



Town of Hinesburg, Vermont  
Application form for Town Commission, Board, and Committee Appointments

Please supply answers to the following. The Town will provide access to a computer and printer for any applicant for the purpose of completing this form.

Name of Applicant: Grace Amapo Ciffo Date: 11/24/12  
Mailing Address: 1695 Baldwin Rd. Hinesburg VT 05461  
Phone Number: (802) 233-2176 E-mail Address: gracesbistro@gmail.com  
Name of Commission, Board, or Committee: Planning Commission

Hinesburg Resident:  Y / N (circle one)

Hinesburg Resident for how long? 35 / NA (years)

See attached

- 1) Review the Mission Statement of the Commission, Board, or Committee you are applying to serve on and explain how you will aid the group achieve said Mission.
- 2) Please share your thoughts about implementation of at least two of the Top Priority Goals and Recommendations in the latest Town Plan (Section 9, page 75), as it relates to the Commission, Board, or Commission on which you are applying to serve.
- 3) Review the scheduled meeting day/time of the Commission, Board, or Committee along with the length of the term of the position. Will you be able to regularly make the meetings?: Y / N Will you be able to serve for the term of the position? Y / N
- 4) Please introduce yourself to the Selectboard by providing a short cover letter and/or a resume.

1) I will help the Planning Commission to keep Hinesburg's land-use planning current and just by bringing a well-rounded perspective to the commission. As a native of Hinesburg who jointly owns several hundred acres, I have personal experience of owning both agricultural and residentially zoned land in Hinesburg and thus understand what often comes along with that ownership: the expectation of certain autonomy over one's property and a desire to preserve or grow its monetary value. On the other hand, as an avid environmental conservationist, and a parent raising young children in Hinesburg, I am protective of the Hinesburg I have known and loved. I could never be happy living in an urban environment and I think most of my neighbors feel the same (and that is why we all live here, pay taxes here, happily shovel and plow our driveways, buy 4-wheel drive cars, pay for septic systems, artesian wells - all the additional expenses that can come with living in a rural area). After living all over the country and even abroad, I chose to settle down in my hometown because I think it provides an excellent lifestyle. I believe that because of Hinesburg's proximity to Burlington and Williston, it is particularly important that we steward our town's growth or lack thereof prudently so that the agricultural and manufacturing roots that made Hinesburg the town it is are preserved - in community spirit, economy, aesthetics, a healthy habitat for our wildlife, our water, our trees and plants, and our soil. Hinesburg's fate should never resemble a Joni Mitchell song (i.e. "They paved Paradise and put in a Parking Lot"), but it also should not be a museum or a resort community. It is a "real" town, with balanced citizens, people who need to work, who love to get outside to enjoy nature, neighbors, walks in the woods as well as sidewalks that make moving about in the village easy and fun...and that is exactly the balanced perspective that I could bring to the Planning Commission. I have unique perspective but no particular agenda, other than to make Hinesburg the best town possible for everyone who lives here - not just the loudest or most high profile.

2)

a) I have been excited throughout the construction of new sidewalks and bike paths within the town center. I believe that an awful lot of Hinesburg's residents will use these pathways frequently, but I feel that more central and clear parking area is still needed. I'm still waiting for that true 'town center' - that make sense and is easy to access, easy to find, easy to get in and out of. I also have a vision of connecting residents that live further away from the Village to the business district. I live on Baldwin Rd. off of the Charlotte Rd., and pushing my children in a stroller is a truly terrifying experience on both my dirt road, and the Charlotte Rd (I've only done it once on the Charlotte Rd.). I would love to be able to bike into the Village with my family on a summer evening for dinner. I know other's that live near me that feel the same, but right now we are cut off from the Village because there is no road shoulder for us to bike or walk safely, which limits how much we come into town to commune, spend money. The amount of traffic and air pollution will also be reduced should residents be able to access bike paths and sidewalks from further outside of the Village. As a landowner, I can think of some ideas that would encourage me to open my land up to a path that connects Baldwin Rd. to Silver Street, for example. But I understand that most land owners are not going to "give something for nothing" - so what is needed to create forward motion here is to find a balance of not just blazing sidewalks and paths all over every road and field while achieving a goal of non-motorized connections on and near our road systems, to the Village, so that we are able to leave our cars at home at least some of the time and get outside, get healthy, and have a good time in our town!

b) I cannot stress how I am glad that the Saputo Plant exists. I am dubious that such development would be allowed to happen were it to be posed today. But it's here and it's well situated to become an exciting part of Hinesburg Village. I love intentional communities. I love a mix of residential and commercial spaces, existing in tandem in an area. I am also drawn to "working with what you've got" for residential development. My brother lives just outside Cleveland, Ohio and there is an interesting space near his suburban home - a mixed-use area called Crocker Park. Now, to be sure Cleveland and its suburbs aren't my type of living (tons and tons of chain restaurants, McMansions, endless streets of identical one-story

