

Harvard Devens Jurisdiction Committee
Meeting Held using the Zoom Videoconferencing Facility
Minutes of the October 1, 2020 Meeting
Paul Green, Clerk

Attendance

Members Present: Jane Biering, Paul Green, Heather Knowles, Kara Minar, Victor Normand, SusanMary Redinger, Lucy Wallace.

Members Absent: George Glazier, Tim Myllykangas.

Guests: Chris Ryan (Town of Harvard), Ed Starzec (MassDevelopment Real Estate), Matt Flokos (Harvard Press).

The meeting was called to order by Victor Normand at 9:01 am.

Approval of Minutes

The committee reviewed the minutes of the meeting on September 3, 2020. No changes were requested. Lucy moved to accept the minutes and SusanMary seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the minutes.

Devens Jurisdiction Framework Committee Update

Victor reported that at its September meeting, the Devens Jurisdiction Framework Committee voted to suspend its activities for 6 months, until March, 2021. Lucy and Victor voted against the motion but the other members supported it and it passed. The reasons given by the members related to needing to deal with the workload added by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to care for children studying at home, and the dissatisfaction by some members with the use of online videoconferencing as a replacement for in-person meetings. Many of the members of the HDJC are retired and do not have the same level of stress and some of the other DJFC committee members.

Consideration to Pause our Meetings

This committee discussed whether or not to proceed with our activities.

Everyone present wants to continue working. We felt that we have plenty of Harvard-specific work we can tackle, and we can also work on 3 areas outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement. We noted that our charge from the Harvard Select Board asks us to provide quarterly reports to them. We felt that our Zoom meetings are effective. We were concerned that if we stop work it could be hard for us to get restarted.

Victor summarized three issues raised in the MOA that need to be resolved: (1) definition of goals and issues, (2) definition of consensus and resolution process, and (3) how to fund a consultant. He wants us to share our memos with the other stakeholders. Lucy said that we should encourage the individual stakeholder committees to keep working.

We created 3 teams to work on the issues. Lucy will lead the effort to document the funding for a consultant. Paul will lead the effort to define the consensus mechanism, and Victor will lead the effort to create a framework under which the goals and issues of each stakeholder can be documented. Jane and Chris will work with Paul. SusanMary will work with Lucy. Heather and Kara will work with Victor.

Vic asked Paul to notify other stakeholders of our efforts, so that they can participate in our meetings as guests, if they so desire.

Heather suggested that our template for goals and concerns should be broad enough to apply to the other stakeholders.

Victor asked our 3 teams to create a draft of their memos for our next meeting, and send it to Paul and Victor by October 30.

Other Business

MassDevelopment will hold a board meeting at Devens on October 8. Lucy sees this as an opportunity to educate the MassDevelopment board members about this work. Lucy and Kara are concerned about the amount of time remaining for the stakeholders to come to an agreement and implement it. Victor noted that a 6 month delay represents about 5% of the remaining time.

Jane asked about following up the previously-discussed issues of defining what we think should be the definition of “framework”, and also what position we should take as a committee towards asking the public to approve the process that the stakeholders eventually agree to use. Victor said that we would come back to these issues after we deal with the three MOA tasks.

Kara asked whether it would be useful to craft a calendar for key dates over the next 10-12 years. She felt it would help people understand how the remaining time must be used. Heather concurred and felt that it should be one of the first deliverables from the framework committee. Lucy felt that the hardest step in documenting a position is to create the initial draft, and that we can help by drafting a timeline. SusanMary and Paul concurred. Paul noted that the Massachusetts Legislature runs on a 2-year cycle. All of the bills get introduced at the beginning of the cycle, and then the bills are assigned to committees which hold hearings, and eventually the legislators vote. So this has to be factored into the planning. If the parties don't come to an agreement, the legislature will have to sort out the differences, which will take even more time. Asking MassDevelopment to help create a timeline should be playing to their strength; they have plenty of experience working on long redevelopment projects. Victor summarized the steps: develop the MOA, develop an RFP, select a consultant, the consultant does their work, the parties use that work to create a plan, the communities consider the plan, the legislature approves it, and then everyone implements the changes, which itself will take years. It could easily consume 10-12 years. Kara noted that you need to have the towns approving the process each step of the way, with time in the plan in case some step is rejected by the towns or other stakeholders. Also, various players and officials will change over the years. Heather supported talking about this for the MassDevelopment board but was concerned about putting anything in writing. Lucy said we should stick to major milestones, and stress the need to constantly seek public input and approval. Jane concurred. Victor noted that the long list of lengthy tasks strengthens the argument for why we need to hire a consultant sooner rather than later. We need a schedule even though we don't have one yet.

Public Comment

Chris supported the decision to continue working.

Pending Task Assignments

Members of the committee should continue to send write-ups of their meetings with department heads and committee chairs to Paul.

Next Meeting

Set for November 5, 2020.

Adjournment

Victor adjourned the meeting at 9:57 am.

Attachment

HDJC Interview Status as of November 3, 2020 (no change from last report)

HDJC Interview Status as of November 3, 2020
Paul Green, Clerk

Listed below are the people who have outstanding reports still due, and the committees or commissions that they have volunteered to interview.

SusanMary Redinger 8 of 8 complete.

Jane Biering 0 of 7 complete (taking over from Erin McBee)

- Moderator
- Warner Free Lecture
- Emergency Program Director
- Fire Department
- Hazardous Waste Coordinator
- Land Stewardship Committee
- Sewer & Water Commission

Lucy Wallace 8 of 10 complete.

- Finance Committee
- Veterans Agent

Kara Minar 1 of 7 complete.

- Agricultural Advisory Comm
- Board of Health
- Burial Officer
- Cultural Council
- Police Department
- Public Works

George Glazier 0 of 4 complete.

- Ambulance Service
- Cemetery Commission
- Constable
- Elm Commission

Heather Knowles 4 of 5 complete.

- Animal Control Officer

Victor Normand 0 of 2 complete.

- Board of Assessors
- Personnel Board

Paul Green 6 of 6 complete.

Tim Myllykangas
- Inspectional Services
- Town Counsel

1 of 3 complete.

Overall

60 identified committees or boards
51 significant committees or boards
9 committees removed from our list
28 reports written

Completion:

28 / 52 or 54%