

**MASSACHUSETTS DEVELOPMENT FINANCE AGENCY
Meeting of the Board of Directors
Thursday, October 12, 2023
11:00 a.m. (Devens Community Session)**

MINUTES

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Yvonne Hao, Chair
Jessica Andors
Kaitlyn Connors
Joan Corey
Dan O’Connell

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Brian Kavoogian, Vice Chair
Gary Campbell
Juan Carlos Morales
Kristina Spillane
Juliann Thurlow

Agency Staff: Dan Rivera, President and CEO
Theresa Park, SEVP and Deputy Director
David Abdoo, Chief of Staff
Simon Gerlin, Chief Financial Officer
Sean Calnan, Acting General Counsel
Marcos Marrero, EVP, Community Development
Tania Hartford, EVP, Real Estate
Cyndy Tonucci, Interim EVP, Finance Programs
Meg Delorier, Interim EVP, Devens
Victoria Stratton, Recording Secretary
Rob Carley
Hilary Clark
Karen Davis
Michael-Ray Jeffries
Robert Jenkins
Chief Timothy Kelly, Devens Fire Department
John Marc-Aurele
Shane Malone
Jim Moore

Guests: Michael Alves, Devens resident; Vice Chair, Devens
Committee
Neil Angus, Devens Enterprise Commission (“DEC”)
Maureen Babcock, Devens Education Advisory Committee
 (“DEAC”)
Lt. Reid Bagley, Massachusetts State Police
Cindy Carter, Press, Devens resident

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Tracy Clark, Devens resident; Chair, Devens Committee
Melissa Fetterhoff, Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce
Paul Green, Devens resident
Keith Jackson, Ft. Devens Reserve Forces Training Area
("RFTA")
John Katter, Devens resident
Dona Neely, Devens Eco-Efficiency Center
Ruth Rhonemus, Ayer Historical Commission
Ashley Stolba, Designee for Secretary of Housing &
Economic Development
Other members of the Devens community

Following the morning session and a short recess, the meeting of the Board of Directors of Massachusetts Development Finance Agency ("MassDevelopment" or the "Agency") resumed at 11:00 a.m.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Devens Community portion of the annual MassDevelopment Board of Directors' meeting in Devens. She introduced herself and said she is grateful for the partnership between MassDevelopment and Devens. She asked each Board member to introduce him/herself briefly, and each did.

Ms. Delorier acknowledged and introduced those present that make Devens Operations possible: Lt. Reid Bagley, Massachusetts State Police; Chief Tim Kelly, Devens Fire Department; Shane Malone, DPW; Hillary Clark, Recreation; Karen Davis, Executive Assistant; John Marc-Aurele, Engineer; Rob Carley, counsel; and Jim Moore, Utilities. She then acknowledged the Agency's Real Estate Team, including (those present): Tania Hartford, EVP, Real Estate; Robert Jenkins, SVP, Development; and Michael Ray Jeffries, VP, Asset Management; among others. She then advised that a few attendees wished to make comments today and she introduced the first speaker.

Melissa Fetterhoff, President/CEO, Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, spoke briefly. She complimented the great relationship(s) among all the community parties, including MassDevelopment; she cited the successful Nashoba Valley Celebration of Service Day in late summer. Reminding everyone that the Nashoba Valley Chamber was the last tenant at Vicksburg Square, Ms. Fetterhoff said she would love to see efforts to revitalize those buildings restart. She stated that one-on-one meetings with community members, which began during the pandemic by videoconference and continue to be conducted in person, remain ongoing and she noted the Chamber's office hours. She expressed her appreciation to the MassDevelopment Team, who she said is "always available," and thanked the Board for its continued support of Devens and the surrounding communities.

Keith Jackson, Deputy to the commander – Lt. Col. Joshua Bloom – of the Ft. Devens RFTA, spoke next. Deputy Jackson advised that it has been a busy year at Ft. Devens, with 91,000 service members completing onsite training. He talked about the complex mission of the nation's military and the importance of preparing for readiness, noting that Ft.

Devens could not complete its mission without its partners, including MassDevelopment, who, he said, look at each other as family. He thanked “the Teams” for all their hard work and support.