ranch houses, etc). But Crocker Park has a blend of small businesses like shops, theaters, galleries and restaurants lining its few streets, with offices, rental apartments, and coop condominiums located on the second and third floors above the ground level. What I love about Crocker Park is the quaint look and feel of the space (everything is funky and yet somehow unified) and the ease of getting there. Once you have parked you can accomplish so much without needing to get back in your car. There plenty of are outdoor areas also – green space, fountains, benches, a running circle – used for concerts, fitness, fairs and festivals, and general public use. The mix of civic, commercial, and residential is brilliant. What excites me about the situation of the “Saputo” lot is that there is plenty of parking, the access to existing businesses and town buildings is close and easy, and there is so much potential within the existing building footprints. I would love to see the area as a bustling multi-use space that answers Hinesburg’s growing need for a town center while avoiding any “sprawl”. I believe that Hinesburg can be a model community with innovative ideas that are both “cool” – (indoor climbing center, perhaps indoor/outdoor town pools just as examples), and actually beneficial to our economy and our residents (a better setup for the farmers market, perhaps an dedicated concert space, a playground for children of all ages aside from the playground at the school, etc.). I can envision so much good happening in unison and with the lowest impact possible on that 15.4 acres in the future.

3) I will be able to regularly make the commission meetings – every other Tuesday at 7:30. My work schedule is flexible and my husband is always home from work by 7 pm to watch our small children...which brings me to the fact that I do have small children. I do work for a living and I have a five and a one year old that come first – so they might on occasion fall sick, or we might travel out of town once or twice a year during school vacations and breaks... There are instances where I might miss a meeting but when I commit to something, I always see it through and anyone who knows me will tell you that I am extremely honest and that I do exactly what I say I am going to do. So if I am honored with an appointment to this Commission, I will be an active member will live up to the responsibility I have accepted.

4) Hi! My name is Grace Amao Ciffo. I’m betting money on the fact that I am the only Hinesburg resident who is both a 7<sup>th</sup> generation Vermonter and Nigerian as well (my biological father was from Lagos. He lived in Hinesburg for a time but passed away just before my 7<sup>th</sup> birthday). I was born in Burlington in 1977 and my parents brought me home from FAHC to my childhood home, which happened to be my great-grandparents house and the center of my family farmstead. Fast-forward 35 years and you’ll find me living in a barn-style house that my husband Jaime and I built ourselves just across the road from that very farmstead. I am dedicated to raising my children on the farm and working with my mother and brother to bring our family farm back to life after a period of dormancy following my grandfather and great-uncle’s retirement from farming in the late 1990’s (he passed away in December of 1999). I attended Hinesburg Elementary School (now HCS), CVU, and then went on to attend and graduate from Middlebury College where I graduated with honors. I hold a BA in Sociology & Anthropology. I attended the University of Vermont’s MA of Social Work program as well. Directly after college I worked as a manager at a non-profit (Community Safety Network Shelter, Jackson Hole WY '00-'01 & State of VT DFS, 01-'02) which has enhanced my business career because social services taught me the importance of paying attention to the human condition rather than focusing on financial returns in my everyday business dealings. In addition to my home state of VT, I've lived in the UK, CA, FL, and NY and have traveled to diverse countries including Brazil, Denmark and Nigeria. After over a decade of restaurant & hospitality experience, I opened and operated a small restaurant/catering business called Graces Bistro in the Firehouse Plaza, which I consequently sold to be home with my son during his first year of life. In late 2007 I returned to work as an Event Coordinator for the Vermont Tent Company, a fantastic event rental company that has been in business longer than any other event company in the state. I was promoted to Senior Event Coordinator in 2009. I'm proud to work for and with this successful and innovative business.

I am also busy with my family business, Prindle LLC. Headed by my mother Andrea Haulenbeek. Prindle LLC owns rental properties as well as our family farmland and a second farm on route 116 south of the Golf Course which together equal approximately 450 acres and which produce and sell crops including soy and hay. My stepfather Fred Haulenbeek heads up a large vegetable garden and often gives produce to neighbors and those in need. We raise free-range natural beef and run a sugar works. We also rent land to Sol Fresh Farm, a local CSA that produces fresh vegetables for sale. Our retail operation is an excellent local source of natural beef and maple syrup. Our farm is really at the heart of my motivation and I am striving to find innovative ways to keep it open and undeveloped. We are currently dismantling a beautiful 200 year old barn located in Johnson Vermont that had fallen into disrepair, and we plan to have it reframed exactly where our family dairy barn stood until 1977 when it burned down for the second time in 2 years under suspicious circumstances. If the Zoning regulations in Hinesburg prove compatible, I hope to hold special events on our farm in the future. If the zoning regulations do not allow for this use, I will of course be respectful of that process and decision.

In my personal life I love to ski, run, refurbish furniture, garden, sew, cook, throw dinner parties, and travel. My husband Jaime is originally from Rhode Island but fell in love with Vermont on a ski trip and moved here when he was about 24. We met at Sugarbush resort where he was a ski patroller and I worked in special events and as a bartender. We fell in love and got married, and then made the decision to plant roots in my hometown. Our children Carter, 5, and Kathryn, 1, are the absolute loves of our lives of course (isn't that what all parents say?). I am passionate about my hometown, my family farm, land conservation, and a balanced and healthy life for myself and my loved ones. I truly believe that outside of the reasons I've already given for how I will help the Commission achieve its mission, I possess a valuable perspective and can lend an understanding of the perspective of a true cross-swath of Hinesburg's residents. This is because of my Hinesburg farm-family roots, my education and all of the travelling that I have done, my passion for environmental responsibility, my age, and my diverse ethnic background. I have a lot to offer to Hinesburg's Planning Commission and would be so honored to be appointed.