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**DEVENS IN THE NEWS:**

**The Sentinel & Enterprise November 8, 2023, published: Shirley TM to consider selling land for senior housing. Special town meeting scheduled for Monday November 13, 2023**

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**The Harvard Press on November 10, 2023, published: Newly created pollinator meadow and trail open at Oxbow** <https://cloud.massdevelopment.com/owncloud/index.php/s/D3WRhkoU5iCZdm9>

<https://www.golfdigest.com/courses/guides/best-new-england-golf-trips-you-can-take-public-golf>

**The Harvard Press on November 24, 2023, published: Quilts of Honor which our own Carl Sciple was one of the recipients of.**

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**The Harvard Press on November 24, 2023, published: Legislators to meet with state officials to urge release of money for study of Devens' future:**

## Legislators to meet with state officials to urge release of money for study of Devens' future

BY JOHN OSBORN · FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2023

In a Nov. 8 letter to Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao, the three state legislators who represent Devens asked for her help in gaining release of the \$400,000 included in a 2022 bond bill for the study of the future of Devens.

This week she responded. In a brief interview, state Sen. Jamie Eldridge told the Press that Hao, who chairs MassDevelopment's board of directors, has called for a meeting in her office before the end of the year to discuss the request with MassDevelopment CEO Dan Rivera; Eldridge, who represents Ayer and Harvard; state Sen. John Cronin, who represents Shirley; and state Rep. Dan Sena, who represents all of Devens.

The \$400,000 earmark was requested by Eldridge as the last session of the state Legislature drew to a close and is included in Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2022. Members of the Devens Jurisdiction Framework Committee say they need the money now to hire the consultants who will help the committee draft the recommendations on the future disposition of Devens due from the towns of Ayer, Harvard, and Shirley by 2033. The money, Eldridge said, is meant to help pay for that study, not for other initiatives like the rezoning of Vicksburg Square. Money in a bond bill is released at the discretion of the governor.

The nature and scope of the services the framework committee says it needs have finally been set forth in a document approved unanimously by the committee at its Nov. 8 meeting. The document, a so-called request for expressions of interest, describes in great detail the scope of consulting services the committee says it needs. Although MassDevelopment representatives contributed to early drafts of the request, the agency has had no involvement in its content since it withdrew from the framework committee more than two years ago. The request will be sponsored by the town of Ayer and posted by its chief procurement officer, Town Manager Robert Pontbriand.

In their letter, the three legislators said that whether the \$400,000 comes from the Healey-Driscoll administration or MassDevelopment was not important, but that the funding should be provided to the three towns as soon as possible to ensure they have the resources to understand the opportunities, challenges, and financial realities of the various forms of governance available to Devens as its redevelopment is completed. Some members hope that the framework committee's interest in the development of housing at Devens (see story on 1) and release of the request for expressions of interest will bring MassDevelopment back to the table. "They're the elephant not in the room," Pontbriand said at this month's meeting.

Said Eldridge when questioned about the matter: "I've said many times, as I think you know, that it's important for MassDevelopment to get back to being more directly engaged in discussions, whether it's long-term disposition issues or the housing discussion."

**The Harvard Press on November 24, 2023, published: Devens Committee explores steps to rezone Vicksburg Square for housing:**

## Devens committee explores steps to rezone Vicksburg Square for housing

BY JOHN OSBORN · FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2023

Ayer, Harvard, and Shirley voters could, in the coming year, be asked to approve the redevelopment of Vicksburg Square in Devens for housing.

At their most recent meeting, Nov. 8, in Ayer Town Hall, members of the Devens Jurisdiction Framework Committee acted on a suggestion by Ayer Town Manager Robert Pontbriand that the group begin to explore the feasibility of using a Super Town Meeting of the three towns to rezone the former Army barracks for residential development—setting aside, for the moment, the area's future jurisdiction. Vicksburg Square is currently zoned for innovation and technology.

Pontbriand said the committee needed more information before it could act on last month's proposal by Ayer Select Board Chair Jannice Livingston that the towns, using the powers granted them by the Devens Reuse Plan, rezone the 20 acres on which the buildings are located. In particular, he said, the committee needs to know how to convene a Super Town Meeting, without the involvement of MassDevelopment, and what elements a zoning article should contain to create the kind of housing the region needs—while satisfying the concerns of residents of Devens, the three towns, and ultimately the state. Finding answers was necessary homework for the committee, Pontbriand said.

At Pontbriand's request, Neil Angus, director of the Devens Enterprise Commission, volunteered to research the details of convening a Super Town Meeting, while Pontbriand and Devens framework committee Chair Victor Normand will draft a zoning article for the committee to review at its next meeting.

