

Economic Development Committee

Thursday, April 26, 2012 7:00 PM
Hildreth House, 13 Ayer Road, Harvard, MA

MINUTES

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

Others Present: Michelle Catalina, Joe Hutchinson

- **Master Plan**

Mr. Maiore stated the purpose of the meeting is to hear additional information about the proposed phase 2 of the Master Plan process.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that they have been speaking to boards and officials about the proposed phase 2 process, should the funds sought at the annual town meeting be voted. He stated they are available to answer any questions that the Committee may have.

Mr. Chapman arrived at this time.

Mr. Ashley questioned the funding source of the \$100,000. Mr. Hutchinson stated they do not know the funding source. Mr. Chapman stated he is supportive of the Devens focus for phase 2. Mr. Ashley stated that Devens is a unique situation and asked about the likelihood that a consultant will be knowledgeable enough to hit the ground running. He noted that there is a lot of information out there, but he has concerns as to how someone will approach the issue. Mr. Hutchinson stated there are consultants who do this for a living, and feels that the expertise is available. It was noted that the DEAT work would be used as the starting point. Mr. Ashley stated he has concerns about doing implementation work before the policy is set by the Town.

Ms. Lazarus asked what kind of public engagement would be included in phase 2. Ms. Catalina stated there would be a lot, and described some of the methods that could be used to inform and involve the public. Mr. Maiore asked how the boards would be involved, noting that there needs to be a clear and transparent communication strategy so that the information gets to people. The transparency issue was discussed, as well as possible communication strategies. It was noted that there should be opportunities for the public to weigh in on the progress from time to time. It was the consensus of the Committee that communication and transparency will be extremely important for phase 2 to go well.

Mr. Stevens asked if the business community would be involved. He noted that this could be a big benefit to the public. Mr. Hutchinson stated that the current master plan consultant has recommended more business community engagement for phase 2. Mr.

Chapman stated the Town should also reach out to Ayer and Shirley. Ms. Lazarus noted that the phase 1 report contained language that seemed to indicate that the MPSC had made decisions with respect to the C district. She asked whether there were any “closed doors” in phase 2 or if the Town would be open to following up on wherever the analysis/information takes it. Ms. Catalina noted that no decisions had been made with respect to the future of the C district. Mr. Stevens noted that the disposition of Devens might affect the business culture of Harvard, positive and/or negative, and this should be looked at in phase 2. Mr. Maiore stated that in phase 2 the communication with the EDC needs to be better, with updates after every meeting. Mr. Hutchinson stated that communication would be a priority.

Adjourned: 8:25 PM

Elaine Lazarus, EDC member

Approved: _____

Document used at the meeting:

Town of Harvard Master Plan: Phase 1 – Vision and Goals, April, 2012