

Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, April 10, 2012 7:00 PM
Old Library, 5 Fairbank St., Harvard, MA

MINUTES

Members Present: Rich Maiore, Chairman, Chris Ashley, Sandy Chapman, Elaine Lazarus

Members Absent: Jim Stevens

Others Present: Michelle Catalina, Joe Hutchinson

- **Administrative Business**

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the March 13, 2012 and December 13, 2011 meetings.

- **Master Plan Update**

Mr. Maiore stated that phase 1 of the Master Plan is almost complete, and Ms. Catalina and Mr. Hutchinson are present this evening to describe the status and the next steps. Mr. Hutchinson stated that phase 1 focused on residents, with stakeholder interviews, public forums, a survey and focus groups. He stated they heard from the Town that people want to figure out Devens before they do anything else. He stated that phase 2 of the Master Plan would tackle that issue first, via a municipal impact analysis of Devens on Harvard, taking the DEAT analysis further and looking at other subject areas such as housing. He noted that a fiscal analyst would likely conduct the analysis.

Ms. Catalina stated that sustainability was a concern of people, as it relates to the overall future of the Town. She stated Devens needs to be decided because it always comes up and affects the Town's efforts to plan effectively. She noted that the survey results show that people are looking for more information. Mr. Chapman noted that DEAT felt that the existing information is very good but needs to get out to people. Ms. Catalina added that the survey indicated that people want the Devens answer within the next 5 years. It was noted that Devens has been built out faster than anticipated.

Ms. Catalina stated that for phase 2 the existing data would be the base and the focus would be expanded with all of the options laid out for consideration. She stated that the Master Plan Steering Committee goal would be to educate the public via forums. She stated the Town could then take a position and charge the Town to go in that direction. It was noted that the timeline would be two years, possibly shorter, for completion of the Master Plan. Mr. Hutchinson stated it is important to the School Committee as well. He stated that the EDC would hopefully assist with the C district portion/economic development analysis. Ms. Catalina noted that there would be a fiscal impact/market analysis of the Ayer Road area to look at the future there. She noted that if the Town wants to take back Devens, it could mean revisions to the C district area. It was clarified

that all of the required master plan elements would be addressed in phase 2, not just the Devens issue.

Mr. Chapman stated that economic development of Devens and of the C district are very different and are not mutually exclusive. It was noted that the EDC's mission as identified by the Board of Selectmen would continue until changed while phase 2 work is going on.

Mr. Ashley asked how the Town's Devens decision would be made. Mr. Hutchinson stated that phase 2 needs to engage the town boards. It was noted that a non-binding town meeting vote would be sought to determine the Devens decision.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that for phase 2 there would be a new steering committee which will work out the details. Mr. Ashley noted that the public decision informs the actions, and noted that the process should be the focus, not necessarily the outcome. Mr. Hutchinson noted that an article on the annual town meeting warrant would seek \$100,000 for phase 2 funding.

- **Other Business**

Mr. Maiore noted that an article on the town meeting warrant will request \$1,000 for the EDC to conduct mailings, etc.

It was noted that the Sign bylaw article at town meeting would be presented by the Planning Board and that the EDC would be available to answer questions.

Adjourned: 8:45 PM

Elaine Lazarus, EDC member

Approved: _____

Documents used at the meeting:

- Draft Minutes of the December 13, 2011 and March 13, 2012 EDC meetings
- Draft Town of Harvard Master Plan Phase 1 Report (undated)