

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS TEAM

November 18, 2009 7:30 PM  
Old Library, 7 Fairbank St., Harvard, MA

### MINUTES

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MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Johnson, Chairman, Michelle Catalina, Vice Chairman, Rick Maiore, Elaine Lazarus, Brian Smith

Eric O'Brien, Joe Sudol, Bill Ashe, Peter Warren, Chris Ashley

Michelle reviewed the results from the survey of north Harvard residents, noting that there was a 50% response rate. The Team discussed the results for each question. It was noted that the overall survey conclusions seem to be: 1) residents seem willing to accept some commercial development, but not necessarily full development of the corridor; and 2) residents agree that the concept of economic development of this area should be looked at.

It was stated that a recent survey in Bolton yielded similar results.

Bill Ashe stated he has concerns about this effort. He stated the Town should look at developing at Devens and other areas of Harvard also. He stated that traffic is the biggest issue, and will affect everyone in Town as drivers look for alternate routes. He stated that the traffic is manageable now, but at some times it is difficult. He stated that full development will kill it. He stated the Town needs controlled, well planned development with a village character.

Rick stated that the traffic is there now and the Town can't do anything about it, but the Town can control it. The issue of Devens related traffic was discussed. Peter stated that most Devens truck traffic uses Jackson Rd. and Rt. 2A as they are supposed to, but he is concerned about the increased number of trash trucks using Ayer Rd. Bill Ashe stated there needs to be a good traffic survey before planning is done.

The group discussed the uses identified in the survey as those residents would like to see on Ayer Rd., including a supermarket. It was noted that a Donelan's is typically 25,000 to 30,000 sq. ft. in size. Michelle noted that even though the supermarkets themselves aren't necessarily large, they are not standalone uses, and are always in larger plazas with other uses.

Eric stated that according to Donelan's, the planned expansion of Hannaford's in Ayer, either at their present location or at the Cains site, is enough to keep other supermarkets from locating on Ayer Rd. He noted that he was told that Harvard would work as a location and has sufficient traffic, demographics and income to justify a supermarket, if not for the Hannaford's issue.

Rick stated that at some point, the group should discuss that if retail is not viable at all, then we should look at an office park with some restaurants and a drug store instead. Joe related that several supermarket chains have been interested in Harvard over the years.

Bill Johnson stated that the group had asked Chris Ashley to come and talk about municipal sewer issues as they relate to the Ayer Rd. area. Chris stated the major issues are treatment and capacity of the systems at Devens and in Ayer. He stated he assumes there is capacity in those systems, so collection and transport would be the main issue to discuss. He stated that people have discussed serving Ayer Rd. with sewer before. He noted that one could tie into Devens at Old Mill Rd. or Barnum Rd. and to Ayer at the rotary. He stated it is possible that there might need to be upgrades in the system that Harvard would tie into, in order to accommodate the increased flows.

Chris stated that with respect to the Town Center system, they found that topography and ledge are challenges that needed to be dealt with. He stated that in a traditional gravity system, the pipes need an ideal pitch and there need to be pump stations along the route. He noted that pump stations are expensive, with construction, operation and maintenance costs. He noted that low pressure systems are an option, with individual pumps at houses. He noted that the pipes are pressurized so they can follow the ground contours instead, and are less expensive than gravity systems in a place like Harvard with challenging topography.

Rick asked what Devens would have to do on their end if Harvard connected to their system. Chris stated the system would need to be evaluated and might need upgrades to handle the additional flow. Peter asked if the costs on Ayer Rd. would be higher than the Center, and Chris replied yes because the pipes would have to travel longer distances, the system is bigger, and it would need more pump stations. In response to a question, he estimated the cost to be \$250 to \$300 per foot. Bill Johnson noted that pipes coming down Ayer Rd. from the rotary would be expensive because there would be along run with fewer flows given the land use and zoning of that area. He noted that using Old Mill Rd. to get to Devens might be shorter and reach the developable commercial properties more easily, but it would still be a long run because in Devens it would have to cross the golf course. He noted that both of these options would involve substantial road work/paving. He noted that residents on Old Mill Rd. would be able to connect to the system, possibly a benefit to them. The group discussed another option, going overland from Ayer Rd. to Barnum Rd. and connecting to the Devens system near Evergreen Solar. It was noted that the pipes would need to go through wetlands and property of unknown ownership, both of which are possible, and it would be a shorter distance with less road work.

The team discussed whether developers/land owners would help to finance the system, since they would benefit by reducing the long term maintenance costs of private systems. The team discussed betterment systems and capital costs.

Joe stated the group needs to make sure that development is viable with or without sewer, and whether there would be enough tax revenue generated.

The Minutes of the October 14, 2009 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

Members agreed on the following action items:

- Eric will collect additional information about supermarket viability;
- Tim Bragan is gathering information on controlling access to a municipal sewer system and capacity issues and will report to the group;

- It was noted that there was a cost estimate done for a proposal to extend sewer from Ayer within the last few years – Chris will provide that information;
- Survey results will be posted on the web site;
- Local developers will be asked to attend the next meeting to discuss opportunities and issues with respect to their properties and in the area in general.

Adjourned: 10:00 PM

Approved: January 26, 2010