

Devens Economic Analysis Team ("DEAT")

Minutes of October 15, 2010 Meeting

7:30am - 9:00am

Main Meeting Room, Old Library

Orville Dodson, Clerk

Members Present: Orville Dodson, Duncan Chapman, Steve Finnegan, Victor Normand, Paul Green.

Victor Normand called the meeting to order at 7:30am.

The minutes of the prior meeting (9/117) were reviewed. Paul Green moved that the minutes be accepted, Victor seconded, and the motion was unanimously accepted.

Victor brought up the subject of the tiers and member assignments to the various "buckets" within the tiers. Duncan distributed his current Tier chart and assignments. Victor distributed a similar chart and the members discussed the tiers and assignments. It was decided to move Environment to Tier3. During the discussion, Victor mentioned that regionalization efforts are underway at the Harvard BOS and in Ayer. He thinks our study could provide base cost numbers on Devens to assist these regionalization efforts. He remarked that in regards utilities, Water and Sewer at Devens can serve beyond Devens, Gas and Electric can not.

Victor brought up the search for additional DEAT members. He talked to Keith Cheveralls of the School Committee and Keith did support Willie Wickman for the DEAT. Victor thinks we should ask the School Committee for a "formula" for computing school costs as function of the major factors and thus the DEAT could then ask for a School Committee member to be on the DEAT. Victor reported talking to the Devens Community and that they were not familiar with Jean Russell so we may want to vet her further. Victor could go to Ted of the Devens Community and get appraisal of people from Devens who could serve on the DEAT.

The members discussed further development at Devens. Paul related what he saw at the presentation by the possible Vicksburg Square developer (Trinity). He thought Trinity 1) Was outreaching to the towns, 2) Expects 1 year to get town approvals, 3) Does have the financing, 4) Does look competent, 5) Is eager to go, and 6) Seems to have a sensible process underway.

Victor moved on to a discussion of the report dated December 10, 2009 on Devens operating costs which the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) produced. He reported that the report was not a "home run". It put many 1-time costs into its ongoing cost numbers. Ron Ricci (in the audience) said he saw little value in the MRPC report. MRPC itself wrote the report.

Victor then reported on his and Ron Ricci's meeting with George Ramirez of Mass Development. The meeting was not as productive had been expected, possibly because George's superior (Bob Culver) is shy about providing information and George hasn't the authority to override this. The meeting did reveal that Devens' police, fire, and DPW departments did initiate audits to see if current running costs are in line and fair. Victor thinks the results of these audits could help the DEAT in its final report. Ramirez did relate that Devens' current running costs vs income are in deficit and are not sustainable.

Victor moved on to the next steps to take. He suggests we ask Mass Development to provide us with 1) An update on the Devens Parcel Analysis (this should be an easy task for MD), 2) A list of committed and projected capital projects at Devens, and 3) Arrange a meeting between our Paul Green and Sandy Duncan and Devens' Utilities Manager. Victor will draft the letter making these requests to be sent to George Ramirez. As an aside, Victor mentioned that utilities at Devens have the “cleanest” cost and capital expenditure numbers. The municipal “running costs” will be the hardest area in our study. Victor also suggested that we have Tim Bragan be at our next meeting to describe how he would do an operating budget for a Harvard plus Devens. We decided to schedule an additional meeting on the morning of November 4 for this purpose.

Steve Finnegan moved that we adjourn, Paul seconded, and the motion was unanimously accepted. The meeting adjourned at 9:00am.