MASSACHUSETTS DEVELOPMENT FINANCE AGENCY

**Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**Thursday, October 10, 2019**

**11:00 a.m. (Devens Residents Session)**

**M I N U T E S**

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Tim McGourthy, Designee for Secretary of Housing & Economic Development, Acting Chair

James Blake

James Chisholm

Christopher Vincze

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Mark Attia, Designee for Secretary of Administration & Finance

Brian Kavoogian

Karen Courtney

Grace Fey

Francesca Maltese

Juan Carlos Morales

Ellen Zane

Agency Staff: Lauren Liss, President and CEO

Robert Ruzzo, SEVP, Deputy Director

Simon Gerlin, Chief Financial Officer

Ricks Frazier, General Counsel and Secretary

Meg Delorier, Chief of Staff

Victoria Stratton, Recording Secretary

Dave Blazon

Graeme Brown

Rob Carley

Karen Davis

Zach Greene

Dena Kavanagh

Chief Tim Kelly, Devens Fire Department

John Marc-Aurelle

Jim Moore

Kelsey Schiller

Jessica Strunkin

Ellen Torres

Guests: Neil Angus, Devens Enterprise Commission (“DEC”)

Maureen Babcock, Devens Education Advisory Committee (“DEAC”)

Bob Benshimol, Devens resident

Tracy Clark, Devens resident; President, Devens Committee

Dix Davis, DEC

Melissa Federhoff, Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce

Hon. Robert Gardner, former Board member

Peter Lowitt, DEC

Mike McGovern, Town Administrator, Town of Shirley

Dona Neely, Devens Eco-Efficiency Center

Victor Normand, Harvard resident

Other Devens Residents and Members of the General Public

Following the morning session and a short break, the meeting of the Board of Directors of Massachusetts Development Finance Agency (“MassDevelopment” or the “Agency”) resumed at 11:06 a.m.

The Acting Chair re-introduced himself and the remaining Board members introduced themselves. The Acting Chair welcomed everyone to this information session and he thanked them for coming. There were about 35 people in attendance.

The Acting Chair introduced Ms. Strunkin, MassDevelopment’s Senior Vice President, Devens, who thanked everyone for attending today’s meeting. She advised that several attendees wished to be heard and she introduced the first speaker, Maureen Babcock.

Maureen Babcock, DEAC Chair and Member and a Devens resident for seventeen years, reminded everyone that MassDevelopment’s Board acts in place of a Board of Education for Devens students. She provided copies of DEAC’s “Update to the MassDevelopment Board of Directors – October 2019,” a copy of which is attached and part of the minutes of this meeting, and advised, as stated therein, that Devens currently has 90 students going to school under a contract with the Harvard Public Schools (40 students in elementary school; and 50 students in middle/high school); this is the eleventh year that Devens students have officially been attending Harvard’s Hildreth Elementary School (K – 5) and the thirteenth year Devens students have been attending Harvard’s Bromfield School (middle/high school). She was pleased to note that the Bromfield School was ranked 4th in *Boston Magazine*’s list of Best Public High Schools in Boston 2019 and was ranked 8th in *U.S. News & World Report*’s Best Massachusetts High Schools for 2019. In addition, education options for Devens students also include the Parker Charter Essential School, the Oxbow Schoolhouse, Sevens Hills Academy, the Applewild School, and others. Although no questionnaires were sent out this year (the DEAC has decided to survey Devens residents every other year going forward), recent annual surveys regarding education confirmed the overall view that Devens students are being well served. In conclusion, on the behalf of the DEAC, Ms. Babcock thanked the Board of Directors and MassDevelopment for continuing to support excellent educational opportunities for the students in Devens.

Next, Tracy Clark, a Devens resident and member of the Devens Advisory Committee, mentioned three “highlights” of recent meetings: (i) PFAS contamination issues and water quality; (ii) traffic concerns; and (iii) jurisdiction. With respect to the first item, Mr. Clark stated that residents have been “super pleased” with MassDevelopment’s proactive response regarding water issues; however, there remain concerns over exposure risks with some residents wondering what the ramifications are of having been exposed to and drinking potentially contaminated water for years. With respect to the second issue and pointing out that Devens has more commuters than residents, Mr. Clark noted that increased traffic is a symptom of zoning. He confirmed that residents are pleased by recent efforts to mitigate traffic issues and they hope to see such efforts continue. With respect to the third item, he stated that residents – who are stakeholders with important interests that may be impacted– still very much wonder what will happen regarding jurisdiction over the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone in 2033. In addition, Mr. Clark commented that the weekly *Devens Newsletter* has been both useful and informative. He was also appreciative of what he referred to as “cameo appearances” by MassDevelopment / Devens staff (utilities, others) at Advisory Committee meetings, and he encouraged more such visits.