Meanwhile, Mike McGovern, Shirley's town administrator, who has experience in state government, will investigate what would be required to move the historical Harvard-Ayer town line and Middlesex-Worcester county boundary to include all of Vicksburg Square within the town of Ayer. Most members of the framework committee seem to agree that should the jurisdiction of Devens revert to the three towns, Vicksburg Square belongs to Ayer. But not everyone agrees this is a matter that must be settled now. Angus and McGovern worried that asking the Legislature to move the Middlesex and Worcester county boundaries that cut through the Vicksburg Square quadrangle would draw the unwanted attention of other senators and representatives whose districts could be affected, slowing efforts to redevelop the site. Resident representative John Katter and alternate representative Marissa Rivera have objected that deciding the disposition of Vicksburg Square violates the charter of the framework committee, whose task is to consider the future of all of Devens, not just a single parcel. Besides, they say, return of Devens to the towns is just one of four options the committee must consider in drafting its recommendations. The Legislature, which will make the final decision, could decide to make Devens a self-governing town, leave municipal governance in the hands of MassDevelopment, or propose a hybrid solution.

DEC director Angus and others question whether the framework committee is the right entity to deal with Vicksburg Square. "The framework committee could always create a subcommittee or the towns and Devens could establish a totally separate committee to deal with the parcel in tandem with disposition discussions," he wrote in an email to the Press. "That way the committee can remain focused on the larger plan for the future of Devens as a whole, as outlined in Chapter 498," he wrote.

Angus continued: "I think the whole point about separating Vicksburg from the jurisdiction discussions is the opportunity ... to redevelop Vicksburg Square before it deteriorates any further and [to] preserve an iconic and historic Devens landmark, while at the same time helping with the state's affordable housing crisis."

Regarding town or county jurisdictional boundaries, Angus believes mechanisms are available under existing authority to redevelop Vicksburg Square without having to change them.

Normand, Harvard Select Board Chair Rich Maiore, and members of the Ayer delegation, however, insist that to win the support of their town meetings, they must be able to tell voters which town will be responsible for serving and educating the residents of any housing that is built. Angus, McGovern, Livingston, and Maiore have proposed

this could be accomplished through an inter-municipal agreement between the towns of Harvard and Ayer, or a “gentlemen’s handshake,” to quote Livingston, leaving the actual redrawing of boundaries until final disposition.

These discussions are taking place amid a statewide shortage of housing of all types and committee members are concerned that unless the towns act now, the state will step in. There are two ways of redeveloping Vicksburg Square, said Normand, summing up the conversation at the committee’s Nov. 8 meeting. One is a Super Town Meeting and the other is for the Legislature to act on its own to eliminate the current cap on housing of 282 units and to rezone other innovation and technology districts at Devens—one of which is Vicksburg Square—for residential development. “If that happens,” Normand said, “MassDevelopment would not need a Super Town Meeting [to rezone Vicksburg Square], which means that they would not need input from the towns or the Devens residents. They would have carte blanche to develop within the existing zoning bylaws. They would not be otherwise constrained.”

### **Housing beyond the Vicksburg quadrangle**

Some stakeholders would like to see the discussion of housing at Devens extend beyond Vicksburg Square. In a recent conversation with the Press, three leaders in the resident community noted that other parcels could be developed more quickly for housing than the deteriorating Vicksburg quadrangle, which would be a major undertaking.

“Devens is a great place to put more housing and putting some of that housing in Vicksburg Square makes a lot of sense,” resident representative Rivera said. “But I wouldn’t want to see a high heavy concentration of housing put right there with no other additional housing added anywhere else. That just doesn’t sound like good town planning, urban planning. I would like to see whatever happens there happen thoughtfully, as it has elsewhere at Devens.”

In an interview this week, state Sen. Jamie Eldridge said the towns should stay focused on Vicksburg Square for now. If there is funding for studying the future of Devens, additional housing is something that could be looked at, he said. “I just think there is a big difference between allowing say 300 to 400 units of housing at Vicksburg Square versus the bigger discussion around creating housing all over Devens.” Such decisions will depend on whether the towns decide to take their land back or what happens in the long term to Devens, he said.

The Devens Jurisdiction Framework Committee is scheduled to meet Dec. 13 at 3 p.m. in Ayer Town Hall, where these discussions will continue.

## **The 10 best New England golf trips you can take**

**Golf Digest**

**By Drew Powell**

**October 27, 2023**

**From Golf Digest Architecture Editor emeritus Ron Whitten:** Fort Devens in Massachusetts was an army facility dating back to 1917, once a city unto itself, housing 10,000 soldiers, with its own water and sewer systems, its own schools, its own airport. Just 35 miles west of Boston, it was both a training ground and stopping-off point for troops fighting in both World Wars. Before heading to Europe in 1942, General George Patton taught tank maneuvers there.

In the late 1980s, much of the soil beneath the fort's thousands of acres was found to be contaminated with the residue of war: arsenic, chromium, nickel, lead, asbestos, battery acid, waste oil and incinerator ash. It became the focus of an enormous (and enormously expensive) clean-up, first by the military and, after the fort was decommissioned in 1995, as a federal EPA Superfund project.

