

MEMO

TO: Devens Enterprise Commission
FROM: Peter Lowitt, FAICP Land Use Administrator/Director
Date: October 27, 2021
RE: Why Rezone Vicksburg Square to allow residential uses in the near term

The Town of Harvard has requested that the component members of the Devens Jurisdiction Committee, one of whom is the DEC, provide a list of pros and cons for rezoning Vicksburg Square in the near term. In the Devens Jurisdiction Committee meetings I have suggested that Harvard is holding the rezoning of Vicksburg Square area as hostage in order to extract a commitment from MassDevelopment to fund a consultant to manage the Jurisdiction process. I have committed to bring before the Commission a recommendation to match any funds the towns provide toward this effort.

In the meantime I have placed the rezoning of Vicksburg Square area to allow residential uses on the agenda for discussion by the Commission and invite you to bring your thoughts and insights to our meeting. We will prepare a memo to the Jurisdiction Committee containing your thoughts and present it at their next meeting.

To get us started I have a couple of suggestions:

- Without an intervention in the near term, the National Register buildings comprising Vicksburg Square will succumb to the elements. Tick Tock.
- The Governor has declared a housing emergency and has repeatedly shown the connection between the availability of housing and economic development.
- Prior market studies and over twenty years of efforts to sell the property under its current Innovation Technology Center zoning have all stated that the property needs to be rezoned to residential in order to redevelop it.
- Past efforts brought to town meeting have shown a viable path to redevelop these properties using a combination of Historic Tax Credits and Low Income Tax Credits.
- Twenty five percent of the units redeveloped will be deed restrict to count towards the underlying communities low income and workforce housing requirements.

What are your suggestions?