

Master Plan Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 3, 2015

Members Present: Kara McGuire Minar (Chair), Didi Chadran, Victor Normand
Liaisons Present: Don Ludwig, Elaine Lazarus
Planning Board Consultant: Bill Scanlan
Others: Paul Green

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Administrative: The minutes of August 13, 2015 were accepted as presented. Kara noted that the Town Administrator completed negotiations with RKG to pay the firm \$10,000 for the recently submitted documents.

Water Study Committee: Kara asked Bill to report on the work of the Water Study Committee. Bill stated that the charge of the Committee is to find a new source well for the Town Center. The Zone 1's of the existing wells have land uses that could potentially contaminate the wells, and the Town does not own or have control over the Zone 1's. The Committee is still in the early stages of its search, but will likely focus its efforts on locations near the Town Center. Connections to Devens or other communities are not feasible given the distance and cost. The Committee is not looking for water sources that might serve other parts of Town.

Burns and McDonnell (BMcD) Reports: BMcD had supplied drafts of two reports prior to the meeting, a "Master Plan Elements Review" and "Economic and Fiscal Impacts". A third report on Devens has not yet been submitted. The MPSC spent the rest of the meeting reviewing the reports in anticipation of its meeting on Sept. 10 with BMcD.

Elements Review: Members felt there was some good thinking by an outside planning professional on how Devens will affect Harvard's long range planning. Some of the key points members discussed include:

- The report contains various tables regarding the level of discussion of Devens factors within the various Master Plan chapters and whether the Plan should contain additional discussion. Members felt there should be some clarification of the terminology of "low, medium, high" and how much new text would be adequate.
- The members considered the matter of residential density for Devens and whether the housing mix should include large lot single family homes.
- How will permitting and development review will take place – will Harvard assume all responsibility for approving projects, or will the DEC continue with this role? Victor mentioned there may be hybrid approaches, for example, Harvard residents could make up the Commission but DEC staff could continue their review function.
- If Harvard resumes jurisdiction, what land use regulations should apply to Devens? Members generally felt the Town should adopt the Devens zoning controls rather than try to modify the Harvard bylaw.

- How will Harvard accommodate the recreation needs of the 4,000 employees at Devens?
- Does Harvard have the capacity to be good stewards of the open space and natural resources at Devens?
- The Plan should contain an analysis of the demographic composition of the population at Devens in order to plan for services to that population.
- It is possible that residents at Devens may one day outgrow their home and seek to move to other parts of Town.
- MassDevelopment has spent an enormous sum to develop infrastructure to attract high value commercial and industrial firms to create jobs and tax revenue. Companies do not wish to have residential neighborhoods locate near-by. While some housing is appropriate, the focus should remain on non-residential uses.
- Assuming jurisdiction of Devens will have consequences for local government. Harvard may have to change from a highly volunteer-based government to one with more professional staff.

Economic and Fiscal Impacts Report: The members noted some inaccuracies in the financial analysis.

- The consultant under-counted the land available for development. The data may show a large amount of state-owned land at Devens with no value. But unless the land is set aside as permanent open space, MassDevelopment still owns considerable property that is targeted for development.
- The only 'pending' development mentioned in the report is the proposed Village Green housing development. Other projects are under construction or are in the pipeline.
- The annual surplus/deficit calculation is not adequately explained.
- The IMPLAN economic model appears to over-state the economic impacts of Devens on Harvard.

Next Steps: The next meeting of the MPSC is set for Sept. 10. According to the schedule this is the Milestone 2 Review, where BMcD will present its Devens Findings. However, BMcD has not yet submitted this report. Victor agreed to send Bill some relevant economic and property data for Devens that Bill will forward to BMcD to use in revising its Economic Report.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.