

Hardwick Planning Commission
July 14, 2026
Hybrid – In-Person and Zoom options – DRAFT Minutes

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

HPC Members Absent: Bud Stevens and Ken Davis (Teddy Wenneker assumes his vote)

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator; Sam Koehler from the Water Resources Institute at UVM; and Paul Fixx, Editor of the Hardwick Gazette.

Chair Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:32 pm. Larry Fliegelman moved to approve the agenda. Teddy Wenneker seconded. All members were in favor. Larry Fliegleman moved to approve the draft June 9, 2026 minutes as written. Teddy Wenneker seconded. All members were in favor.

Updates from the Community Development Coordinator

N/A

Vermont Mesonet Presentation

Sam Koehler from the Water Resources Institute at the University of Vermont attended the meeting to provide an overview of the Vermont Mesonet.

The Vermont Mesonet is a statewide weather monitoring network designed to observe weather at the mesoscale, including localized events such as thunderstorms and flooding. The network collects real-time weather data to improve monitoring and forecasting.

Data collected by the Mesonet is publicly available and uploaded every five minutes. Each station consists of a 33-foot-tall weather tower within a 33-by-33-foot fenced enclosure. The instrumentation is powered by solar panels.

The information collected will support emergency management, dam safety, weather forecasting, and other public safety applications. UVM is also working with the agricultural community to provide valuable weather information to farmers, as well as with VTrans, recreation and tourism organizations, and utility providers.

The first Vermont Mesonet station was installed at the Caledonia County Fairgrounds in Lyndon on May 5, 2026, and is already providing valuable weather data.

UVM is working with Snug Valley Farm as the potential host site for a future station in Hardwick. Installation could occur as early as 2027.

Data collected by the Mesonet will be shared with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), helping supplement existing observations and improve national weather models over time.

Initial funding for the project was provided through the Leahy Institute at the University of Vermont. Each Mesonet station costs approximately \$50,000 for equipment, with an additional installation cost of approximately \$20,000.

Sam Koehler emphasized that the Mesonet is a passive weather monitoring system. It is not a radar installation, cellular tower, or 5G facility and does not emit radiofrequency signals. The station transmits collected data using the cellular network but does not generate emissions comparable to a cell tower. The installation does not include lights or audible equipment.

UVM is also exploring options to provide a public-facing website where community members can view the station's weather data in real time.

The proposed installation would require a zoning permit as an accessory structure. No Development Review Board or Select Board approval is required. The presentation was provided for informational purposes only.

2027 Municipal Plan Update:

The Economic Development chapter was distributed the previous week to allow Planning Commission members additional time to review it before the meeting. The chapter begins with an introduction followed by a section titled "What We Heard from the Community."

Extensive discussion followed. Members recommended several grammatical edits, moving the community quotations from boxed callouts into the body of the text (similar to the 2019 Town Plan), and incorporating supporting survey data throughout the chapter where appropriate.

The suggested revisions will be incorporated into the draft chapter. Review of the Economic Development chapter will continue at the August meeting, after which the Commission will begin work on the Historic, Scenic, and Archaeological Resources chapter.

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		

Updates from Commission Members:

None

Updates from the Zoning Administrator:

The Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE), in partnership with the Hardwick Area Food Pantry, is preparing a grant application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The application is due on July 15, prior to the July 16 Select Board meeting.

Katt Tolman, Grants Manager for CAE, requested a letter of support from the Hardwick Planning Commission. The support requested is based on the proposal's alignment with the Planning Commission's work on the Municipal Town Plan, including the community priorities identified through the recent public survey. Staff also provided CAE with a summary of relevant survey findings that support the community need for the proposed project.

Motion: To authorize staff to prepare and sign, on behalf of the Hardwick Planning Commission, a letter of support for the USDA grant application submitted by the Center for an Agricultural Economy and the Hardwick Area Food Pantry, recognizing the proposal's alignment with the goals and priorities identified in the Municipal Town Plan.

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

New state statute requires municipal plans to address the housing targets established by the Regional Planning Commission (NVDA). Municipalities must explain how they intend to meet these targets or identify the factors that may limit their ability to do so.

Hardwick's assigned housing targets were developed without a detailed housing build-out or capacity analysis. As a result, the Town currently lacks the information needed to evaluate where additional housing could realistically occur under existing zoning and development constraints.

Staff has begun exploring the scope, cost, and timeline for completing a housing build-out and capacity study. Based on preliminary discussions, the work could likely be completed within approximately one year.

Kristen is seeking the Planning Commission's support to pursue grant funding for this study. A housing build-out and capacity analysis would provide foundational information to guide future planning efforts, including identifying areas suitable for new housing outside flood hazard and river corridor areas, evaluating development constraints and infrastructure capacity, quantifying vacant or underutilized buildings, and supporting implementation of new housing programs such as CHIP funding. Like the hydraulic modeling completed by SLR Consulting, this study would provide a long-term planning tool that could inform multiple projects, grant applications, zoning decisions, and future planning efforts.

Motion: To support the Zoning Administrator in pursuing grant funding to retain a consultant to complete a housing build-out and capacity study for the Town of Hardwick.

Teddy Wenneker made the motion and Larry Fliegelman seconded. All members were in favor.

Motion: To conclude the Hardwick Planning Commission Meeting.

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

The meeting ended at 8:03 pm.

The next HPC meeting will be at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, August 11, 2026 on the first floor of the Memorial Building (due to primary elections on the 3rd floor).

~ Respectfully submitted, Kristen Leahy, ZA