

**Harvard Devens Jurisdiction Committee
Meeting Held at Harvard Town Hall, Harvard, MA
Minutes of the March 7, 2019 Meeting
Paul Green, Clerk**

Attendance

Members Present: George Glazier, Paul Green, Heather Knowles, Erin McBee, Victor Normand, SusanMary Redinger, Lucy Wallace.

Members Absent: Kara Minar, Tim Myllykangas.

Guests: Chris Ryan (Town of Harvard), Ed Starzec (MassDevelopment Real Estate), Jim DeZutter (Harvard Resident and member of the Devens Enterprise Commission), Duncan Chapman (Harvard Resident and member of the Devens Enterprise Commission), Matt Flokos (Harvard press), Jessica Strunkin (SVP of Devens for MassDevelopment).

Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Victor Normand at 9:00 am.

The committee reviewed the minutes. Lucy Wallace moved to accept the minutes and SusanMary seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the minutes.

Department Heads and Committee Chair Feedback Updates

Paul reported that SusanMary's interviews are complete. He estimated that 40% of the interviews are complete (Ed: Actually, 29% are complete). Victor stressed the importance of speaking with the department chairs about the work of this committee.

Town Updates

Lucy reported that Victor and she drafted a letter to mail to the Boards of Selectmen and Town Administrators of Ayer and Shirley, along with MassDevelopment and the DEC, to form a working group on the process. The letters have gone out, both by post and by email. The purpose of the working group is to figure out the process we intend to follow. Each party will have 3 members on the working group. Lucy will get a copy of the letter to Paul for inclusion in the minutes. Ed asked if the facilitator would be needed. Victor thought that we should see how it goes first.

Since the last meeting she and Victor have met with the DEC. Victor has talked to the town administrators as well.

MassDevelopment Updates

Victor asked Jessica to introduce herself. She was previously deputy director of the 495 Metrowest Partnership. It is a regional economic development group that worked with 35 communities and the private sector, including employers of various sizes. Tasks included working on regional transportation improvements, municipal vulnerability preparedness, and facilitating job creation.

Victor asked Jessica for suggestions on how to engage the Devens businesses with this committee, and she offered ideas based on her past experience. Victor stressed that we should talk to the businesses early, so as not to blindside them.

Duncan agreed and suggested that we look for ways to make the economic development environment better and communicate it back to the businesses.

Lucy said she wanted the businesses to get to know contacts in the towns, and that she wanted to reassure them that the transition would be orderly, would not disrupt their ability to do business, and that we would look for ways to improve upon the work done by the DEC and MassDevelopment.

Heather agreed and said that it was important that we not repeat the mistakes from the past, offering the example of Evergreen Solar and its impact on its neighbors.

Jim said that the businesses needed to come together and speak collectively. The permitting process just gets them started. They need to advocate for their interests regarding the impact of the disposition on their ongoing operation.

Erin noted that a potential change in tax rates would concern both the residents and businesses, and George affirmed that statement.

Ed reported on an action item from the previous meeting. In 1997, \$200 million in bond capacity was approved by the Legislature, \$80 million was provided immediately for operational purposes, and \$120 million was set aside for capital purposes, allocated as needed. There is \$1.9 million of the \$120 left, after the current fiscal year allocation of \$500,000. Victor noted that this funding mechanism is typical for a redevelopment project; an initial infusion of capital, followed by revenue from land sales and taxes. Redevelopment projects often have a 40 year lifetime. Ed noted that MassDevelopment had to make major investments, including a new wastewater treatment plant for Bristol Myers Squibb.

Lucy asked if MassDevelopment got Chapter 70 and 90 funds? Ed affirmed this was true. Lucy is interested in the sources of revenue that would be available to the towns.

Victor reminded people that major capital expenses are not done; there are several new projects coming up. A major concern of everyone involved in the disposition will be financial, and he expects that the consultant we hire will need to look at that aspect.

