

Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, January 11, 2011 7:00 PM
Old Library, 5 Fairbank St., Harvard, MA

MINUTES

PRESENT: Bruce Stamski, Jim Higgins, Elaine Lazarus, Jim Stevens

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Dec. 14, 2010 meeting as written.

Bruce Stamski provided an update with respect to his research into past history relative to a sewer system connection for the Commercial District on Ayer Road. He noted that with respect to a connection to the Town of Ayer system, he learned that in the past Harvard lobbied against a connection for the Shaker Hills golf course, and then later when Harvard wanted a connection for the housing proposed there, Ayer said no. He stated that with respect to Devens, they are apparently open to discussion. He noted it was suggested to him that a place to start is with the Devens engineering group to determine if a connection is feasible, and then to begin the political discussions after that if the Town wants to proceed.

Bruce then provided an update as to the funding listed on the State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Route 110. He stated it is listed as a \$2,500,000 project, noting that it was apparently originally for the portion of Route 110 in Still River but was changed to an Ayer Road project at some point. He noted that the report done by CDM a few years ago was a preliminary study, and there would need to be additional work before a project can be funded. It stated the project is programmed for 2015/2016 construction. It was noted that regardless of the listing, TIP projects are not funded unless they are designed first, and the Harvard project is at less than 25% design at this point.

Jim Higgins stated that he has a list of some businesses, and talked to a few of them to get an idea of what questions to ask. He noted that one individual was optimistic about commercial development on Ayer Road. He added that both indicated that the bylaws regulating signage are too restrictive, which makes it hard for people to find the businesses. He noted that he will gather information about what would make their situation better, any regulatory issues they face, and their infrastructure needs.

Jim Higgins noted that he has also been thinking about communication, and there needs to be a determination as to who we want to communicate with and about what. He noted that the EDC would probably want to communicate with people who need information and people that it wants feedback from, which can be done via the Town website. He noted that the second thing is to get people involved in a process, which could be done via a Google group, and the third could be a chat or information exchange group. It was

noted that the latter two communication methods would be used when there is a project or proposal to be discussed.

It was noted that there should be as much information as possible on the Town web site with regard to what the EDC is doing.

Elaine Lazarus provided an update with respect to the process of joining the Devens Economic Target Area (ETA). She stated she had spoken with Tim Bragan about the process, which will require legislative action. She noted that to this end, there should be an article on the annual town meeting warrant authorizing the Town to submit special legislation. She added that an official with the Mass. Office of Business Development stated that the Town will still need to meet one of the criteria for ETA designation, and distributed copies of the list. She noted that the official will double check on that, however, and get back to her. It was noted that the Town should also discuss with Devens officials the desire for it to join the ETA.

Document used at the meeting: Mass. General Laws Ch. 23A, Section 3D, Economic target areas

Adjourned: 7:45 PM

Approved: