

Master Plan Steering Committee Meeting January 30, 2012 - Fire Place Room Old Library

Present: Tim Clark, Joe Hutchinson, Michelle Catalina, Lucy Wallace, Ron Ostberg, Rich Marcello

Meeting opened 9:35am

Approval of Minutes

Unanimous approval by the committee to accept the minutes of December 22, 2011 and January 23, 2012

Survey Survey closes 1/31 - MC reported survey is over 600, manual surveys are being collected and input from Hildreth, Town Hall and Library and shipped to BW for input.

Vision/Goal update

Draft work product continues to evolve. Survey inputs may change hot points.

Deliverables

JH to check-in with BW to review final deliverables list baseline and the what makes the most sense of how to use the remaining work time in the contract. MPSC needs to work towards an outline of tasks and costs that will tell FinCom and town how money will be spent in Phase 2.

March 3, 2012 9-1pm forum at Old Library

Tasks update:

TC refreshments - check with Chef Paul and look at alternatives

MC - will update flyer for forum

LW - Ad in the Press Ad to run in 2/24 edition (Press deadline 2/21)

MC - Contact Maureen Babcock to reach Devens residents

MC - To investigate baby sitting - possible use of Congo

Working Groups Report

Devens Focus Group 1/26/2012 7:30- OL

Report by LW : BW had a very specific process for the focus group. 3 tasks - 5-10yr vision of Devens, identify crossover of visions, process moving forward.

Attendees: Ed Starzac MD, Peter Lowitt, Phil Crosby Devens, Heather Knowles Devens, Victor Normand DEAT, Steve Finnegan DEAT, Sandy Chapman DEAT (Commercial real estate broker) Lucy Wallace, and Jim Breslauer.

Common vision - Devens needs to be financially sustainable.

Re-Use Plan has been a good road map for development.

Planned development of Devens has been good regarding open space, unified permitting etc. There were concerns for maintaining the "economic engine" at Devens. Suggestion to MD should look beyond Devens and out towards Westminster and down to Clinton in terms of supporting the "region" and the need for economic development.

Agreement that Residents want to stay as a contiguous community (not split between towns). Many townhouses are serving as rentals now since its hard to sell them. One year leases are required by the homeowners association (not month by month). A noticeable number of military are renting, and many rentals are transient.

Opinion of housing cap of 282 was mixed. Some believe they need a more vibrant community there. Agreed it is an artificial number. Suggested that zoning should dictate what the maximum density would be, not a cap.

Salerno circle was loosely discussed in terms of its development potential.

Greater transparency by MD is essential for the surrounding community to understand what the underlying costs and liability are.

Towns need to be engaged at the planning phase, rather than responding to projects formulated by MD in isolation. The towns need a planner representing them and resources to support them - along with a declaration by MD that we will be part of the process.

RO reflected that do we need a planner or a consultant specifically hired for the task (LW: and have Mass Dev pay for it). Can we get a commitment from MD to allow us into this process up front?

Devens residents want to know that there is an effort on behalf of the town to work towards a common goal.

Already opportunities are being pursued about delivering services by the towns rather than MD.

RM: There appear to be areas of agreement, but have the problems been framed crisply for BW or the MPSC team?

RO: Devens is really hard to characterize what the problem is or what are the issues to be solved.

RO: we don't have a development plan that reflects how we perceive the character of Harvard as we know it today. The rural character reflects our values, but we have not yet updated our local government and laws as economic realities and conditions have changed. "Winding roads, farms, villages, vistas" struggle to be integrated into the modern development pattern of highways, cars, roads and modern employment centers.

Agreement among focus group participants that something has to be done to move this issue along - there was a sense of urgency and opportunity.

How much housing should be rental vs. ownership - Ownership represents much more of a commitment to community than rental.

Re-use plan has a minimum 25% affordable as a target (understood and agreed this is good goal)

Reconnect Harvard to Devens - Depot rd or Old Mill either for pedestrians and bikes initially - connections are necessary to the integration of the towns.

Regional Economic development corporation suggested - an entity that could benefit all three towns in achieving the visions for commercial development for Devens.

Form a municipal utility and keep it intact as a unified, independent municipal utility.

Consider keeping residential Devens as a village concept

TC: (notion of village is debatable - what kind of village has two hotels and a pizza place?)

RO: Do really have to spend money to tackle Devens before we complete the master plan?

JH: Does Devens really impact every aspect of the master plan? - (the sense was yes)

LW: What is the process by which the towns would move forward?

RO: Nomenclature is important - We can't find precedents in our town - ex Village. The new demands prevent the replication of our older settlement pattern. Are there ways to start thinking about these. Harvard still has a vibrant "cultural landscape" and can we be vigilant over these things when it comes it

Upcoming working groups

TC asked for updated boards from BW for working group to review and provide input as part of their primary work objective.

C- District 1/31 7:30 OL - BW to lead focus group. MC has confirmed invitations.

Housing 2/7 (2/14) 7:00 OL? LW to book space

Town Center TBD - First week in Feb. TC to Set up tentative dates.

Conservation TBD - Ron O to get together with Rich Marcello and set date

FinCom Mtg. report: Michelle updated on status. MPSC didn't get any questions in advance. MC Explained status and progress. Few questions

Fincom wants to see a breakdown of financial expenditures and refined notion of the deliverables of Phase 2. Searching for ways to push requests down the road or break up the tasks into smaller pieces.

CPIC meeting - Invited MPSC to their meeting on Feb 16.

Meeting Adjourned 11:10am Minutes drafted by TC