**For our architecture editor's complete review, click here.**

<https://www.golfdigest.com/courses/ma/red-tail-golf-club>

**Sterling Street Brewery to open a taproom on a biomanufacturing campus in Devens, Massachusetts**

<https://www.wbjournal.com/article/clinton-brewery-to-open-second-location-inside-devens-biomanufacturing-campus>

<https://www.craftbrewingbusiness.com/featured/sterling-street-brewery-to-open-a-taproom-in-a-biomanufacturing-campus-in-devens-massachusetts/>

CRAFT BREWING BUSINESS | OCTOBER 25, 2023 | KEITH GRIBBINS



**STERLING  
STREET  
BREWERY**



[Back in July](#), we announced that King Street Properties was looking for a brewery to help service its [Pathway Devens](#) facility — a five building, 750,000-sq-ft, state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing campus in Devens, Massachusetts. That search is over, as King Street just announced that they have signed an agreement with [Sterling Street Brewery](#) to open that taproom.

Based in Clinton, Massachusetts, Sterling Brewery serves up fresh craft beer (and seltzers and hard kombucha), house made paninis and tasty apps with events ranging from trivia and musicians to craft fairs and workout classes. The brewery was founded by Brian Mason and Jesse Tarbell in 2020, and the duo took their time to pick the right location back then. From a [2020 article](#) via the *Telegram & Gazette* (the only daily newspaper of Worcester, Massachusetts):

“We looked for a good year or so before settling on a building [for the original Clinton location],” Tarbell said. “We absolutely love the building. It gives us the industrial feel that we were going for and has the perfect amount of space, both for production and for the taproom. Clinton has a really up and coming feel to it. The Strand Theatre has always been an attraction, Clintons Bar & Grill has been a great addition to the community, and Coffeelands and Taqueria El Amigo 3 the same. We believe we are another great addition that the community lacks and can help continue its growth.”



The close proximity of the space to their homes was also a big draw.

“We are really happy with the [original Clinton] location,” Mason said. “We had looked at a few towns, and many commercial buildings before deciding on our location. We had certain utility requirements that we would need in order to make this project feasible, (and) Clinton was one of the towns that met all of our requirements.”

Sterling Street’s new Devins location also looks to have a built-in customer base, which should hopefully meet the brewery’s requirements. [Pathway Devens](#) is a biomanufacturing campus. Pathway is King Street Properties’ customizable real estate platform designed to give biotech companies “the space they need to manufacture their drugs in-house,” according to [its website](#). The advanced manufacturing campus located in Devens is about an hour northwest of Boston. It’s a five-building development that is currently under construction, looking to open in early 2024, and King Street sees a diverse mix of modern manufacturing tenants “ranging from cleantech to advanced manufacturing to biotech companies will start to occupy the Pathway Devens campus in early 2024,” according to this [taproom prospectus](#).

Sterling Brewery will occupy a 8,300-sq-ft amenity center and taproom, currently under construction. It’s a “third space,” where employees can work, socialize, eat and drink. The taproom aims to be a gathering space for both the new employees of Pathway Devens and the larger Devens community that the campus sits within, which employs over 10,000 people on a daily basis. From the press release:

“We are extremely excited to expand on the success we have had in Clinton to Devens and the surrounding areas. We pride ourselves on brewing great beer and creating a family friendly and inclusive environment for both our customers and local businesses. We are grateful for King Street Properties for giving us this opportunity and for believing in our vision,” said Brian Mason & Jesse Tarbell, Co-founders of Sterling Street Brewery

“We are thrilled to be partnering with Sterling Street Brewery in the opening of our Devens amenity building. Their local roots in central Massachusetts combined with their passion for brewing great beverages and curating community activities will provide for a great addition to the campus,” said Tyson Reynoso, Managing Director and Partner, King Street Properties. “We have experience incorporating successful food and beverage experiences into our campuses and we look forward to this becoming a destination for our tenants and people in the area.”



The opening of a craft brewery inside a bustling biotech campus marks a refreshing and innovative fusion of science and craftsmanship. This strategic establishment not only offers a unique space for relaxation and socialization, but also represents a blend of industries, fostering a culture of collaboration and creativity. As frothy pints are raised in conversation, I foresee a lot of cool connections this brewery could cultivate, and I dig how these diverse industries are coalescing, promising not just moments of leisure, but also potential incubation of ideas — all within a craft brewery.

To back it up, the city of Devens boasts a thriving mix of commercial, residential, and recreational areas including parks, trails and golf courses, and a portion of Devens is also still home to an active military reserve base. Right now, over half of King Street's Devens campus has already been delivered and phase 2 of the development is currently under construction, including the amenity center which will open in Q1 2024. We'll keep you updated on this fun project.