

Master Plan Steering Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 10, 2013

Present: MPSC: Joe, Victor, Lucy, SusanMary; Liaisons: Don, Jaye, Elaine; PB: Bill; Consultant: Judi

Timeline: Joe noted we are about 2 weeks behind schedule. We need to assign committee members to meet with town boards and committees. Before meeting with boards/committees we need to develop consistent messaging. Do this at our meeting on Dec 19<sup>th</sup>?

Update from Judi -Mobilization: With the help of Bill, Judi collected a “boat load” of information and data, such as various departments’ annual reports to the state (ie COA report to Dept. of Elder Affairs), town’s bonding prospectus, and federal census data (updated from Phase I). She is now starting to “knit together” and distill this data and information. She also has been in contact with subcontractors and getting their subcontracts in place.

1<sup>st</sup> Survey - Devens Criteria: Judi noted a target date of on-line survey is Jan 1, 2014. A discussion of how to tie the Devens criteria to the MP elements led to a discussion of how Devens would be integrated into the MP. Survey discussion, therefore, was postponed to later in the meeting.

DEAT: There remains confusion over the relationship between DEAT’s analysis, ascertaining a Devens direction and the need for a Devens impact analysis. Judi noted that each element of the MP would identify what criteria re Devens would relate to that element. There may be 3-5 criteria for each element. For instance, under financial criteria would include not only revenue needed from Devens to cover operating and capital costs, but also consideration of Devens’ business needs and Harvard’s ability to meet them.

Vic asked Judi why she was averse to collecting data on Devens, particularly municipal operating data. Judi replied this was not part of their contract. Vic noted that the MP should look at the whole picture – and Devens is potentially a large part of that picture. The 10-year implementation plan could/would be radically altered by the inclusion of Devens. Judi again stated the contract doesn’t include the parameters of a Devens return. Vic suggested that an early action item in the implementation plan would be an analysis/development of a Devens municipal budget so the town would have a greater/deeper understanding and able to make a more informed decision.

Joe stated that Harvard needs to figure out what it wants/needs vis a vis Devens – not just financial decision.

SusanMary stated she didn’t believe RKG had been hired to study Devens, but to do a master plan. Judi agreed, noting Harvard is putting too many eggs in the Devens

basket; not all master planning decisions are contingent on Devens. And, we don't have control over Devens.

Vic concurred that while a Devens budget is not part of the contract, developing some metric to by which to measure Devens is. He explained to Judi that Devens now assesses properties according to the same state standards as any municipality – and in fact uses the same assessing firm as Harvard. In addition, Devens' assessor's information is separated by town and county. This has enabled the DEAT to develop a fairly accurate picture of Devens' revenues from property taxes; the need is for a municipal budget which MD does not generate.

Judi reiterated that business interests cannot be overlooked; agreed with Vic that implementation plan needs to include a process for determining the pluses and minuses of Devens' inclusion.

Elaine summed up the discussion noting the purpose of the MP is to provide a framework for future changes and decisions, and to highlight the information that would be needed to make those decisions.

Vic again asked if Judi would be including known data/information on Devens, such as number of acres of open space; housing data, tax base in place, potential tax revenues (as TIFs expire), etc. Judi said it would be included. Judi said the MP would include what the town would need to do if it was to resume jurisdiction of Devens. Vic opined that the MP has to help “move the ball down the field” towards a decision, and part of that is educating the town on Devens.

Developing Devens Criteria: After some discussion the committee agreed that before the first public workshop we would take the draft Devens criteria to various town boards/committees for input and review. A date of Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, was agreed to for the forum. Backing up from that date we agreed the outreach to town boards had to be completed by the end of January in order to assimilate/distill their feedback for the forum. It was agreed that a survey on Devens criteria would not be done before the March forum – and maybe not at all?

Boards and committees we assigned to MP members and liaisons as follows:

Housing – Vic (MAHT), Joe (PB)

Education (part of municipal services) – SusanMary (SC)

Municipal Services & Facilities (DPW, public safety, water & sewer, etc) – Lucy (BOS)

Transportation/Circulation – Joe (PB); Police/fire – Lucy (BOS)

Economic Development – Joe (PB), Elaine (EDC)

Open Space & Recreation (ConCom, Park & Rec, Pond Com) – Didi (CPC); Jaye (ConCom)

Natural and Cultural Resources (Hist. Com, BOH, ConCom) – Didi and Jaye

Land Use – Joe (PB), HEAC?

Judi will develop questions to get at Devens criteria.

Joe asked about governance and where that would fit into the MP. Judi said it is usually covered in implementation (need for staffing, etc). The recommendation that funds be requested for a comprehensive analysis of a Devens municipal budget would also be included in implementation.