

Hardwick Planning Commission  
February 9, 2016 Work Session  
Hardwick Memorial Building  
Minutes

HPC Members Present: Diane Grenkow, Chair Dave Gross, Jim Lewis, Joyce Mandeville, Ken Davis, and Shawn Ainsworth  
HPC members Absent: N/A

Also Present: Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning Administrator (ZA); Alison Low, Planner for Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA); Jim Lovinsky, Executive Director, Lamoille Housing Partnership; and Michael Bielawski, Gazette Reporter

Dave Gross opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Motion was made to approve the agenda as published by Joyce Mandeville, Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor.

Joyce Mandeville moved to approve the January 12, 2016 minutes as written, Jim Lewis seconded. All members were in favor.

Jim Lovinsky, Executive Director of the Lamoille Housing Partnership, presented an overview of the planned projects. LHP currently has 59 Apartments in 5 properties, 32 mobile home lots, and 4 commercial spaces in Hardwick.

Project 1 is the Evergreen Manor Mobile Home Park – this will entail the purchase of 11 high-efficiency modular homes (2 are already here). Solar PV panels for affordability. Project commencement scheduled for the Summer of 2016.

Project 2 will combine the Hardwick Housing and Highland Hill properties. The project focuses on upgrading the four buildings in a variety of ways. This has significant challenges including the condition of the Church Street building. A fall 2017 start date is targeted.

Housing Challenges in Hardwick include:

- Old housing stock in poor condition
- Absentee landlords
- Few incentives to update housing or create new
- Rents are lower than Morrisville or Montpelier
- Could pose impediments to economic development
- Workforce housing is challenging 80-120% AMI

Alison Low from NVDA met with the HPC to begin the process of updating the Hardwick Unified Development Bylaws. This work is financially supported by the receipt of a Vermont Municipal Planning Grant (18 month grant cycle). Alison will be creating a new master version of the bylaws and all work will be tracked. Discussion initially focused on the following technical changes, which were suggested by the ZA:

I. Technical Changes:

- How ZA appointed (See Howland verbiage)
- Incorporating interim provision for agricultural processing use into the bylaw.
- Amending signage regulations for clarity regarding temporary signs and sandwich boards – sign regulations – clarity/expansion.
- Expanding the authority of Zoning Administrator in accordance with 24 V.S.A. 4464(c).
- Include a table with the ROW distances for the roads in Hardwick.
- Definition of Boundary Line Adjustments and how process?

- Replacing ZBA/PC with DRB/PC – define individual commission jobs/tasks
- Decision needed from DRB within 45 days not 60 days (page 43).
- Remove references to Section/Article 10.2 – does not exist.
- Existing small lots and subdivision of merged small lots – remove necessity as of new adoption date? See Hinesburg language (pg 78)
- New right-of-way and minor subdivisions.
- Update language for renewable energy to accurately reflect State Statute.
- Update language for telecom to reflect State Statute.
- Define “Agribusiness”
- Define “Contractors Yard” – See Hinesburg
- Time frame for removing damaged structures should be added.
- Define and expand on Forestry versus. Forest Product Processing – See Hyde Park Def.
- Include maps of Source Protection overlay
- Definition/change to Lake buffer – State jurisdiction.
- Waiver language
- Enforcement language

Alison referenced the need to include the new requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units (re: Flood Plain), as well as the curb cut requirements for state roads in Site Plan Review. She discussed the need to better integrate the flood hazard overlay into the current plan (ie. in the exemptions and subdivision review sections). She reported that the state no longer requires the merger of non-conforming lots (since 2004) – Hardwick could identify certain districts in which a required merger would be beneficial instead of a town-wide requirement.

Waiver language was discussed. Different options will be reviewed in the future but the Commission will need to decide if this tool is appropriate for Hardwick.

The petitioned bylaw amendment highlighted perceived deficiencies in the enforcement policy language. Alison will review the current enforcement language and make suggestions about its efficacy.

Discussion was also held regarding junkyards and enforcement of state statutes. Alison informed the Commission that the State wishes to see an enforcement attempt made at the local level (either through zoning or a town ordinance) to receive assistance from the State’s sole investigator. She will forward further information regarding this topic to the board.

Consistency regarding “steep slope” language will be sought in the Bylaw document (percentage and definition).

The initial bylaw update will focus on technical issues. Later updates will address the Flood Hazard Overlay review and the River Corridors, as well as the Performance Standards. The final review will focus on fragmentation of working lands, soil overlays, etc. This final aspect will need to include inventories and a mapping element.

Over the next month, Alison and Kristen will begin the process of suggesting possible updates to the current zoning bylaw. A draft version will be examined at the next meeting. A target completion date of the first update would be late summer/early fall (September).

The next scheduled meeting will be March 8, 2016 at 6:30 pm. Alison Low will be in attendance.

Motion to adjourn at 8:20 pm made by Shawn Ainsworth, Joyce Mandeville seconded. All members were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristen Leahy, ZA