

# MINUTES

## Montachusett Brownfields Group (MBG)

Thursday, April 14th, 2016

1:00 P.M.

MRPC Conference Room

1427R Water Street

Fitchburg, MA 01420

### Attendees Present

Liz Allard  
Don Ritchie  
Springer, Charlie  
Kathy Castagna  
Michael Gerry  
Bill Scanlan  
Duffy, Phil  
Steve Wallace  
Scott Myers  
Eric Smith  
Beauregard, Trevor

### Affiliation

Town of Harvard  
Harvard Conservation Commission  
TRC  
US EPA  
Ncmwib  
Harvard  
Community and Economic Director, Town of Clinton  
Town of Westminster  
Enterprise Bank  
Athol  
Director of Community Development and Planning, City of Gardner

### MRPC Staff Present

Glenn, Eaton, Executive Director; John Hume, Planning and Development Director; George Kahale, Transit Director; Noam Goldstein, Regional Planner

### Overview of recent activities involving MRPC's \$400,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant

Charlie Springer starts explaining to the attendees that, so far for this program TRC has completed one Phase I assessment for the city of Westminster (in the Old Town Hall) and there are currently four active sites: 1) CSX Rail Corridor between Fitchburg and Leominster with 4.55 miles and whose status is that all the paperwork is signed and back to CSX, waiting to be returned considering that all the changes were accepted; 2) Jean's Towing/Auto-Service in Clinton, MA, which is a petroleum site and MASS DEP has approved and is just waiting for final approval from EPA (to which Kathy Castagna from EPA intervenes adding that they are good to go); 3) Old Manufacturing building in Seventh Street Leominster for a Phase II assessment, that was also pending approval, and will be delayed because of sequencing so TRC will conduct another assessment after the building comes down (which must occur before the end of June or the city won't be able to use the money leaving their work to be executed in July); 4) Old Gardner CDC building in 246 to 248 Central Street has been approved for hazardous money, the QUAPP (Quality Assurance Project Plan) is finalized and will be submitted to North Quabbin and copied to Kathy Castagna from EPA.

### Review ESA requests (site nomination form) from the Towns of Harvard

Liz Allard from the Town of Harvard started talking about a decision taken by the Harvard Conservation Commission to purchase a 24 acre piece of land along Massachusetts avenue, historically an undeveloped lot and for that reason are required to do an environmental site assessment on the property to see if it would comply with the requirements. There are no known activities on the site, although throughout history it has been surrounded by apple orchards. Charlie Springer adds that the purpose of this assessment is to be a Phase I environmental site assessment, and TRC will create the Phase I documents to provide the due diligence

protections that it does for the town. The concern in such cases are surrounding uses, such as agricultural and commercial (which there is some further down the road) and mostly illegal dumping. Along the 24 acres there is a dirt road that goes to the back and there is a tire dump in the back forty. And that's not something the town wants to acquire the liability for.

Q: What is the intended use for the area? A: Open Space/Conservation.

Q: Is there a proposed budget lined for that? A: Yes.

Q: When were you planning to purchase the property? A: 3/20<sup>th</sup>

Q: Can TRC do it that quick? A: We should be able to, since it's a vacant property and we have access (which was a condition of approval for the project) and we will start with that on Monday.

Q: So there was a tire dump in the property? A: Not that there is, but there might be the case, considering the nature of the property.

Q: Is there any known history of dumping? A: There isn't any known history of dumping of anything.

Q: Are you acquiring it through a friendly acquisition? A: No. Motion to accept the inclusion of the Harvard Project to the program: approved.

### **Review ESA requests (site nomination form) from the Town of Athol**

Trevor Beuregard explains that the property is a former Athol Table Manufacture company. It has fifty thousand square feet, and only about ten thousand square feet are actually being used today... there is a small cabinet manufacturer, a plumber and an electrician using some of the space, but currently it is certainly underutilized. The property owner is willing to unload this property to the town or to the EDIC or perhaps to another non-profit even below market rate, to someone who can handle the land transfer process. So, we want to make sure the property is clean and the request is actually to submit it for a Phase I and a Phase II EA. It is known that actually a Landscape Architecture studio is interested in trying to move as a user, as well as other users that are interested in sharing the collaborative workspace in a facility like that. It's actually right next to a railroad which is the PanAm Railcom. We haven't had the access officially 100% but it sounds like, talking to Jim Meehan, Glenn and Shaun Suhoski that is something that could be taken care of or perhaps we could do some kind of conditional approval. Charlie Springer responds saying that TRC already had site access and that EPA already gave its approval (which is conditioned to having such access). John Hume adds that he knows from Shaun Suhoski that two weeks earlier the access wasn't issued yet. Then, Charlie Springer concludes that for the purposes today we could continue with the review of this site, but the motion would have to be pending access and this would be reviewed and approved by EPA and then we could move forward. Trevor Beuregard explains that this proposal is for a Phase I and a Phase II EA because the goal is to move with this as quickly as possible and be a model of public sector working as fast as private sector, to get that property reviewed, cleaned and assessed to be able to move those users such as the Landscape Architecture firm as soon as possible. So I would assume that a Phase II might affect the acquisition substantially depending on what's found on the site. That's something that the Town of Athol is ready to address being this a fairly establish old industrialized site with potential environmental conditions on site. Charlie Springer intervenes saying that because we are dealing with an old furniture manufacture, potential issues are paint, slackers, solvents, other chemicals like stains, coatings, things that would've gone onto the furniture, and also petroleum products like lubricating oils for all the machinery that they've had there. So it's a large site, it's been operated for a long time, and in MASS DEP website where the nomination forms are there is a release right on a parcel that cut out of this one. This was an old tank farm and they had multiple release, they did remediation contamination may have let them brown, so that's a concern in an abutting site that had issues in the past. So these are the issues that TRC would try to figure out on Phase I, to then document that and then design the Phase II if necessary, although with this kind of site it's a rare thing to finish the Phase I process and find no issues that need further investigation.

Q: Why not move to Phase I, let the acquisition go through, and then do the Phase II? A: It may be better to make the Phase II prior to any acquisition because that can be used as a negotiating tool. Even with the owners being open for a purchase-price below the market value, since depending on what is found the price can be way

below market value.

Motion to continue discussion next meeting: approved.

### **Other Business**

George Kahale asks Charlie Springer about the Phase I and Phase II taken in the Commuter Rail parking four-million-dollar project in Ayer from 2009, in which some contamination was found on site. Because of lack of an access easement the project had to be interrupted after the Phase II. If the town grants the access easement by eminent domain, is the site going to be eligible for a contingency plan to be done on the site? Charlie Springer was not completely familiar with the ongoing of the 2009 results and was willing to proceed with this conversation at a later point.

### **Adjournment**

Trevor Beuregard adjourned the meeting at 2:15 p.m.