

Devens Economic Analysis Team ("DEAT")

Minutes of December 1, 2010 Meeting

7:00pm - 9:00pm

Fireplace Room, Old Library

Jean Russell (for Orville Dodson), Clerk

Members Present: Duncan Chapman, Victor Normand, Jean Russell, Patty Wenger
Also Attending: Tom Kinch (DAC), Ron Ricci (BOS)

Victor Normand called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The purpose of the meeting was threefold; provide update on MA Development Communication, Seek School Department Input, Review Harvard Budget Format.

The minutes of the prior meeting (11/4) were reviewed. Pat Wenger suggested that the minutes should conclude with the words "respectfully submitted". Members voted unanimously to approve the 11/4 minutes.

MA Development

Victor began the discussion concerning MA Development by sharing that he and Ron met with Jaime Eldridge, who was then going to meet with George Ramirez but no update yet. Victor and Ron both offered that George's perceived hesitancy may be attributable to the fact that he has already provided a lot of information to JBOS and MRPC (Montachusett Regional Planning Commission), and also that he may have some concerns that such requests increase the workload of his staff. Tom asked Victor whether DEAT had qualified the type of information it wants from MA Development. Victor replied that DEAT is only looking for revenue including assessments and new values (since the MRPC Report), everyone agreed that that was probably a fairly easy request. Victor reiterated that DEAT is only concerned with looking at Devens from the perspective of Harvard, he then offered to call Jaime Eldridge to get his take on the situation.

Discussion of School Input

Patty Wenger – NESDEC (New England School Development Council) is currently assembling an extensive report for Harvard and Devens (available January 11th). Commonwealth would like to see Devens and Harvard come together in a collaboration (rather than regionalization). There was some discussion on the number of Devens residents currently in the Harvard School System (76%) and the contractual nature of the current agreement (in effect until a party backs out). There was a question of what the Harvard School population projects out to be, Patty responded that Harvard is expected to decline but that the Devens population would allow the system to remain stable. There was also some talk about the possibility of new housing starts on Devens with as many as 250 in the current Vickburg Square Development Plan, and 8 – 10 smaller energy efficient single residences as well.

Review of Harvard Budget

Victor began by saying he envisions another column that details the “Devens Increment” in the Harvard Budget. As numbers are populated he would like to release them to residents for input. Patty wondered why ambulance service is zeroed out on the budget this led to a contrast between the service provided to Devens (2 ambulances always sitting in ‘hot’ standby); contractual agreements with businesses and the U.S. Army versus Harvard which is mainly residential. There was also some question of whether Ayer is lobbying to provide fire service to Devens but this was thought unlikely as George is still conducting audits. Victor pointed to the ambulance issue as a good example of how certain areas, such as fire, municipal services, library, etc. need to be flagged and thoroughly examined. Ron added that he wants DEAT to look at the entirety of Devens. Duncan suggested looking at other cities/towns with ‘industrial parks’ to gain some insight on their operations. Tom suggested keeping the output simple. Victor felt it would be helpful to get Steve Finnegan’s input at the next meeting; he also let everyone know that Steve Colwell of the FINCOM will be at the next meeting.

A motion to adjourn was presented and seconded and was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned.