

# THE Hardwick Gazette

INDEPENDENT LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1889

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Wednesday, August 19, 2020

Volume 131 Number 33

## DRB Again Denies HCA Request

by June Pichel Cook

GREENSBORO – The Development Review Board (DRB) upheld its decision to deny the Highland Center for the Arts' appeal for relief from Condition #5 of its Conditional Use Permit.

The board's reconsideration of the DRB's June 18, 2020 decision, rendered on August 17, was unanimous.

However, on a split decision, the board granted a summer reprieve until October 15 from Condition #5, Condition #5 prohibits sound amplification at outdoor events.

On July 8, Attorney Robert Halpert appealed the board's earlier denial, citing deficiencies in its decision. Testimony given by Halpert and HCA Executive Director Keisha Luce stated there would not be an adverse effect on sound pollution in the area.

Halpert argued that not enough objective evidence was presented at the June hearing to enable the DRB to make a decision. No factual evidence was presented by other witnesses. A sound test was conducted on July 2 to provide objective evidence for the DRB's reconsideration and its findings were presented at the August 10 hearing.

The board commenced closed deliberations immediately after the hearing, recessed, and met again the morning of August 11. The DRB was not convinced to change its mind.

Under Section 5.4 of the Greensboro Zoning By-Law, the DRB found, generally: "The use of amplified sound would adversely affect the character of the area." In its decision, the board cited testimony from Julie Brochu, a neighbor, who heard music from inside the HCA several times and once, when a door was left open, the sound had awakened her.

The board noted: "Although the HCA apologized when she called and solved the problem, this is not indicative of, nor in keeping with the character of a rural community, especially since it has happened more than once."

See DENIES, 2



photo by Doug McClure

The Perseid Meteor Shower as captured just off Porter Brook Road in Hardwick on August 12-13.

## Primaries Draw Record Turnout

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – Area town clerks said the August 11 primary saw record voter turnout in some locations and strong turnout overall. Those who responded said the mail-in ballot voting process went smoothly.

According to Town Clerk

Alberta Miller, Hardwick's total turnout was 651, surpassing the highest previous turnout in 2016 of 506 and nearly matching the turnout of the Presidential Primaries in March. Calais, Wolcott, and Walden set records for total ballots cast, according to those town clerks.

Walden Town Clerk Lina

Smith said that, despite the large number of ballots, "everything went very well." She added, "We do have a fair number of ballots that did not come back so I will try to gauge if this was mail problems or if they decided not to vote after receiving the ballots."

Craftsbury Town Clerk Assistant Michelle Warren said the only issue she encountered was that some voters forgot to sign their ballots.

"There were a few people we had to remind to sign the ballot, but overall we feel the process ran smoothly, including the mail function," she said.

Calais Town Clerk Judy Fitch Robert described processing the voluminous mail-in/absentee votes as "a new experience" requiring "a great deal more administrative labor and time."

Of the 672 ballots cast, 588 were absentees, Robert said, easily surpassing previous records for voter participation.

Robert praised the voting process in Vermont and said the only issue was a jammed tabulator that was quickly replaced.

"The Vermont Secretary of

See TURNOUT, 3



photo by Vanessa Fournier

This 1984 international pumper from the Hardwick Fire Department will be up for sale and will be replaced with a 2020 mini pumper. The new truck is not expected to arrive until June of 2021. The voters of the Town of Hardwick passed a bond vote on August 11 for \$275,000 to acquire a replacement fire truck. The bond passed by a vote of 472-169.