

To: Hardwick Select Board

From: Tracy Martin, Community Development Coordinator, and Kristen Leahy, Zoning and Floodplain Administrator

Summary:

Hardwick is not currently eligible for **Tier 1A designation** under Act 181 because we need to incorporate historical context into our local rulemaking. A possible approach to satisfying that requirement is to seek **Certified Local Government (CLG) status**. Achieving CLG status is a **low-cost, high-benefit step** that opens the door to additional state and federal funding for **historic preservation, community planning, and downtown revitalization**.

1. What is the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program?

The **Certified Local Government (CLG)** program is a preservation partnership among local, state, and federal governments. Administered in Vermont by the **Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP)** in collaboration with the **National Park Service**, the program supports communities in recognizing, protecting, and investing in their historic resources.

Becoming a CLG formalizes a municipality's commitment to historic preservation and makes it eligible for specific technical and financial resources.

2. Why Certified Local Government Matters for Hardwick:

A. Required for Tier 1A Designation

Tier 1A status provides priority access to technical assistance and resources for planning, housing, and infrastructure investments. One core eligibility requirement is incorporation of historical context in our local rulemaking – the Certified Local Government designation satisfies this requirement.

B. Unlocks Dedicated Preservation Funding

Certified Local Government communities are eligible for an annual set-aside of funding from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), administered by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. These grants can be used for:

- Historic district surveys and documentation;
- Building assessments and preservation plans;
- National Register nominations;
- Downtown design standards or architectural guidelines;
- Public education and cultural heritage projects.

C. Strengthens Grant Competitiveness and Local Control

Certified Local Government status elevates Hardwick's credibility when applying for state, federal, or philanthropic funding related to planning, economic development, or downtown revitalization. It also allows us to **formally weigh in** on National Register nominations and planning initiatives that affect our historic resources.

D. Supports Our Village Center Goals

East Hardwick is already a Designated Village Center, and parts of the Hardwick village core are listed in the National Register. Certified Local Government status reinforces these assets by building local capacity, protecting character, and encouraging reinvestment through preservation-minded planning.

E. Minimal Cost, Big Return

Certified Local Government status does **not require hiring new staff** or creating a new department. It simply requires:

- Adoption of a short ordinance to establish a Historic Preservation Commission;
- Appointing qualified local volunteers with interest or expertise in preservation;
- Holding at least four public meetings per year;
- Maintaining basic inventory and communication with the State.

3. Requirements for Certification

To qualify for Certified Local Government designation, the Town must:

- **Establish a Historic Preservation Commission** with 3–9 members appointed by the Select Board. A majority of members must have interest, experience, or training in historic preservation-related fields.
- **Adopt a local ordinance** to formally create the Historic Preservation Commission and authorize preservation activities, using the model ordinance provided by the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation.
- **Maintain a system** for the inventory and survey of local historic resources, coordinated with the State's databases.
- **Provide public participation** in local preservation activities, including review of proposed nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Adhere to federal and state procedures** for Certified Local Governments, as outlined by the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation and the National Park Service.

4. Draft Motion

To authorize the Town of Hardwick staff to pursue a Certified Local Government designation in accordance with the requirements of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service.