

Hardwick Planning Commission
October 7, 2025
Hybrid – In-Person and Zoom options
Minutes

HPC Members Present: Dave Gross, Chair; Kole; Bud Stevens; Larry Fliegelman; Jim Lewis; and Gillian D’Acierno (Alternate)

HPC Members Absent: Michael Haveson and Ken Davis (Gillian D’Acierno assumes his seat)

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

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:30 pm. Kole moved to approve the agenda. Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor. Kole moved to approve the draft September 9, 2025 minutes as written. Gillian D’Acierno seconded. All members were in favor.

Updates from the Community Development Coordinator – Tracy Martin

Transportation Alternatives – The Concepts Presentation for the Mill Street and Main Street Scoping Study will occur on November 5 at 6:30 on the third floor of the Memorial Building. There will be a Zoom option available. Three concepts are being developed for the community’s consideration, and the chosen option will be developed with cost estimates. Items within each concept can be combined or subtracted to generate the final selection.

Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) – Hardwick applied for an implementation grant and a planning grant. The planning grant focuses on the phased design and engineering that is needed for downtown Hardwick. The implementation grant focuses on the floodplain restoration of the HED property below the intersection of Cooper and the Lamoille River.

Hardwick Downtown Partnership –The Tree planting grant is nearly complete with 29 out of 30 trees planted. Waiting for the Sycamore.

New Zoning Bylaw Changes:

The proposed zoning bylaw changes were forwarded to the Regional Planning Commission for their input. Alison Low of NVDA had a selection of comments about the Private Family Cemeteries section of the update. Her comments and the proposed language were then forwarded to the Municipal Center at VLCT. The staff attorney had different concerns than the RPC planner and recommended that the town forward the updated document to our Town Attorney. After discussion with the Town Manager’s office, the Planning Commission was asked to wait on the inclusion of this section until next April or May.

Motion: To remove the Private Family Cemeteries language from the current draft update to the Hardwick Unified Development Bylaws.

Bud Stevens made the motion and Gillian D’Acierno seconded. All members were in favor.

HPC Accomplishments Review:

As the Hardwick Planning Commission shifts gears from Zoning Bylaws to the next Municipal Plan, the Commission spent a portion of the meeting looking at the accomplishments from the past 6 years. The previous town plan was completed in 2019. Despite the disruption of a global pandemic and repeated flooding, the Town of Hardwick has delivered more than 40 major planning or implementation accomplishments since the 2019 Town Plan. With support from the Hardwick Planning Commission, the community has modernized its regulatory framework, strengthened resilience, and invested in housing and economic growth.

Top 10 Highlights

1. Modernized Bylaws – Adopted new zoning bylaws addressing housing, floodplain protections, cannabis, accessory dwelling units, and a proposed new East Hardwick Village Center Zoning District.
2. Village & Downtown Designations – Secured Designated Downtown status for Hardwick Village and maintained Village Center Designation for East Hardwick, unlocking state tax credits and funding opportunities.
3. Economic Development Anchors – Participated with the initial planning of the Yellow Barn and Business Accelerator and advanced revitalization planning through Better Connections for East Hardwick Village Plan
4. Flood Resilience – Advanced the Granite Street Historic District Flood Resilience Plan, adopted updated floodplain bylaws, completed the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update (2023), and prepared proposed river corridor rules.
5. Natural Resources – Supported a proposal for a new Town Forest on Buffalo Mountain, participated in the Natural Resources Inventory process, and participated in studies of the Jackson Dam and Mackville/Nichols/East Long Pond dams.
6. Public Facilities – Participated in planning for a combined Fire Station, Town Garage, and Emergency Services facility on Creamery Road and in evaluating the future of the Wastewater Treatment Facility following repeated flooding.
7. Community Assets – Participated in the remodeling and addition to the new Jeudevine Library as a modern civic and educational hub.
8. Transportation & Walkability – Participated in the Downtown Paving Project, invested in LVRT improvements (Hardwick & East Hardwick), advanced the Main & Mill Street Scoping Study (VHB), staffed and chaired a Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee, and completed multiple AARP/Local Motion walkability studies for village streets and sidewalks.
9. Energy Innovation – Advanced solar projects at multiple sites, including former gravel pits, Center Road, and the former Inn by the River site.
10. State & Regional Alignment – Participated in Act 181 Tier 1A/1B discussions, preparing Hardwick to benefit from new state planning and investment tools.

2027 Municipal Plan Update:

The Municipal Plan update is due in November of 2027. After discussion, the following process items will be reviewed:

1. Assurance that the zoning bylaws and the municipal plan correlate. The Hardwick Unified Development Bylaws need to be rooted in the Municipal Plan
2. Communication with the public and future investors/developers/buyers. An interactive map (story map) on the website with various components (like housing or schools) and links to associated zoning bylaws was suggested. Money would need to be obtained for this approach.
3. A possible new chapter or language on Health and Wellness. Alison Link from Lamoille Healthy Families has offered to assist. Kristen Leahy will meet with her on Friday, October 10, to initiate an interaction.
4. A new Municipal Plan Climate Resilience toolkit is being developed by the State of Vermont. The Climate Action office is interested in working with Hardwick as one of the pilot towns. Kristen will reach out and request additional information (already done).
5. Updating of the Plan Implementation – including which tasks are accomplished or no longer viable.