Devens Resident Outreach

Heather and George are still working on a date for an evening meeting with the residents. George reported that there are 3 homeowners associations at Devens, and that there is a lot of interest in the work of this committee. People are sensitive to increases in fees and taxes. All residents belong to one of the homeowners associations. Victor said it was important for people to know how they can access information about us, and that we are interested in involving them in the process. Heather reported that each association is required to be professionally managed. We discussed, but did not resolve, the question of the appropriate mechanism to reach out to the residents.

Victor suggested putting the chairs of the Devens Committee and the chairs of the 3 homeowner's associations on our mailing list.

Victor offered to attend a Devens Committee meeting in person to talk about our work.

Devens Budget Review

Victor reported that Kara and Rudy Minar had taken a cursory look at the financial statement of MassDevelopment that was provided, as promised, by Bob Ruzzo. He will offer a summary of the analysis for our next meeting.

Town Meeting Report

Lucy wrote and mailed out a draft of a brief report on our work, to be included in the Harvard Town Annual report. It will appear in the Select Board's section, and covers the 2018 work of this committee. It will also be a separate, simpler handout for the annual town meeting. We critiqued the memo.

Victor noted that deeds for properties on Devens are recorded using the historical boundaries of the 3 towns. Ed noted that Devens does not have its own Town Clerk, and so Victor noted that births and deaths are also recorded in each town rather than at Devens. Lucy noted that the size of the base has changed over the years. She reviewed the history of the base and the disposition. She said that neither the town nor the county lines have ever been moved. Jim and Victor stressed that the Legislature will get the final say on the boundaries. Victor also noted that a military base that straddles communities is not unique, and he pointed to the Weymouth base as an example, which straddles 3 towns.

Pending Task Assignments

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

Lucy and Victor will provide feedback from the other towns.

George and Heather will arrange a meeting with Devens residents.

Victor will send Paul a copy of the letter than he and Lucy sent to the other towns.

Lucy will send Paul a copy of the report she submitted to the Harvard Annual Town Report.

Jim will send Paul a copy of the report that the DEC submitted to each town.

Adjournment

Victor adjourned the meeting at 9:59 am.

Attachments

1. Letter from Victor and Lucy to the other parties.
2. HDJC Report for the Harvard Annual Town Report.
3. DEC Report to the Towns.

**OFFICES OF THE
SELECT BOARD AND
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR**

13 Ayer Road, Harvard, Massachusetts 01451
(978) 456-4100

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(978) 456-4107 fax



March 4, 2019

Town of Ayer
Town Manager Robert Pontbriand
Board of Selectmen Janice Livingston
1 Main Street
Ayer, MA 01432

Subject: Devens Permanent Government Framework Committee

Dear Mr. Pontbriand & Ms. Livingston,

Thank you for taking the time during this busy budget season to meet with us. We greatly appreciated your questions and input, and look forward to future opportunities to meet with you regarding resolution of Devens permanent governance.

We are writing you now to see if the Selectmen in your town would agree to participate in a special committee to work with MassDevelopment and the Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC) on advancing this planning for the future of Devens.


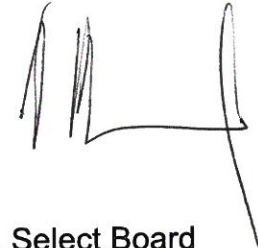
Lauren Liss, President of MassDevelopment has responded to the January 8, 2019 letter sent by the Town of Harvard and the Harvard/Devens Jurisdiction Committee. She agreed that "time spent now cooperatively developing a mutual framework for identifying issues" would be worthwhile. Ms. Liss suggested that all parties get together to work toward "cooperatively developing a mutual framework" that would facilitate the eventual establishment of permanent governance at Devens. In the letter, on which each town was copied, Ms. Liss acknowledges that consultant services would be procured to analyze the implications of such a transition, but only after all parties are able to agree upon and execute a Memorandum of Agreement which would set forth the "agreed upon planning process."