Peter Lowitt, Director of the DEC, was then introduced by Ms. Strunkin. Mr. Lowitt described the DEC as the permitting and regulatory authority for Devens; its role is to administer and enforce the reuse plan, by-laws, regulations, and sustainability vision within the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone, and it functions as the community’s board of health, conservation commission, zoning board of appeals, historic district commission, and planning board. Mr. Lowitt provided copies of the “Devens Project Updates – July 2019 to September 2019,” a copy of which is attached and part of the minutes of this meeting; he recapped briefly highlights of certain projects, including: the expansion of Bio-Techne Diognostics at 7 Jackson Road; ongoing construction at Shirley Meadows Senior Housing; the third phase of development has commenced at Little Leaf Farms, and the second phase of development is underway at Emerson Green on Grant Road; in addition to adding more parking spaces, Bristol Myers Squibb is also expanding (again); the “regional” benefits to area businesses from filming activity at New England Studios; remodeling plans that are underway for Clear Path for Veterans, Inc.; Quiet Logistics’s decision to add loading docks; and more! Mr. Lowitt gave special recognition to Jim Moore and others in connection with the PFAS contamination and drinking water and wells issues. He noted, too, that bike lanes have been installed; and the recent completion of a greenhouse gas survey has resulted in some grant funding for additional analysis. Finally, Mr. Lowitt was proud to announce that the first Farmers Market in Devens will take place on October 30.

Ms. Strunkin then introduced Dona Neely, Executive Director of the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center – a non-profit organization established in 2008 with the mission of promoting and assisting with sustainability initiatives that help firms make more efficient use of material, human, economic, and environmental resources. The Center provides technical assistance, educational offerings, partnership opportunities (e.g., 250 lbs. of baby food was recently donated to Partners for World Health), and other programs (such as waste reduction, environmental safety, and more) and organizes events such as blood drives, exchange programs, and emergency kit assembly programs; it has served more than 184 industrial and commercial entities, non-profits, schools, and municipal departments from 54 towns; noting a 75 percent uptick in participation, the Center’s successful “Great Exchange” program has repurposed more than 50,000 lbs. of excess materials to date this year. Ms. Neely has been with the Center since its inception and she thanked MassDevelopment for its continued support.

Next, Ms. Strunkin introduced Mike McGovern, Town Administrator, Town of Shirley. Noting he had not prepared any remarks for today, Mr. McGovern informed everyone he has been Shirley’s Town Administrator for the past 16 months and it has been a great experience so far. He said he enjoys a great and complimentary working relationship with Ms. Strunkin, which he looks forward to continuing, and he looks forward to working more with the community of Devens in the future.

The floor was then opened to questions and/or additional comments from the attendees. The Honorable Judge Robert Gardner, who served on the MassDevelopment Board many years ago, thanked the Agency and the Board for its ongoing support of Devens; he said it is “extraordinary” that Board members continue to take time out of their busy schedules to come to Devens to be seen by and in the community and to attend this meeting. Next, Bob Benshimol, Devens resident for the past fourteen years, expressed gratefulness for the “marked improvements” with respect to traffic issues in his neighborhood. He then pointed out that there now seems to be a distinct “hum” in his home and he wondered if the DPW Department / Utilities could assist in identifying its cause. Mr. Moore indicated that some testing was performed and nothing was found.

Finally, Melissa Federhoff, President of the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, commented briefly on the Chamber’s great relationship with MassDevelopment. She mentioned partnering with Kelly Arvidson (of MassDevelopment) in connection with visits to local businesses to discuss their financial needs, as well as services provided by the Agency.

In conclusion, the Acting Chair, Ms. Liss, Ms. Strunkin, and the Board members present again expressed gratitude to everyone for attending the meeting today.

The meeting of the MassDevelopment Board of Directors adjourned at 11:50 a.m.