

Devens Economic Analysis Team ("DEAT")

Minutes of July 15, 2011 Meeting

7:30am – 9:00am

Fireplace Meeting Room, Old Library

Orville Dodson, Clerk

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

Also in attendance: Ron Ricci, Phillip Crosby of the Devens Committee

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

We first reviewed the minutes of the prior meeting (6/29/11). It was moved and seconded that we accept and approve the minutes for 6/29/11 and the vote was unanimous to approve.

Victor began with the topic of wage and earnings information for the workforce at Devens – civilian jobs, jobs at the federal prison and hospital, and job in the military. We currently have no information on this. Mellisa Fetterhoff at the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce (978)-772-6976 x10 may be able to provide some of this information. Victor asked Steve Finnegan and Sandy to pursue this.

Victor then mentioned that he would like to study the demographics at Vicksburg Square and Trinity's figures. He suggests finding existing projects similar to Vicksburg Square that have a numbers of years' of occupancy history and studying the initial and evolving demographics of them. Special attention might be paid to school-age children. Victor noted that an NESDEC study done for the Town of Harvard estimated .6 kids/housing-unit for Harvard. A BHP (??) study in 2004 gave .42 kids in Harvard and .37 in Ayer. Trinity's number for Vicksburg Square is .87. That might be accurate given Vicksburg Square's likely demographics. Victor noted, as an aside, that he'd calculated that 2 two-earners family in a 2BR unit at Vicksburg Square would exceed the income limit for an affordable 2BR unit at Vicksburg if both wage-earners earned more than \$9/hr.

In discussion, it was noted that the veteran preference in Trinity's Vicksburg Square plans could apply to persons as young as 25; the preference doesn't necessarily mean older age persons. It was wondered if Trinity has ever done an 80% affordable project before. Someone suggested asking DHCD if there are any towns with projects having an 80% affordable component and getting the tax credits for them. What are the details of those projects? Kate Racer at the DHCD might be able to help here.

Steve Finnegan presented members with CDROM copies of the DHCD report "Housing Market: A Statewide and Regional Analysis" dated November, 2008. It is a 225+ page study of housing current and forecast in Mass. In discussion, a couple of other reports and studies were mentioned: A 1998 Harvard Master Plan study on the fiscal impact of affordable housing and a report by Judy Barrett associated with Master Plan work.

Phillip Crosby then discussed some of his views and views of some of the current Devens residents about Vicksburg Square and Trinity's plans. He first noted that Ayer gets about \$5000/pupil in state Chapter 70 education money, Harvard gets about \$1000/pupil, so it would be wise to redraw boundaries to place all of Vicksburg Square in Ayer. Phil and others' initial reaction to Trinity's plans

was positive since at last someone was showing interest in Vicksburg. However it then became evident that Devens couldn't afford Trinity's plan for Vicksburg since it implied an annual education costs deficit of about \$2million per year --- educating about 150 pupils from Vicksburg with only \$210,000 of tax revenue coming in from Vicksburg. The chapter 70 monies could help but the deficit would still be considerable. He thinks Trinity's plans for Vicksburg should be redone. One aspect of them that is troubling is the high level of affordable units, forming an almost monolithic block of purely affordable housing. Speaking about broader issues, Phil mentioned that his greatest concern about Harvard taking back its Devens land is how long it may take for the social integration of the two parts, or might it never happen. He mentioned that one of the reasons for the current Devens proposal to the legislature for Devens to become a town is just to get things to start moving, not necessarily to get such legislation passed.

Steve Colwell then presented his findings about Town of Harvard workforce earnings verses the limits on income for the affordable units at Vicksburg. These findings are broken down by town department (Schools, Police,). They appear as Figure 1 at the end of these minutes. They include all persons receiving wage income from the town including part-time work. Members wondered if part-time and second-income workers could be scrubbed from the results. Ron Ricci suggested that we redo the data using only employees receiving employee benefits (health insurance, pension....). In the end Steve was asked to get the starting salaries for town jobs – school, police, DPW, etc.

Victor briefly summarized how he thinks we have come thus far in studying Vicksburg. Tax revenue from Vicksburg is mostly done. Ditto Vicksburg's impact on workforce housing. Effects, especially costs, of Vicksburg upon education is mostly done but the same for other services (police, fire, DPW, recreation...) has not been done.

Finally, there was the discussion of work to be done prior to the next meeting. The following assignments were drawn up:

- Study typical salaries of civilian jobs and federal jobs at Devens: Steve F and Sandy
- Study salary ranges for active military and retired: Steve F and Sandy.
- Expected school-age kids per household residing in affordable housing using NESDEC information: Steve F.
- Starting salaries for town and school department employees.
- Locate completed projects similar to Vicksburg with help from Kate Racer at DHCD: Paul.
- Housing needs data from Harvard's Veterans Agent: Paul.
- Send Trinity's responses to Mass Dev for comment: Victor.
- Draft followup questions for Trinity: Victor.

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn and it did so at about 9:15am.

Devens Economic Analysis Team
Vicksburg Square Analysis
2010 Harvard Employee Income vs. "Affordable Housing" Income Levels

	Schools	Police	D P W	Town Hall	Other (incl. Fire)	Library	Dispatch	Total
Number who do NOT qualify	85	9	3	4	2	1	0	104
Family of 4 max. \$ 55,080	-----							
Number who DO qualify	9	0	3	0	1	1	1	15
Family of 3 max. \$ 49,620	-----							
Number who DO qualify	7	0	1	2	0	1	2	13
Couple max. \$ 44,100	-----							
Number who DO qualify	12	0	3	1	0	1	0	17
Single max. \$ 38,580	-----							
Number who DO qualify	51	1	1	3	2	3	0	61
Minimum income \$ 15,703	-----							
Number who do NOT qualify	111	2	3	1	66	7	3	193
Totals	<u>275</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>403</u>

Figure 1: Town Employee Earnings vs Vicksburg Affordable Limits