



**Town of Underhill**  
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**HARVEST CROSSING IMPLEMENTATION GRANT  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES  
Friday, April 5, 2024, 6:00 P.M.  
Underhill Town Hall**

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**Present:**

Selectboard Members: Bob Stone, Patricia Richards

Town Staff: Brad Holden, Russ Clark

Others: Dan Manz, Maureen Collins-Kolb (remote), Jonah Kolb (remote), Sandy (remote), Lynne Kemp (remote), Janet (remote), Bob Carr, Gail Canedy (remote)

The public hearing started at 6:00. Bob Stone explained that a quorum of the selectboard was not present, so the selectboard meeting would not be held, but the Harvest Crossing public hearing would proceed as it did not require a quorum of the selectboard.

Brad Holden read the warning for the hearing:

*The Town of Underhill is considering making application to the State of Vermont for an Implementation Grant under the Vermont Community Development Program. An in-person and remote option public hearing will be held on Friday, April 5, 2024 at: 6:00 PM at the Underhill Town Hall, 12 Pleasant Valley Road, Underhill, VT to obtain the views of citizens on community development, to furnish information concerning the amount of funds available and the range of community development activities that may be undertaken under this program, the impact to any historic and archaeological resources that may be affected by the proposed project, and to give affected citizens the opportunity to examine the proposed statement of projected use of these funds. The proposal is to apply for \$500,000 in VCDP Funds which will be used to accomplish the following activities: Build a road and establish the infrastructure to create a group of affordable homes; any remaining funds will be applied to the home construction.*

Dan Manz, representing the United Church of Underhill, said about 2 years ago the church came to the board to ask for support on an application for a planning grant related to this project. A \$50K planning grant was obtained. Now the church is seeking an implementation grant. Only municipalities can receive this grant. The town can receive the money and sub grant it to the church, as was done with the planning grant. The mechanism would be identical for this implementation grant. The church will do the work and comply with all state and federal requirements for the funding. The church will pay up front, then submit a document to the town. The town will send it to the Vermont Community Development Program and get reimbursement. Then the town will write a check to the church.

The church has purchased the parcel where the development will take place. They are asking the Community Development Program for up to \$500K to be used for infrastructure development – installing road, running utilities, implementing a surface water management system, etc. Once they make it through the DRB process they will turn construction-ready lots over to Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity, who will build the homes. The homes will remain perpetually affordable. If we submit an application for this funding cycle we have access to leftover FY23 funds the Community Development Program has. That is important because if we access future funds the federal government is phasing in Build America, Buy America requirements and any material

that would go into the project would have to comply with those requirements. If we use the FY23 funds, only steel is subject to BABA requirements. BABA requirements would elevate prices and add administrative complexity.

This hearing is one of the requirements for the application. Brad said the selectboard will consider signing the resolution needed for the application at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Dan Manz said applying for the grant is cost neutral for the town, other than some time Sherri Morin, Jennifer Silpe-Katz and Brad Holden will need to spend helping to apply for reimbursement. This hearing is not about endorsement of the project. It is about applying for the grant. The church is still working through the DRB process to get approval and permitting necessary to begin construction.

Lynne Kemp said her property abuts the property in question. She wants to learn more about the project.

Brad said Harvest Crossing has received an acceptance of sketch plan after two DRB hearings. The acceptance letter from the DRB states some things the DRB will be looking for in its future reviews. The next step will be preliminary subdivision review. Then there will be a final subdivision review. All abutters will be warned of hearings for those next two steps. Notice of the sketch plan review was sent to every abutting landowner even though it was not required.

Lynne asked about the timeframe for the process. Brad said the DRB's acceptance letter requires an application and materials for preliminary subdivision review to be submitted within one year. Dan Manz said the Harvest Crossing group is working with an engineer who is addressing many of the questions asked by the DRB. He thinks they will submit materials to the DRB within a month and then a hearing will be scheduled.

Lynne asked if the sketch plan dated March 1, 2023 is the most recent. Brad said yes. Dan said the plan shows 6 single-family homes and one duplex. Brad said there is a large block of land on the parcel that would be common space and would remain undeveloped.

Maureen Collins-Kolb said she strongly supports the town helping this grant application go through. She thinks it is a good use of collaborative effort between the town and the church.

Jonah Kolb asked, this grant would be additional money coming into our community, right? Dan said yes; it would be money outside of the town budget. Jonah said he thinks it is valuable if we can bring in money from outside Underhill. He thinks additional housing stock is likely to bring younger people into the community. He is in favor of the project.

Patty Richards said the town is coming into this because it has to be a municipality that applies for the grant. Our contribution will be minimal staff time. Brad said the staff time is substantial. But affordable housing is in our town plan and is important for our community.

Patty said if the grant comes through she understands that Vermont Community Development reviews expenses. If an expense is not approved, the town is not on the hook for it, right? Dan said that is right. Patty said there is no liability for the town. Dan agreed. Brad said the subgrant agreement will have guarantees to the town in it that Harvest Crossing will follow required procedures. There will be an even more in-depth subgrant agreement for this grant, with monetary guarantees. Patty said there will be no financial risk for the town. Dan said the church is at risk because they are paying invoices up front. If an expense is determined to be ineligible the church, not the town, is responsible for it.

Brad said there will be another opportunity for comments and questions at the selectboard meeting where the selectboard takes action on the grant application.

The public hearing was closed at 6:30.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*