

Harvard Devens Jurisdiction Committee Meeting
December 1, 2022

Members attending: Victor Normand, SusanMary Redinger, Paul Green, George Glazer, Tim Myllykangas, Don Ludwig (joined 10:18am) Kara Minar (joined 10:10am) , Heather Knowles, John McCormack

Members absent:

Others Present: Neil Angus (DEC member)

Victor Normand called the meeting to order at 10:00

The minutes from November 3, 2022 were approved as amended unanimously.

Don Ludwig gave an update on the finance review of Mass Development Financials. He continues to work with MD. Have gotten some, have requested more (assessments). Once Jared Mullane (Harvard's Finance Director) has some time available he'll collaborate on the work.

Victor suggested that the next step would be to develop an omnibus budget for the operations of Devens/Harvard. The complexity of that work is something he had hoped to hire a consultant to help us with. As a historical reference, the property tax revenues in 2020 amounted to \$9.7M and increased to 11.8M 2022. Victor hopes to put out some of the metrics with respect to the revenue side to paint a pretty clear picture that Devens is a solvent operation. The financial consideration that is important to all residents (Harvard and Devens).

Paul gave an update on efforts to continue refining Harvard's summary plan. Victor asked members for input on how to support/help the other stakeholders in developing their plans and outlining the issues they see that need to be resolved.

Zoning, utilities – both important aspects in the redevelopment of Devens that Harvard sees as beneficial to continue.

Members agreed with the idea of circulating a document that outlines the issues. Victor suggested including a link to our plan.

Victor asked members to align on the distribution of the outline: For Devens: John Katter, For Ayer and Shirley their SB chairs are on the Framework Committee so sending it to all members of that committee of that committee will suffice. Members also aligned on sending the document to Jaime Eldridge and Dan Sena since the legislature will be included in the ultimate decision.

Paul added that the document leaves most of the issues as question. Do members see any other questions that should be included? Should the question about the schools be expanded. There are just a few "statements" made (e.g. residents' wish to stay together, environmental issues).

Paul included financing as of the date of the transfer of control. Bonds for the utilities; tax increment finance agreements (TIF's) signed with firms located on Devens;

Heather admitted that she has not done a poll/vote by Devens residents that actually confirms that residents want to stay together. She suggested that it might be beneficial to have the towns or residents put this kind of information gathering together.

Victor asked that members send in comments on the document in advance of the January meeting so that we can review/approve then.

Mass Development Letter to Residents of 11/22/22

Victor asked George to provide some feedback on the impact of the letter they received about the usage of the community center to process immigrants. There was no notification, no input solicited by the Devens residents and George pointed to the disadvantage position that residents are in by not having a vote/say/voice in what's happening to the land at Devens. There has been no follow up from MD or any other agency that he's aware of and it puts the residents in a strange scenario.

Heather expressed her frustration about the lack of representation as well and the seemingly uncaring attitude towards the residents by MD.

Victor asked Don and Kara how they thought it would have been handled in Harvard. Both agreed that there would have been outreach and a better process if the Harvard SB was going to take over the use of municipal building for a temporary use.

Phil Fama (Devens resident) was invited to share his perspective and added the question about the ability to push back against the decision if it was in Harvard.

Kara added that MD and the legislature changed the cap on commercial development in defiance of the agreement made with Harvard.

SusanMary agreed with the lack of communication and collaboration, but pointed out that MD does own the land, and perhaps doesn't believe that Harvard would be supportive given their history of voting against MD proposals in the past. She

Kara added that what this move points out is that Harvard really has no power/say when it comes to actions taking place at MD (e.g. the cap). She indicated that

John Osborn asked if the JBOS (joint board of selectman) that has been inactive for 5-7 years now might be resurrected. The original MOU doesn't indicate it would expire at any point. Don and Kara didn't have a sense of whether or not the Harvard SB would have an interest in resurrecting that body.

Victor suggested that in light of MD's recent actions regarding the lack of reaching out to the Devens community that it's time to begin the work to define how jurisdiction could look and keep MD to the commercial redevelopment only.

There will soon be a new Governor and two appointments to the MD board (housing/admin & finance). There is an opportunity to get information to those folks. Perhaps we could work with Jaime on getting a message to the new administration about how we manage our own political voice with regards to MD. And how do Devens residents get out of the 'taxation without representation' position that they're in. Ownership of the land is different from zoning and governance. DEC should remain the permitting agency but stay out of governance.

Paul suggested that the three SB's should hold a meeting with Jaime and Dan as the agencies with the authority to push back on MD. Members discussed whether or not Ayer and Shirley SB's would join in the effort. It would add to the strength of the "town's" positions but they may not agree.

Three recent events of MD not supporting the wishes of the towns/Devens residents: leaving DFJC; changing the commercial cap, establishing the community center (and the lack of funding the consultant).

How do we open up a line of conversation with MD?

Victor suggested putting an agenda item in front of the Framework Committee in January about how to approach MD.

A Motion was made by Victor/seconded by Paul to communicate with the SB to be initiate communication with Mass Development. Motion passed unanimously.

Victor asked SusanMary to work with him in drafting the communication to the SB.

Victor Normand adjourned the meeting without objection at 11:17am.

Respectfully submitted,

SusanMary Redinger, recording secretary