Next, Maureen Babcock, DEAC Chair and Member and a Devens resident for more than twenty years, reminded everyone that MassDevelopment’s Board acts in place of a Board of Education for Devens students. She presented DEAC’s “Update to the MassDevelopment Board of Directors – October 2023,” a copy of which is attached and part of the minutes of this meeting. She gave a brief bio of each of the photographic subjects in this year’s Update, all students from Devens, and noted that 2023 marked the largest graduating class of Devens students to date.

Ms. Babcock informed everyone that there are currently more than 117 students in Devens, of which 93 are being educated in Harvard Public Schools under a contract between MassDevelopment and the Harvard Public Schools, with others being educated at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School, the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School (in Devens), and Deerfield Academy. This is the 15th year that Devens students have officially been attending Harvard’s Hildreth Elementary School (K – 5) and the 17th year Devens students have been attending Harvard’s Bromfield School (middle/high school), which continues to rank very highly in educational achievement. On behalf of the students and DEAC, Ms. Babcock thanked the Board and MassDevelopment for its continued support, as always, in providing excellent opportunities for the students in Devens.

Next, Tracy Clark, a Devens resident for eleven years and chair of the Devens Committee, as well as founder of MagneMotion (now a Rockwell Automation company) on Barnum Road, thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak. Mr. Clark said he is pleased with operations in Devens, generally, noting that all services are run well and everyone helps. He praised special events and offered thanks for many good things happening, including outdoor activities (hiking, biking, kayaking, cross country skiing; he wondered if tennis and/or pickleball courts are being considered), pocket forests, and more. While the progress of Devens businesses is interesting and exciting and provides positive energy, he said residents are concerned about the ratio of businesses to residents, particularly in light of a recent legislative “overhaul” related to the so-called “Devens development cap”.

Mr. Clark then spoke about Vicksburg Square and its decaying condition, and a discussion ensued. He described Vicksburg Square as an eyesore giving off negative energy and everyone sees it. He recalled prior dashed efforts at rezoning as frustrating due to jurisdiction issues, pointing out that decades of attempts have gone nowhere. He noted that the most recent effort at rezoning, in 2019 and early 2020, seemed very promising having included considerable community engagement but seemed to have been halted by the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors. Mr. Rivera agreed, confirming that the property is zoned for non-residential use and prior attempts to make zoning changes (to allow for residential use, for instance) have been unsuccessful; he said MassDevelopment has concerns about Vicksburg Square and is closely watching its decline. Meanwhile, Mr. Clark opined that it is the responsibility of MassDevelopment to play a role in such

jurisdiction issues. Commenting that you cannot have the best without the rest, Mr. Clark said he would like to see more involvement from the Agency in this regard. Mr. Rivera advised that MassDevelopment's role is clear: to finish the work of the DREZ and to support the residents. Mr. Clark said that the influx of new residents at Emerson Green has brought new attention from residents concerning Vicksburg Square, and he hopes those folks will bring new ideas and thoughts on how to redevelop the property. He said it would be good to see something happen there.

Devens Committee Vice Chair and Devens resident, Michael Alves, spoke next. Mr. Alves described Devens at the "carrot" that lured him away from Boston after 22 years. To continue the Vicksburg Square discussion, Mr. Alves revealed that he attended a meeting yesterday of the Devens Jurisdiction Framework Committee ("DJFC") and the rezoning of Vicksburg Square is top of mind; indeed, when he asked at such meeting if all the representatives of the surrounding communities were open to housing at Vicksburg Square, everyone said yes. He stated that there is grant funding available for innovative live / work / play communities and he thought this project would be a perfect candidate for that sort of development. To that end, he wondered if MassDevelopment could broker a meeting between legislators, colleges & universities, businesses, and others to discuss the opportunities of this property.

Mr. Alves then asked for help with the signage on Grant Road and inquired about the installation of raised crosswalks and/or redirected traffic patterns. He requested that the Agency stop taking down trees, or plant more to mitigate removal [*Ed. Note: This was in apparent reference to duly permitted development projects at 75 Jackson Road and 11 Grant Road, both of which are private projects not being undertaken by MassDevelopment*]; he requested sidewalks on all streets in Devens. He said, generally, that Devens residents want to be more involved in decision making that affects them. A discussion then ensued regarding the builder Now Communities [developer of Emerson Green Neighborhood in the Grant Road Housing area] and issues related thereto, including code issues, non-compliance, warranty issues, difficulty contacting the builder, and more. The Chair declared that these are concerning issues which are not acceptable.