HPC members were requested to consider how the Commission will proceed with the Municipal Plan update and what capacity is available from members. In addition, members were asked to think about which plan chapters would be of interest. A chart of the levels of update needed was generated by the Zoning Administrator and provided to the members.

Chapter	Goal(s)	Policies	Actions / Recommendations	Update Priorities (2025–27)
1. Land Use & Development	Maintain village-centered development, rural working lands outside.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage clustering. • Flood Hazard District protections. • Higher density near centers. • Mixed-use encouraged. • Fit scale/context. • Discourage costly service extensions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain character when subdividing/building. 	<p>High – Update to reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New East Hardwick Village Center zoning district. • River Corridor Overlay adoption.
2. Historic, Scenic & Archeological Resources	Identify, protect, and preserve historic, scenic, archaeological features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development in historic districts must fit. • Towers/large structures carefully sited. • Protect views and vegetation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Historical Society. • Maintain Village Center Designations. • Explore tax stabilization for façades. • Budget for historic structures. 	<p>High – Add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granite Street Historic District Flood Resilience Project. • CLG (Certified Local Government) process

				<p>exploration.</p> <p>Designated Downtown/Tier 1A and the Steps.</p>
3. Housing	Provide safe, affordable, diverse housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multifamily in villages. • Affordable housing = efficient design, close to jobs. • Support aging in place. 	<i>(No specific actions in 2019).</i>	<p>High – Update with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 Bylaw housing reforms. • Senior housing & special needs gaps. • Flood-safe housing standards.
4. Economic Development	Resilient economy based on ag, small business, and light industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable extraction. • Support recreation/tourism. • Allow small home enterprises. • Encourage value-added industries. • Promote “buy local.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate Downtown Designation. • Funding for new industrial park. • Identify ag/value-added expansion sites. • Improve downtown & East Hardwick village centers. 	<p>High – Reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yellow Barn Business Accelerator. • Downtown & East Hardwick Village Center Designations. Better Connections • Flood-related economic recovery.
5. Land Resources	Protect farmland, forest, sand/gravel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extraction allowed w/ protections. • No building on >25% slopes. • Avoid fragmentation. • Minimize loss of ag soils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support conservation easements & development rights. 	<p>Medium – Add Act 171 forest block/connectivity updates and resilience linkages.</p> <p>Integrate Act 181</p> <p>Integrate Natural</p>

				Resources Inventory
6. Natural Areas & Wildlife	Maintain wildlife diversity and abundance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect critical habitat. • Avoid fragmenting core areas. • Protect rare species with buffers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission support for landowners. • Conduct Natural Resources Inventory. 	Medium – Update with Biofinder 2025 data and climate adaptation priorities. And Natural Resources Inventory
7. Water Resources	Preserve/improve surface & groundwater.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buffers: 50' Class 2 wetlands, 25' Class 3. • Erosion control required. • Impervious surfaces <10%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education on invasives. • Wetland inventory. • Study Renaud Rd. Source Protection. 	High – Reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFAS & groundwater issues. • Updated stormwater regulations. • Drought/water shortage planning.
8. Flood Resilience	Build a flood-resilient community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid development in hazard/river corridors. • Protect floodplains & upland forests. • Promote preparedness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update LEOP & HMP. • Meet VTrans standards. • Update culvert/bridge inventory. • Replace undersized culverts. • Relocate/fireproof Fire Station & HED garage. 	Critical – Must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023–2024 flood damage, FEMA buyouts, NRCS EWP projects. • Act 121 Flood Safety Act requirements. • Fire Station relocation feasibility.
9. Public & Private Facilities & Services	Maintain essential services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue water/sewer upgrades. • Support hydrants & mutual aid. • ERAF & hazard mitigation compliance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and invest in facilities/services. 	High – Update with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Station relocation project. w/Garage &

				<p>Rescue Squad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wastewater Treatment Facility vulnerabilities. • Neighbor to Neighbor Supply Center & volunteer system & NEKO/Civic Standard MOUs. <p>And Jeudevine Library</p>
10. Education	Ensure quality education for all ages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support OSSU/Hazen Union. • Encourage adult/technical education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor governance/facilities . 	<p>Low–Medium – Minor updates; include OSSU role in resilience education. May grow depending on State</p> <p>Movement of young ones to Greensboro</p>
11. Transportation	Provide safe, efficient, multi-modal system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain highways. • Support transit, rail, walking/biking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with VTrans. 	<p>Medium – Add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LVRT connections. • Pedestrian safety in East Hardwick and downtown.
12. Energy	Encourage efficiency & renewable energy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote renewable siting, efficiency in heating/electricity/transport . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support weatherization, EV infrastructure, work with RPC. 	<p>High – Update for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act 250 energy standards. • Renewable siting conflicts. • Climate resilience co-benefits.

13. Regional Compatibility	Align with regional and state planning goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate consistency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with NVDA during review. 	
14. Appendix A – Implementation Tools	Tools for implementing plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning, subdivision, capital budget, conservation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply state/federal programs. 	Medium – Update with new state programs: CRDMF, Act 181 Tier 1A/1B

Updates from Commission Members:

N/A

Motion: N/A.

Updates from the Zoning Administrator:

N/A

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

Larry Fliegelman made the motion and Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor.

The meeting ended at 7:50 pm.

The next HPC meeting will be at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, November 11, 2025, on the 3rd Floor of the Memorial Building.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA