

**HARVARD PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 1, 2021
APPROVED: NOVEMBER 15, 2021**

Chair Justin Brown called the meeting to order at 7:03pm virtually pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures adopted during the State of Emergency and signed into law on June 16, 2021, and under M.G.L. Chapter 40A and Code of the Town of Harvard Chapter 125

Members Present: Justin Brown, Stacia Donahue, Richard Cabelus, Brian Cook, Doug Thornton and Jefferson Burson (Associate Member) (departed at 9:00pm)

Others Present: Christopher Ryan (Director of Community & Economic Development), Liz Allard (Land Use Administrator), Joan Eliyesil (Harvard Press), Valerie Hurley (Harvard Press) and Ellen Leicher (Community Resiliency Working Group)

Public Comment – There was no comments from the public this evening

Community Resiliency Working Group Update

Ellen Leicher, chair of the Community Resiliency Working Group (CRWG), stated Jefferson Burson, the Planning Board (PB) liaison to CRWG, has been providing updates to both the PB and CRWG. The Fall Town Meeting approved the proposed Climate Resolution. Leicher stated it is good news to see how many people came out to support and vote on it at Town Meeting. The Resolution is now in the hands of the Select Board (SB), with additional information to be provided by CRWG.

CRWG is planning to request to be a standing committee at the SB meeting on November 16th; along with a name change to Harvard Climate Initiative Committee (HCIC). Leicher stated all existing CRWG members are willing to continue on the HCIC. Leicher, as a member of the Harvard Energy Advisory Committee (HEAC), has suggested a representative from HEAC be added to HCIC. The total number of members would be twelve.

CRWG is finishing work on the Climate Action Plan, as well as expanding upon it. CRWG is planning a meeting for December 4th and asking that a representative from all boards and committees attend to provide input on this Plan. The framework of this Plan will be presented at this meeting as well.

CRWG is continuing with public outreach through the Harvard Energize site and is working with Bromfield Green Team to roll out this site to all of the Harvard students. CRWG has plenty of data and needs to organize it better to be able to determine how to use it more effectively and get it out to the public.

Leicher explained the Environmental Assessment Form is meant to help reduce the impacts on the climate that new projects may have; it is not meant to punish people, but to assist in working together. A request has been made to add a HEAC liaison to the Permanent Building Committee to further this goal.

Brown asked how this new committee will support itself. Leicher thinks the CRWG is pretty well supported by volunteers now and will continue, as all are willing to do so. Leicher realizes she will need to ask the SB how HCIC can move forward without any resources. Brown advised on the necessary Open Meeting Law requirements that will need to be maintained.

Donahue asked the differences between HEAC and CRWG. Leicher stated HEAC is great at applying for and receiving grants. Donahue wondered if HCIC would be doing the same? Leicher agreed, however HEAC typically applies for funding through the Green Communities grants, therefore having a member of HEAC on HCIC should omit competing for the same grants. Ryan agreed although he would be unable to

provide the same level of support he has been giving to CRWG, he would still be available to provide technical support as there will be overlay with PB on some projects.

With no charter drafted as of yet for the HCIC, Allard suggested one be ready to go for the meeting with the SB on November 16th. Allard cautioned that a 12-member committee may lead to quorum issues. Donahue suggested, like the Transportation Advisory Committee, the HCIC only meet quarterly. Leicher stated once the Climate Action Plan is completed things will be in a better place and requiring fewer meetings of the group.

Thornton asked about outreach; are we making progress in comparison to other Towns. Leicher stated the Harvard Energize site had a slow rollout, but there are a number of families involved, along with the involvement of the Green Team, those numbers will increase.

Brown asked how will a standing committee be better at getting support from the Town. Leicher feels as a standing committee HCIC will be more recognized and be given better standing in the community. Ryan agreed a standing committee gets better support from the residents as opposed to a subcommittee.

Members discussed the options available to them this evening in regards to supporting CRWG effort to become a standing committee. Leicher stated she appreciates the advice provided this evening and is seeking the PB support.

Cabelus made a motion supporting the Community Resiliency Working Group efforts to take all active measures to become a standing committee known as Harvard Climate Initiative Committee. Donahue seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by roll call, Donahue, aye; Cabelus, aye; Cook, aye; Thornton, aye; and Brown; aye.

Devens Issues Discussion

Brown stated he had previously encouraged Ryan to share his ideas for Devens as a discussion of possibilities. Ryan stated one of his biggest tasks is economic development, with many in Town looking toward Devens to provide this in the future. Ryan provided the members with the background on Devens. The problem is time is running out and various parties have their own specific agenda and it is hard to get consensus and move forward. Ryan detailed the short-term problems - Vicksburg Square, participation in Framework Committee, growing demands from citizens (Devens), pressure to view Devens as a cash cow, need to coordinate other projects with Devens and/or MassDevelopment (e.g., trails, sewer, development), and continuing to experience the negative externalities from Devens (i.e. traffic) without the benefits.

The question is, would it be better to consider the assumption of responsibility for the Harvard portion of Devens with the fiscal projections and the additional burdens or negotiate a win/win deal prior to 2033 and dispense with the extended planning and studies?

Ryan feels now is the time to negotiate with MassDevelopment on such things as tax-base sharing, transfer of development rights, infrastructure, grant funding, Subsidized Housing Inventory credits, school children credits, Vicksburg Square plan approval, and regional traffic and transportation planning. It would be very challenging for Harvard to continue to provide the same level of service that Devens is currently providing.

Cabelus thinks getting the infrastructure is essential to developing the commercial district and should be sought immediately. Jefferson would really like to see this move forward as opposed to waiting until the last minutes to make a decision. Donahue is concerned with the 2017 ballot vote that directed the Select Board to develop a plan to resume jurisdiction of the historic boundaries of Harvard. Additional Donahue commented on gaining water and sewer brings concerns of increased traffic. Allard explained the 2017

vote is for a plan, not the execution of that plan and development, such as Chapter 40B's, is a concern of those who live along Old Mill Road if water and sewer is brought through there to the commercial district. Brown thinks what Ryan is proposing is really a win/win for all. Cook stated it would be great to convene a joint meeting to discuss internally. Additionally, Cook wondered if anyone knew how the residents of Devens felt. The Board agreed to further discuss this matter as meeting time allows over the next two months.

Select Board Request for Comment – Code of Conduct

Minor comments were provided by the Board that will be shared with the Select Board's Executive Assistant.

Discuss Meeting Format – Virtual or Hybrid

Allard noted the choices before the Board also includes an in-person meeting open to the general public. After vetting the options and pitfalls of the available formats to meet the Board agreed to do a trial run of a hybrid meeting at the next available meeting.

Spring Annual Town Meeting, 2022 - Open Space Residential Development (OSRD)

This item was passed over this evening

Board Member Reports

This item was passed over this evening.

Director's Report

There was no report this evening

Approve Minutes

Donahue made a motion to approve the minutes of October 18, 2021 as drafted. Cook seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by roll call, Donahue, aye; Cabelus, aye; Cook, aye; Thornton, aye; and Brown; aye.

Adjournment

Donahue made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:31pm. Thornton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by roll call, Donahue, aye; Cabelus, aye; Cook, aye; Thornton, aye; and Brown; aye.

Signed: _____ Liz Allard, Clerk

EXHIBITS & OTHER DOCUMENTS

- Planning Board Agenda November 1, 2021
- Devens Discussion November 1, 2021