

Master Plan Steering Committee Meeting March 5, 2012 - Old Library

Present: Tim Clark, Joe Hutchinson, Michelle Cataina, Lucy Wallace, Ron Ostberg, Jim Breslauer, Rich Marcello

Meeting opened 9:35am

Recap of Forum

Town Center - TC reported this was the least controversial component. Primary change to the strategies section was the new description of commercial overlay district as a distinct "Historic Town Center District" with specific regulations related to housing and commercial property/businesses.

Devens - It was clear people want to set a direction for the town. Caution advised about not knowing about what will happen in the near future. 2-5 year window for decision making. Better coordination with DEAT is necessary - How is the proposal by MPSC different from work of DEAT? MPSC should be building on prior work. Clarity requested about an upcoming vote on Devens - the slide presented at the forum needs to be adjusted to clarify the scope of the question and implication of the outcome. Sense of the meeting was that the community is ready to tackle Devens. We should articulate how the investigation will effect the character of the town - "will this change affect the nature of the town". Education of the alternatives and impacts will be important. LW - highlight the things to be considered when looking at the economic development zone, separate perhaps from our local municipal govt. operations.

Outline of Devens investigation will be incorporated in the RFP

Conservation - General Agreement on strategies and goals. - more specificity required in terms of development of implementation plans. Mapping energy/sustainability issues to conservation efforts and development goals also needs to be done. Is there a way to reward individual initiatives, rather than collaboratively. (Its nice to talk about farms, but if the farmer doesn't make money, there will be no farm - Define challenges of a suburban community with an agricultural identity vs. the national park model) Conservation is a holistic issue, dependent upon who lives in the town. How do we encourage private land owners to deal with these issues and organize themselves and take actions on their own. What kind of diversity do we need to continue to provide for what we have. Discussion around "Stewardship" and how responsibility was distributed among all property owners - perhaps education/outreach etc might re-establish that behavior. What is the role of the planning committee in knitting the different areas together. Conservation is no longer just about acquiring open space. JB - should we get info we have learned to the town Ag Commission.

Housing - What data do we have that drives these strategies, identify open land options that might be suitable for develop - perhaps some illustrations of what the options are - what are the risks of a property transitioning into a high density development. Yes we need more diverse housing - what has worked for other communities? Smaller housing

doesn't necessarily mean affordable. What about things that are good like assisted living - but what is the financial impact. We should plan internally for housing pro-actively and not wait for Devens to happen or use it as a place of a high concentration of low income or elderly housing . New development should be compatible with the character of the town. Who will be responsible for the new housing developments and diversity? Neighborhood connectivity - promote community connections. Should be proactive about 40B developments - and make that investment or not?

C-District

Cluster development was seen as desirable by participants. Questioned why C-district should allow housing at all as it takes away from the commercial development - conflicts with residential character.

Both groups wanted connectivity of walking and biking paths within and connecting to the C-district to be added as a goal.

One group indicated that jurisdiction of Devens might alter how we want to develop the C-district differently.

One group suggested a strategy to be added that they wanted a path to get a restaurant and grocery store - and put to a vote of the town if they would be willing to pay for the infrastructure to make that happen within the next 6 months.

RO suggested a strategy of a "peer review" of how other communities have achieved a particular goal similar to this one.

Overview of Forum - Errors and Omissions

MPSC needs to ensure we are aligned and communicating with EDC and DEAT, Energy Committee, Ag Committee, School Committee before ATM.

Different groups who didn't participate in the working groups, not because they don't want to, but because they couldn't make the meeting. Phase 2 may be the opportunity to continue the conversation.

Another discussion was inviting and leveraging Non-Profit Trusts and developing the partnership between them the public (government). MP can have the forum that brings these groups together.

To Do - Item - Articulate request of support from other sub committees.

Survey Content

Final analysis received from Brown Walker - RM suggested a press release.

RO - Are there elements that need to be mined?

LW - What assertions we are making at ATM support our request and provide validation. Can we get another board/committee to support our recommendations?

MC - cross referenced data on C-district - doesn't appear to be very different from past three surveys. Also isolated Devens respondents and correlated the written responses which were split in becoming their own town or being part of Harvard (using filters)

BOS Meeting Prep

People want more info on Devens, Survey data reinforces the direction of the MPSC for phase 2. No objections by FinCom and CPIC. PB on monday, BOS on tuesday.

Discussion points for next meeting (7PM at OL):

RO - the boards and Goals/Strategies are not incredibly rich, is there a way to deepen the conversation and incorporate the working group data and feedback. How does it get into the final report?

Notes from forum breakout groups should be sent to BW ASAP.

Q's when will MPSC get the draft.

Meeting Adjourned 11:45pm Minutes drafted by TC