

JBOS Joint Boards of Selectmen of the Towns of Ayer, Harvard, Shirley and the Community of Devens

**May 22, 2014 Meeting Minutes
Shirley Town Hall, 7 Keady Way, Shirley MA 01464**

Chairman Leo Blair– Vice Chairman Gary Luca

* This meeting was recorded by SPACO.

JBOS members in attendance: Gary Luca (Ayer), Leo Blair (Harvard), David Swain (Shirley) and Rick Bernklow (Devens)

MassDevelopment representatives in attendance: George Ramirez, Vice President of Devens Operations and Attorney Lee Smith.

Guest. Former Ayer Selectman Frank Maxant

Call to Order: Chairman Blair called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM

Review and approve the April 24, 2014 Minutes. Tabled.

Treasury update. The Devens Disposition Fund balance is \$32,699.30

Presentation by Frank Maxant, regarding proposed amendment to Chapter 498. Mr Maxant proposed a Home Rule Petition to amend Chapter 498 to restore municipal authority to the one or more of the Towns. The Home Rule format would protect the bill from potentially having changes made to its content and meaning while in the legislative review and approval process. Mr Maxant provided five handouts: Draft Home Rule Petitions for Ayer, Harvard and Shirley, Draft Home Rule Petition for all three towns, and HRP Notes. Mr Maxant said that House Counsel had reviewed the proposed legislation and said that it is written correctly.

Chairman Blair asked if the proposed legislation would impact MassDevelopment's ability to redevelopment Fort Devens. Mr Maxant said that the restoration of municipal authority to the towns would only enhance MassDevelopment's ability to develop.

Chairman Blair said that municipal services (eg. fire, police, DPW) would have to be dismantled. Mr Maxant said that companion legislation could assign municipal services to the towns or, if preferred, Ayer could do all of the DREZ municipal services. Chairman Blair asked if there would be duplication of services and employees. Mr Maxant said that the new legislation would establish boundaries and the towns would have to provide municipal services within their towns. Partnerships may be formed in order to combine equipment.

Chairman Blair said that, if the revenue went to the towns, the towns could manage the municipal services. Selectman Swain said that the Home Rule Petition(s) would need the united support of the Towns, MassDevelopment and State officials and representatives.

Discussion of potential zoning changes to allow senior housing in the Shirley Village Growth District. Chairman Blair noted that, so far, we only have loose figures regarding the numbers of residential units that might be proposed. MassDevelopment needs to provide more firm numbers for the proposed units.

Vice Chairman Luca reported that the Ayer Board of Selectmen is generally favorable to the ideas of senior housing in Shirley and to a Super Town Meeting in Fall, 2014.

Selectman Swain noted that MassDevelopment would host informational charrettes in each town. Chairman Blair suggested that an inexpensive survey could be run in all of the towns, prior to MassDevelopment spending a lot of money. A survey would get voters thinking before the meetings. Selectman Swain agreed.

A letter should be drafted and sent to MassDevelopment, asking what changes to the housing cap might be asked for and what those changes might look like. See if MassDevelopment is interested in getting a survey out in advance.

Public comment. Former Shirley selectman Enrico Cappucci noted that the older population is having a hard time finding downsized homes in their familiar locations. They want to stay near their doctors and their friends. Chairman Blair agreed, and noted that Bowers Brook is fully occupied and the residents are drawn from local communities. Chairman Blair added that the area needs more affordable housing for local downsizers and that the older population puts a premium on maintenance-free housing.

Review and approve draft letter to MassDevelopment, re: request for funding. Chairman Blair noted that the JBOS can review the draft letter, but it must go to the boards for approval. Chairman Blair summarized: The JBOS will run out of money and, in order to proceed, the JBOS will need professional advice and continuing administrative services. We do not want to be in the position of having our funding balance drop to \$8,000 right in the middle of trying to get financial analysis for the Shirley project.

Chairman Blair asked the JBOS representatives to go back to their boards and get their direction. Should we ask MassDevelopment for funding? Is this draft letter the right way to ask? Is this the right amount to ask for?

Mr Bernklow asked if the towns would support the JBOS, financially. Chairman Blair said that the towns might contribute \$10,000/annually, as good faith. However, this would happen a year from now and we need progress now. We need to ask for help, at least for once, from MassDevelopment.

Review and discuss the 2014 DEAT Report. Chairman Blair asked the JBOS to read the report and bring questions and discussion items back to the JBOS.

Public input: Frank Maxant offered appreciation for the report and suggested that the other towns might follow suit in doing their own similar studies. Chairman Blair agreed, and said that Harvard's Devens Economic Analysis Team would more than likely embrace feedback from the other towns and would welcome volunteers from the other towns.

Next meeting: June 26, 2014

Motion to adjourn by Vice Chairman Luca. Second by Mr Bernklow. All in favor. **The May 22, 2014 JBOS meeting was adjourned at 7:47 PM.**

_____ Minutes taken by Liz Garner _____

Meeting Documents

May 22, 2014 JBOS Agenda

Draft Home Rule Petitions for Ayer, Harvard and Shirley (*authored by Frank Maxant*)

Draft Home Rule Petition for all Three Towns (*authored by Frank Maxant*)

HRP Notes (*authored by Frank Maxant*)

Draft letter from JBOS to MassDevelopment, regarding funding request

2014 DEAT Report (authored by Harvard's Devens Economic Assessment Team)