At this time, we would like to suggest that the Towns of Ayer, Harvard and Shirley form such a committee comprised of the Chair of the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator and the Chair of a citizens committee such as the Harvard/Devens Jurisdiction Committee. We would also invite MassDevelopment and the DEC to be represented. The individual citizens committees could be constituted however each town desires; the purpose of those committees would be to facilitate public and town government input and communication within their respective towns. In addition, Harvard has encouraged participation in its committee by appointing two Devens residents; Ayer may elect to do the same should it form a similar committee.

The Harvard Select Board will be asked to take up the matter and consider a vote to participate in an ad hoc "Devens Permanent Government Framework Committee" constituted as described above in the near future. We would be pleased to work with Ayer and Shirley should your Town agree with this initiative.

Thank you for your consideration of this, and as always, we are available at your convenience to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Lucy B. Wallace, Chair, Select Board

Victor Normand, Chair, Harvard-Devens Jurisdiction Committee

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March 4, 2019

Town of Shirley
Town Administrator Michael McGovern
Board of Selectmen Chair Debra Flagg
7 Keady Way
Shirley, MA 01464

Subject: Devens Permanent Government Framework Committee

Dear Mr. McGovern & Ms. Flagg,

Thank you for taking the time during this busy budget season to meet with us. We greatly appreciated your questions and input, and look forward to future opportunities to meet with you regarding resolution of Devens permanent governance.

We are writing you now to see if the Selectmen in your town would agree to participate in a special committee to work with MassDevelopment and the Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC) on advancing this planning for the future of Devens.

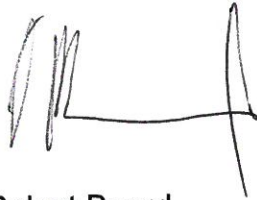
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Sincerely,



Lucy B. Wallace, Chair, Select Board

Victor Normand, Chair, Harvard-Devens Jurisdiction Committee

To: Harvard-Devens Jurisdiction Committee
From: Lucy Wallace
Date: February 23, 2019
Re: 2018 Select Board Annual Report re Harvard-Devens

As requested at our last meeting, below is the section on Devens included in the Select Board's report in the 2018 Town Annual Report.

The Future Relationship with Devens: Devens lies within roughly 20% of the town's political boundary. The 1994 Devens Reuse Plan, adopted by Ayer, Harvard and Shirley, informed the state's intensive effort led by MassDevelopment to convert the Army base into a regional economic engine which today is a great success. This largely commercial-industrial area, along with its considerable open space and recreation lands and limited housing, may offer a potential opportunity to balance Harvard's largely residential profile and put the town in a more sustainable position. At the 2017 Town Elections the voters endorsed the development of a plan to resume jurisdiction of Harvard's lands within Devens and in June 2018 the Select Board approved a charge and appointed the Harvard-Devens Jurisdiction Committee. Comprised of nine members (two Selectman, one Planning Board member, one School Committee member, four residents from Harvard and two residents from Devens), the Committee has met monthly and developed a course of action to implement its charge. It has reached out to MassDevelopment, which is now sending two representatives to the Committee's meetings, and the boards of selectmen of Ayer and Shirley to advise them of our work, particularly to encourage the other two boards to undertake a similar planning effort. Clearly this is the first step in a longer process by the three towns and MassDevelopment to develop a recommendation for Devens' permanent local government by 2032 to present to the state legislature for approval by 2033. Whatever the outcome, it will be important to assure a smooth transition to local governance and, therefore, the Committee has met with our state legislators to keep them informed as well.

MassDevelopment continues to contract with Harvard Public Schools to educate the children of Devens residents. A proposed rezoning of Vicksburg Square to allow 300+ residential units could have an impact on our projected school population. MassDevelopment intends to take the requisite zoning amendment to a Super Town Meeting for approval in the late spring of 2019.