Mr. Angus, the DEC's new Executive Director (following his predecessor Peter Lowitt's retirement this summer), spoke next. He presented details of a presentation entitled, "Devens Regional Enterprise Zone – 2023 Updates," a copy of which is attached and part of the minutes of this meeting. Advising that Devens is home to more than 120 businesses and 9,000 employees, Mr. Angus commented that the DEC is always happy to help residents when and where it can.

Mr. Angus spoke about recent development projects at 11 Grant Road and 35 Saratoga Boulevard, as well as Watson-Marlow's new 151,000 square foot facility and the King Street Properties' campus that will include six buildings when complete (three are already built). He mentioned Commonwealth Fusion Systems, noting how it and other "cool companies," including numerous biotech and clean tech companies, are attracted to Devens due, at least in part, to the region's responsible and sustainable development practices. There is a Climate Action Plan in place, and low energy homes have been constructed.

With respect to infrastructure, Mr. Angus called attention to the groundbreaking for the public safety building earlier that morning, the three new water treatment plants, road upgrades, trail connections, and water connections. He mentioned Community Initiatives, including pocket forests, farmers markets, the Earth Day celebration, tree plantings, public art, and more.

With respect to next steps, Mr. Angus advised that the DEC will continue to facilitate growth and lead by example. He said the DEC remains engaged in discussions about disposition and asked MassDevelopment to re-engage in such efforts.

[Secretary's Note: Having cited a "hard stop" at midday, the Chair and Ms. Stolba departed the meeting room at the conclusion of the above presentation, at 12 noon.]

A discussion then ensued regarding communication and information sharing, and one Devens resident pointed out that often the residents don't hear about a given project unless and until there is a hole in the ground; he complained about the lack of communication from MassDevelopment. Mr. Rivera clarified that all project permitting is done by the DEC, and Mr. Angus confirmed that the DEC maintains a pipeline and that public hearings are advertised and conducted on all development projects; everything is also posted to the Devens Enterprise Commission's website. He said there are email blasts that go out weekly and when Ms. Andors asked if there is a ListServe that residents could join, Ms. Davis suggested that OnSolve is an excellent new resource, for which residents can sign up. In addition, Public Notices are posted as required; however, it was noted that such "legal" notices often provide less information than people may want. Mr. Clark advised, also, that once a year an informal meeting takes place with Meg Delorier, Neil Angus, MassDevelopment's Engineering team, and others, to which residents are invited.

Next, Ms. Delorier invited John Katter to speak, and Mr. Katter noted briefly that he is a Devens resident, founding member of the DevensConnect group and website and member of the DJFC. Referring to the DevensConnect website, Mr. Katter elaborated that it was developed for the purpose of connecting the Devens residents and others to a central and convenient location for many informational resources related to Devens. With respect to DevensConnect, Mr. Katter advised that while "everyone has an opinion," the Committee was formed for the purpose of focusing on jurisdiction issues, while remaining unbiased and taking no position. The mission of DevensConnect is to represent and inform Devens residents to be as educated as possible regarding the four potential outcomes of disposition, which he described as: status quo; reverting back to the surrounding towns; becoming its own town, or a hybrid model. He briefly described recent activities of the Committee, as well as opportunities. He was pleased to announce that more people ran for elected seats in Devens last year than in its history and that elections were contested.

The floor was then opened to questions and/or additional comments from the attendees. Paul Green, Devens resident, stated that the areas currently zoned for residential development are capable of holding many more housing units. His concern was that this could result in lots more students and wondered if and where a new elementary school is being planned; he suggested that the time for such planning is *now*. There was a question

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regarding automobile excise tax bills (which numerous Devens residents recently received from Harvard), and staff advised that there was an issue, but it has been resolved. Dona Neely, the Executive Director of The Great Exchange, invited Board members and others to visit The Great Exchange's new home, "right down the hall." There were no more questions or concerns.

In conclusion, Mr. Rivera, advised that MassDevelopment hopes to give Devens residents every opportunity to reach out, while acknowledging that the responses are not always what is desired. He noted that all responses must be thoughtful and done in such a way that gets accurate information to the people who need it. MassDevelopment, he stated, is a tool for furthering the Commonwealth's Economic Development Plan and, as such, it is important to build trust. Mr. Rivera, Agency staff, and the Board member(s) present expressed gratitude to everyone for attending today's meeting.

This meeting of the MassDevelopment Board and members of the Devens community concluded at 12:32 p.m.