 2025 meeting. In addition, the Town would need to adopt regulations that address historical aspects. Tracy and Kristen will continue to review this component.

To retain the Tier 3 Center designation, Hardwick will have additional components to create but the legacy acceptance into the new designation is in place until 2034. The Town will have ample time to adjust and improve our planning processes to retain the Advance Center verification.

## **New Zoning Bylaw Changes:**

The Section 4.13 Mobile Home Park language 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 was reviewed at the June meeting. The Zoning Administrator reviewed the Mobile Home or Manufactured Home language from multiple Vermont towns. This appears to be an overlooked aspect of the integration with the HOME act. Montpelier has the least discriminatory approach but it is tailored to a larger and less rural community. The Planning Commission will continue to review possible approaches. A suggestion was made to remove the category of Mobile Home Park (or Manufactured Housing park). With the exclusion of the category, would the impact be less discriminatory to that type of housing structure or would it be viewed as exclusion of mobile homes/manufactured homes within the town limits? The question will be posed to the Regional Planning Commission.

## **Short Term Rentals:**

N/A

## ***Motion: N/A***

## **Updates from Commission Members:**

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N/A

***Motion: N/A.***

**Updates from the Zoning Administrator:**

There will be a presentation on the Flood Safety Act on Wednesday, June 18 at 6 pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Memorial Building. There will be a Zoom option. The Select Board, Planning Commission and the Conservation Commission have been invited and surrounding towns have received information.

***Motion: To conclude the Hardwick Planning Commission Meeting.***

Ken Davis made the motion and Larry Fliegelman seconded. All members were in favor.

The meeting ended at 8:01 pm.

The next HPC meeting will be at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, July 8, 2025 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Memorial Building.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA