

Harvard Devens Jurisdiction Committee Meeting
January 5, 2023

Members attending: Victor Normand, SusanMary Redinger, Paul Green, Tim Myllykangas, Kara Minar (joined approx. 10:45am), John McCormack

Members absent: Heather Knowles, Don Ludwig, George Glazier

Others Present: Peter Lowitt (DEC member)

Victor Normand called the meeting to order at 10:01am

Minutes:

Approval of the minutes from December 1, 2022 was tabled until the February meeting.

Financial Update:

HDJC has received documents with financial info from Mass Development (MD). We now have the most comprehensive financial information to date. Victor, Don and Tim have been reviewing the financials, and have shared the information with town finance dept. as well as Fin Com chair, Jennifer Finch. Victor is hoping to meet with someone from MD to get further information about the budget process. From all the information gathered so far, Victor asserted that Devens is a solidly solvent enterprise. The goal is to come up with an omnibus budget that contains all of the revenues and expenses that would pertain to Harvard.

We are still waiting for an update on the capital budget from MD and the assessments from Devens as of the end of 2022, as well as the tax documents which will allow us to paint a complete picture of Devens finances.

Stakeholders plan:

Members reviewed each section of the proposed Shareholders Outline that covers the areas identified by the HDJC for other stakeholders to begin reviewing. Paul gave the background for each section:

- Residential Community and Boundary Changes
- Municipal Services (add a simple listing)
- Utilities
- Unified Permitting
- Zoning
- Public Lands
- Connectivity, Traffic and Transportation
- Environmental

SusanMary suggested adding a reference to boundary lines as well as a simple listing of municipal services.

RE: Unified Permitting – Peter weighed in on the DEC’s position about permitting. He imagined that there will be some need to maintain unified permitting in the future but the needs may change as development reaches its maximum.

John McCormack suggested that since Harvard does not currently have any industrial zoning that some changes would need to be considered. Peter clarified that Harvard actually does have zoning regulations as part of the reuse plan, but there are likely not industrial zoning by-laws for Harvard.

Paul raised the issue of the housing cap which is not covered in the document. Is this the time/place to include that? SusanMary suggested that the housing cap, along with many other factors would become up to the resuming jurisdiction(s) and maybe it’s premature to include it at this point. Victor agreed that it may/will be part of the larger conversation moving forward, and there are many other issues that will eventually need to be resolved.

Re: Public Lands. Mirror Lake is under a conservation restriction which is owned by Trustees of Reservations; other conservation lands are either also covered by CR’s or will be.

Victor suggested adding Public Buildings to the Public Lands section. Tim indicated that there are several buildings that could be a benefit to the community: DPW, daycare center, community center, old officers club, public safety buildings. These are distinct from buildings owned by MD (e.g. Vicksburg Sq. other military buildings not federally owned) that could be redeveloped.

Tim said that there are robust services/equipment at Devens (e.g. plows, etc.) and suggested that we consider how Devens might absorb Harvard, vs. Harvard absorbing Devens. Tim suggested keeping utility buildings as they are, but that developing the other ones may not be desirable to the Devens residents. Victor added that the DPW building is currently in Ayer.

The suggestion was made to separate Public Lands from Public Buildings. SusanMary suggested again adding in a simple listing to help the shareholders begin thinking about the various factors.

Connectivity – Tim expressed the desire for enabling connectivity to create a sense of community and support residents in gaining access to the various resources (Mirror Lake, Oxbow, e.g.).

Environmental – Peter confirmed that MD has resources for managing the continued clean-up, but said that the efforts are on the wane as most of the work has been done. The need for a continued position would be up for the resuming jurisdiction(s) to decide.

Taxation – How do the shareholders transition monies currently being collected by MD from residents to a form of taxation to support municipal expenses? What is the transition period/plan? Is there a ramp up or an on/off switchover date. How are the capital resources handled (e.g. does a plow need to be bought out from MD by the resuming jurisdiction?)

Victor indicated that edits from today's meeting will be made and a final document will be sent around to all members to review. After that Victor would like to send it out to the other stakeholders.

SusanMary suggested sending it to the Select Board first to gain their support before sending it out. Kara agreed that would be a good way to approach this and that having SB support would strengthen the HDJC's position.

SusanMary motioned to approve Paul and Victor to make edits to the document as discussed in today's meeting and to have the final document then sent to all members for a final review after which we authorize the chair to send the SB for their final approval. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Future meetings will be at 11am on the first Wednesday of every month. Victor will confirm the new time with them and come back to members if that time doesn't work.

Kara said that the SB had not yet discussed the letter to Mass Development but will take it up at the next meeting.

DJFC now has a website. Victor will send out the address to everyone and ask for suggestions for other content to include.

Victor said he is looking for someone to write up the annual report. Paul offered to write it.

Victor Normand adjourned the meeting without objection at 11:07am.

Respectfully submitted,

SusanMary Redinger, recording secretary