

Devens Economic Analysis Team (“DEAT”)

Minutes of August 26, 2015 Meeting

7:30 AM

Hildreth House

Paul Green, Secretary

Members Present: Paul Green, Noyan Kinayman, and Victor Normand.

Members Absent: Steve Finnegan, Christopher Roy.

Victor Norman, Chairman of DEAT, call the meeting to order at 7:45 am.

Old Business

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting were not available.

Annual Report

Victor passed out revised, draft copies of our annual report for 2015. Paul passed out copies of his suggested changes.

We all discussed the draft report and potential conclusions and recommendations.

Paul wondered what can the Towns do now to prepare for resumption of jurisdiction? What would be the criteria for resumption?

Victor stated that the effort to develop the reuse plan 20 years ago is similar to the effort needed now to plan for disposition.

Victor had thought about the question of “what Harvard wants” and decided that this question was asked and answered 20 years ago when Harvard participated in the creation of the reuse plan, and then voted affirmatively to adopt it.

Victor felt that for the discussion of disposition, Mass Development has a role to play but should not drive the process. He suggested that the parties establish a commission whose task would be to make a plan for resumption of jurisdiction.

Paul felt that “What does Harvard want” is not a useful question. Instead, we need to do the hard work to understand what resumption of jurisdiction would entail. One way to approach this would be to task each Harvard board with examining how its own scope of responsibility would be affected. However, these boards currently have full-time, day-to-day responsibilities and would need to coordinate their

efforts. Therefore, he felt it would be better, and more efficient, to have a single entity plan the transition.

Victor suggested that a commission would create an overall plan, with subcommittees to handle specialized areas. He believed that the default goal should be to return jurisdiction along the historic boundaries; if such an effort failed, then the alternative would automatically become to create a new town.

Paul felt that there was already pressure from the Devens residents to have a real government, and that this would only increase as more homes are constructed and occupied.

Victor said that people want to be in control.

Noyan said that a good example of this sort of tension was the discussion at the DEC, which he attended, over the recently approved greenhouse at Devens. People were worried about lighting, noise, and traffic.

Victor noted that current residents have no political recourse against decisions they don't like. In Harvard, they can vote out elected officials. Devens residents don't have this option.

Discussion turned back to our final report.

Victor felt that we should make two major points. The first point is that the economics of Devens/Harvard is solid, and won't be a burden on current Harvard. The second point is what should be the next steps in the process? How do we keep the process from falling flat?

Noyan said that he agreed with these points, and felt it was up to the leadership of the Town.

Paul noted that historically, the technique for getting the attention of the Town is to put propositions up to a vote. For example, the Town could discuss, debate, educate, and then vote on the notion of establishing a disposition commission.

Victor suggested that we invite our BOS liaison to our next meeting to discuss these issues. He'd like suggestions from the BOS as to the next steps.

Someone noted that a commission could take the broad, rather vague charge in Chapter 498 ("write a report") and develop a plan. There are a lot of issues to address. We could get the plan ready in the next few years, and have it available, even if the actual disposition is much farther away.

Noyan asked what do the people living at Devens think? They have a representative on the JBOS.

Paul agreed that Noyan had asked a good question, and that the Devens residents would need to be part of the process.

Victor pointed out that a key element of marketing the housing at Devens was the quality of the schools. With a recently constructed high school in the Ayer-Shirley combined school district, they might be in a position to compete with Harvard when the school contract comes up for renewal in 2020.

Conservation Costs of Operation and Upkeep

No report.

New Business

None.

Select Future Meeting Dates and Locations

The next meeting date was set for Friday, September 11, 2015, at Hildreth House, at 7:30 am.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 am.