

Hardwick Planning Commission
June 9, 2026
Hybrid – In-Person and Zoom options

HPC Members Present: Dave Gross, Chair; Larry Fliegelman; Jim Lewis; Kole; Teddy Wenneker (First Alternate) and Ken Davis

HPC Members Absent: Bud Stevens and Michael Haveson (Teddy Wenneker assumes his vote)

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:31 pm. Jim Lewis moved to approve the agenda. Ken Davis seconded. All members were in favor. Ken Davis moved to approve the draft May 12, 2026 minutes as written. Kole seconded. All members were in favor.

Updates from the Community Development Coordinator

N/A

Motion: N/A

2027 Municipal Plan Update:

The survey was available electronically and on paper until June 5, 2026. 238 survey responses were received. There is 27-page compilation of all responses from the survey. In addition, the ZA created a 9-page summary of the results.

Open-ended responses largely reinforced the results of the multiple-choice questions. The same themes appeared repeatedly regardless of question format, suggesting a high degree of consistency in the feedback received.

Preliminary – Part II - Hardwick Municipal Plan Community Survey Results

Topic	Key Observations from Responses
Survey Status	Approximately 238 responses were received through both online and paper outreach efforts. The survey remains closed June 5, 2026.
Respondent Background	Most respondents live in Hardwick year-round. Many report being connected to the community for more than 20 years, suggesting that many responses reflect long-term resident perspectives and lived experience within the community.
Transportation & Daily Activity	Most respondents rely on driving. Many also report regularly walking and biking in town. Downtown Hardwick continues to play an important role in daily life, with many respondents reporting that they visit downtown daily or several times per week.
Community Values	The most frequently identified value was Hardwick's strong sense of community and neighborliness. Other commonly selected values included local businesses and the food economy, natural beauty and outdoor access, historic and small-town character, and

Topic	Key Observations from Responses
	walkability or trail connections.
Top Community Priorities (10-Year Outlook)	Affordable and diverse housing options near village centers was the most frequently selected priority. Flood resilience and infrastructure improvements also rank highly. Supporting small businesses, strengthening downtown, improving walking and biking conditions, and maintaining affordability emerged consistently throughout the responses
Housing	Strong support continued for expanding housing opportunities. Frequently supported housing types included affordable homes, housing near village centers, accessory dwelling units, mixed-use housing, and senior housing. Responses also reflected broader concerns regarding affordability, housing costs, property taxes, and retaining local residents and young families within the community.
Downtown Vitality	Respondents expressed strong interest in attracting additional businesses and restaurants, improving pedestrian safety and parking conditions, supporting storefront development, and encouraging housing near or above downtown businesses. Flood-safe infrastructure, streetscape improvements, recreation connections, and public gathering spaces were also identified as important.
Emergency Preparedness & Resilience	Residents emphasized the importance of clear communication during storms and flooding, reliable evacuation routes, resilient infrastructure, safe bridges, drainage improvements, and continued investment in flood mitigation and emergency preparedness planning.
Food Access & Wellness	Local grocery stores remain the primary food source for most households, though many also rely on out-of-town stores. Gardens, local farms, and farmers markets were important food sources. A local pharmacy was the most frequently identified wellness need by a substantial margin. Access to healthcare, recreation opportunities, and social connection also emerged as important themes.
Community Communication	Residents most commonly receive information through Front Porch Forum, the Hardwick Gazette, and word of mouth. Preferred future communication methods continued to strongly favor Front Porch Forum, the town website, and Town email updates. Responses also reflected interest in clear and consistent communication regarding Town projects and long-term planning efforts.
Overall Themes	The expanded survey responses continued to reinforce many of the same themes identified in the preliminary review. Affordability, resilience, downtown vitality, infrastructure, community character, and economic sustainability remained recurring priorities throughout the broader response pool.

There is a file on the Planning Commission page that has the Municipal Plan and all associated documents, including the community survey and each chapter as a separate entity. The file will be in the Agendas and Minutes for the HPC. [Planning Commission \(HPC\) – Hardwick, Vermont](#)

Broader Overarching Themes			
Affordability	Housing costs Property taxes Utility costs Healthcare expenses Economic Opportunity		
Resilience	Flooding Infrastructure vulnerabilities Emergency prep. Housing recovery Protection of natural resources		
Walkability and Connectivity	Connected sidewalks Trails Transportation options Recreation opportunities Village Centers		
Community Wellness	Healthcare access Pharmacy services Recreation Food access Aging in place Social connection Mental Health		
Community Identity	Sense of Community Local businesses Natural beauty Recreation opportunities Historic Character		

Larry suggested adding a box and graphics for each of the overarching themes in the required chapters. Dave suggested a final box at the end or in the beginning with survey connections. The Commission will consider how to weave the thematic connections throughout the plan.

A recommendation was to include an introduction to this update. The introduction would have the themes and would talk about the survey results. For example, the introduction would have language that indicates that the reader will find “community conversations and concerns.” The results would be incorporated and highlighted.

A surprising aspect of the survey results was the cyclical nature of the concerns and the strong connections between the themes.

The idea of adding a new chapter was discussed. A Food and Wellness (or Food Security and Community Wellness) chapter will be drafted for the update.

Staff will begin the process of preparing draft chapter updates. In July, the Planning Commission will have a draft version of Housing to consider. Draft copies will be sent out on Friday, prior to the meeting to allow more time for the members to consider and review. (edited: *the July chapter will be Economic Development rather than Housing since there is a new statute requirement for Housing*). Each chapter will have several implementation/action items to choose from. These will be based on the survey responses and statute requirements.

Updates from Commission Members:

Dave Gross reported that EHNO will be implementing their plan to install a trailhead in East Hardwick. The two FRCF buyouts on East Church Street have also been purchased by the town and will be demolished this summer. The LVRT trailhead is within walking distance of the two parcels and there may be additional opportunities for on-street parking.

Motion: None

Updates from the Zoning Administrator: N/A

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 7:57 pm.

The next HPC meeting will be at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, July 14, 2026 on the 3rd Floor of the Memorial Building.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA