

Selectmen's Meeting
Tuesday, January 18, 1994
2nd Floor Meeting Hall
Town Hall, Main St., Ayer, Ma.

7:15p.m. Open Session

Present: Chairman Slarsky, Selectman Jones and Selectman Hamel.

The Board met with the Ayer PLanning Board re: The proposed Job Corp. Siting in the Town of Ayer at the present Verbeck Housing Area site.

Present from the Ayer Planning Board: Chairman Coleen Norstrom, Clerk-James Williams, Members: Maurice MacDonald and Joseph Wallace. Also present for this discussion was Peter Alsopp of the JBOS Devens Re-Use Office.

Chairman Slarksy opened the discussion by thanking the Planning Board for being present this evening upon such short notice. Chairman Slarsky stated the Board has been contacted by the Land Bank that Fort Devens has been considered as one of the Job Corps sites proposed by the Federal Government. Chairman Slarsky stated Devens would serve youth in the North Central region. Devens posses existing facilities that match requirements set by DOL. Some new facilities would need to be constructed creating jobs and construction dollars. The Jobs Corp. would create approximately 120 jobs and bring in a Federal funded operating budget Of \$5-10 million to the region.

Mr. Alsopp presented to the Board a map depicting the proposed site for the Job Corp. The site depicted is the Vicksburg Square Area. The present Verbeck Housing Area would be torn down and a college type campus constructed to include a buffer placed along McArther St. and West Main Street. Mr. Alsopp related to the two boards that the Devens proposal for a Job Corps center stressed construction of new buildings rather than the reconstruction of old buildings for the construction of a state of the art center & program. The Consulting team has recommended that the Center be placed at the Verbeck Housing area near Shepley Hill to provide open space for athletic fields and nearby buildings would serve as classroom areas. Mr. Alsopp stated area Congressional representatives offers support for creation of a center here and could be persuaded to help seek funds for demolishing the substandard Verbeck Housing. Mr. Alsopp advised the Boards also that the search for center siting was being conducted without consideration for former town lines. Mr. Alsopp stated other sites under consideration were:

1. Housing area located by the Shirley gate.
2. Reserve building on Barnum Rd.

Mr. Alsopp stated that on Feb. 1, 1994 a tour of the Bangor Maine Center was being planned for Town officials to view which is run by the firm which may prepare and run the program at Devens.

Mr. MacDonald of the Ayer Planning Board stated his concern re: security and doubling the Ayer Police Dept. and of impact to community re: students loitering along Main St. Selectman Hamel stated she had spoken with Heather Archer re: disruptive students are handled by Center Authorities and of the programs success rate being very high with only a few/minor student problems. Selectman Jones stated from his personal opinion that such a center would not be too intrusive and he thought it was a good idea and opportunity for the area and the economy. Selectman Hamel stated her concern with the Verbeck Housing site being near the main entrance to Devens and should not appear to monopolize or shut off the entrance. James Williams of the Planning Board agreed with Selectman Hamel stating local authorities lose control if land becomes Federal property and placement of the Center near this gate would lead to loss of control as well as when the Federal Prison Hospital is sited the Jackson gate would be lost as well. Mr. Williams recommended the Board look at other areas for location of the center. Mr. Williams also addresses his concern that the image of Devens not be made to appear as a "Prisonville" atmosphere with a Job Corps presence close to the main gate since the center is defined by being fenced in.

Mr. William Oelfke, Chairman of the Advisory Board presented to the Board brochures and pamphlets describing the Job Corps which his office is associated with in Boston. Mr. Oelfke stated he has personally toured the Brooklyn, N.Y. Job Corps site and stated how impressed he was with the program. Mr. MacDonald requested whether the community would have the opportunity to become involved in running the base should the center not work out. Chairman Slarsky stated these type of question will be addressed later as a closer look into these centers is provided.

Chairman Slarsky stated the Selectmen try to represent the interests of the community in the Board's decisions and will not be able to please everyone and he was against shooting down the proposal because the Job Corps has failed in some communities he requested the Board go forward to learn more and look at the site. Chairman Slarsky called for a motion re: the proposed siting of a Job Corps Center at the Verbeck Housing area on Fort Devens. Selectman Jones moved to support the concept as presented with qualifications, seconded by Selectman Hamel, Vote: unanimous, so moved.

Chairman Slarsky requested the Planning Board sit through the next Agenda discussion re: Moore Air Field. Present for the discussion was Robert Hubbard the Town Economic Development Director.

Chairman Slarsky opened the discussion by addressing the need to investigate whether we want this airfield for the Town of Ayer. Chairman Slarsky stated the airfield is entirely located on land

formerly belonging to the Town of Ayer. Chairman Slarsky turned the discussion over to Selectman Jones who is currently chairing the new task force studying the potential reuse of the airfield. Chairman Jones stated that the Town had an Airport Commission established in the 1950's which looked into closing the runways which was thought to be of no use. Selectmen Jones stated recently he has been contacted by companies interested in locating at Devens and using the airfield runways. Selectman Jones stated he has begun a cost analysis of operating a airport and figures in the \$600,000 range was what it took to run the Fitchburg airport.

Mr. Higgins advised the Board the Re-use plans lists the airfield as a "Development Reserve Area" which implies that it is to be an unzoned area until such time as a more definitive use is identified. If this designation sticks it could be inferred that the airfield reuse is somehow not an immediate priority. In order to make a case that this site has substantial and immediate potential either as a municipal airfield, helicopter repair facility, small plane flight school, industrial development park or a combination of these and others it is highly desirable to have a feasibility study conducted as soon as possible.

Selectman Jones stated the task force has found that the FAA would have money available for a study just for the heliport phase of the field but that Mass. Aeronautical Commission also has money for airfield studies. Mr. Hubbard suggested to the Board that the Town rather than the FAA or MAC should drive the study and also to include the Town of Shirley officials be brought in to place priority re: the airport development. Selectman Jones warned control of the airfield could it go into a state entity than MASSPORT would take control of the direction of the facility and if the airfield were to become privately owned by the municipality then it would have to follow FAA regulations. Selectman Jones advised the Board to a Public Hearing being held at the Ayer Town Hall, on Wednesday, January 26, 1994 at 7:30p.m. to secure more information and ideas from the public concerning the airfield. Chairman Slarsky called for a motion re: consensus of Board re: a Feasibility Study be conducted by the Joint Boards of Selectmen. The Planning Board stated they considered this a high priority item and support a formal request to the Joint Boards. Selectman Hamel moved the Board request a formal request be made to the Joint Boards that they recognize the reuse of the airfield as a high priority and they demonstrate their support by finding funding to conduct the necessary studies, seconded by Selectman Jones, Vote: unanimous, so moved.

The Board entered into their regularly scheduled meeting.

The Minutes and Weekly warrant were held off until the end of the meeting.

Chairman Slarsky requested if there was anyone present who wished to be heard. No one stepped forward. Chairman Slarsky called for a motion to accept the Agenda of 1-18-94, Selectman Hamel moved the Board accept the Agenda of 1-18-94, seconded by Selectman Jones, Vote: unanimous, so moved.

The Board met with Library Trustees: Neville Markham, Paul McGuane, Robert Gardner, Timothy Holland, Mary Ann Lutch, Penelope Kelley, and Ida Narparkstek and Rob Hubbard.

Mr. Higgins opened the discussion by stating he had met with Library Trustees earlier in December re: a Debt exclusion being placed on the Town's Annual Town election ballot. Mr. Higgins stated he reviewed with the Trustees the procedural requirements should the trustees wish to pursue re: expansion funding.

1. The Trustees request the Selectmen put the question on the ballot.
2. a 2/3 vote of the Selectmen is required
3. a majority vote at the ballot box is required
4. 2/3 vote at Town Meeting is required to incur the debt

Mr. Higgins stated the Trustees were present this evening to request the Selectmen vote to transfer UDAG funds in support of the project. The Trustees are requesting a timely reply so that they may plan their fund raising activities. Mr. Higgins stated pursuant to Rob Hubbards draft allocation plan dedicates only 10% be spent from UDAG for public facilities projects.

Ms. Lucht presented to the Board an artist rendition of the proposed new addition to the Library.

Ms. Lucht stated the Trustees have \$200,000 in Federal grant money promised and plan a private donation plan to raise the additional funds but anticipate problems soliciting for these donations until they secure a financial commitment from the Town. Ms. Lucht stated that Townspeople she has talked to support positively the construction of this addition.

Mr. Hubbard reviewed with the Trustees the various uses the UDAG Funds could be used for. Mr. Hubbard stated for public facilities and social service projects he had earlier recommended that \$375,000 be set aside (15% of the total UDAG funds on hand 2.5 million) and that this money be used for several different projects rather than be used just on one project but that his personal view was that this was such an extraordinary proposal meriting more than the 25% portion of the \$375,000 that usual projects of this type would merit.

The Board agreed that this was an extraordinary project. Chairman Slarsky stated there is no question on anyone's mind that the Library is important and the Library meets requirements of UDAG.

Mr. Higgins stated the Board could support at a structured risk, stating if the project is unsuccessful at the ballot the funds could be transferred back to UDAG.

Selectman Jones agreed with Rob Hubbard that this indeed is an extraordinary project and moved the Board transfer \$100,000 to the Library addition contingent upon successful override passage if unsuccessful the \$100,000 to be transferred back into UDAG, seconded by Selectman Hamel, Vote: unanimous, so moved.

Penny Kelley stated the Trustees pleasure and stated this was the positive reenforcement that they needed to begin their private donation campaign.

8:30p.m. the Board took a five minute break.

8:35p.m. the Board re-opened the meeting.

The Board met with Rob Hubbard, Economic Development Director re: Mr. Hubbards proposal for Permit Streamlining.

Mr. Hubbard presented his proposal to the Board. Mr. Hubbard opened the discussion by stating the need to review the Town's development permitting process was identified at the Economic Summit in Jan./93 and in Ayer's Community Action Statement in Aug./93. Mr. Hubbard stated by streamling the Town's permitting process will attract new business and industry.

Mr. Hubbard stated by streamlining it does not relax the town's control of potential developments. It will not lower the review standards but will provide for a speedier more predictable process and be less costly for developers.

Mr. Hubbard reviewed with the Board his work plan, and possible implementation scheduled and likely issues and or outcomes. The Board requested time to review this proposal and rescheduled Mr. Hubbard for the Selectmen's Meeting on 2/1/94. Selectman Jones applauded Mr. Hubbards efforts. Mr. Hubbard requested the Board authorize him to begin meeting with Town Boards to review the streamlining process with them. The Board endorsed Mr. Hubbard's request.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: See report dated 1-18-94

ACTION ITEMS:

1. The Board appointed Carol Callahan to fill the unexpired seat of Mildred Barclay on the Library Trustees. The Board requested letters be sent out to Mrs. Callahan thanking her and Mrs. Barclay.

The Board stated Supt. Ouellette's Report has been rescheduled

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for 2/1/94. Mr. Higgins presented to the Board in Supt. Ouellettes absence 9 Water and Sewer permits for Brilania Court submitted by George Carpenter. The Board approved the water and sewer permits contingent that the road does not have to be reopened.

The Board met with Police Chief Arthur Boisseau and Lt. Donald Haapakoski re: Police Facilities alternatives.

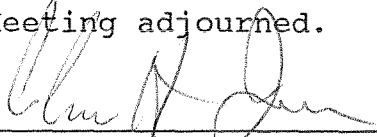
The Board read the Chief letter of 1/14/94 which stated after a tour of the Ft. Deven's M.P. Station it was determined that the facility could house the Ayer Police Department. The Board requested Mr. Higgins draft a letter to Brett Doney requesting the M.P. Station for use by the Town of Ayer in providing Public Safety services to the Town of Ayer, as well as for vehicles & equipment.

The Weekly Warrant was examined and approved in the following amount: P/R: \$340,698.23

The Minutes of 12-13-93 and 1-3-94 were read and accepted.

Selectman Jones moved the Board adjourn the meeting seconded by Selectmen Hamel, Vote: unanimous, so moved.

9:25p.m. Meeting adjourned.



Charles H. Jones, Clerk
AYER BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Date: 3/1/94