

Memo To: BOS

From: Janet Wilkinson

Subject: Massachusetts Selectmen's Association's Fall Conference 10/18/08 Summary (see attached agenda). Attended by Joe Knox and Janet Wilkinson.

Date: October 23, 2008

Rep. Barney Frank:

- Goal is to keep credit flowing; regulation is coming
- Plan to extend unemployment benefits
- Provide money to states to increase Medicaid funding
- Expanding FHA loans, 30-year fixed rates insured
- Reported that Treasurer Cahill will cut municipal bond rates to 2.2%
- After Nov. election, proposing Fed. Funds for city and town infrastructure – roads, bridges, facilities (including police stations)

Deputy Legislative Director of MMA, John Robertson:

- State government not expected to cut Local Aid, Chapt. 70 or Lottery
- Cuts include – community policing, Circuit Breaker (from 75% to 72%) by \$14 million, sewer rate relief, spec. ed. transportation

Undersecretary and General Counsel, Exec. Office of Transportation, Jeff Mullan

- Need to spend \$10 Billion of 4 bond bills immediately through Mass. Highway, towns need to be ready with permits, designs to work with MBTA, money available with no cuts. Money includes Small Town Road Assistance, Public Works Ec. Dev. Grants, Transit Oriented projects, off-street parking infrastructure, MORE grants, Library Construction grants, LAND grants (see Memo 2008 Bond Acts attached)
- Increased services to Worcester, no RTA cuts
- Cut backs include – Reg. of Motor Vehicles, MBTA cutting services
- Working on Fitchburg line

Selectwoman from Ayer, Carolyn McCreary

- The EPA is planning to do a study of the SanVel site before any action is allowed
- Interested in school regionalization

Selectman from Weston, Michael Harrity

- Has information on septic system they developed with businesses for downtown
- Has information on how to put speed bumps on “cut-thru” roads

Ec. Dev. and Planning Director, Southbridge, Cassandra Acly

- Tools for preserving and revitalizing downtowns – strategic, planning, financing
- Central Core Overlay District, zoning amendments, historic district tax credits, community dev. block grants,
- Action plan to leverage town money with investors, new store fronts
- 2-story buildings – retail and residential – need public funds or not profitable, geothermal heating, roof garden with solar panels

Ashland Redevelopment Authority, Steven Greenberg

- Redev. Authorities are public/private partnerships; similar to a Housing Authority (MGL Chapter 121?); began with private funding; have own charter, pay taxes
- Ashland mission – RA to attract and sustain dev. to revitalize economy while making town attractive and self-sufficient
- RA issues bonds, borrows money, receives grants, uses eminent domain, CPA funds
- Worked with Planning Board to re-zone; voted at TM to have moratorium on permits/approvals during process
- Study of downtown funded through CPA; architect created vision
- RA has broader responsibilities with less constraints
- Purchased MBTA property; hired co. to design, engineer, permit based on RA specs; town retains control over dev.; more valuable to developer
- Town retains land on 50-99 year lease; developer own/manage building and pay % revenues to RA.

#### Urban Dev. Coordinator, DHCD, John Fitzgerald

- Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance Program; \$1000 for up to 30 hours of assistance (see attached)
- Basic suggestions for downtown (see attached); “Stop making parking the reason your downtown will never work;” make people the priority; do market analysis of downtown
- Focus on community development, e.g. downtown revitalization; septic system betterment; historic preservation
- May recommend a specific person from another community to assist
- Plenty of money available

#### Regional Services Rep., DHCD, David Haynes

- Developed “Guide to State Development Resources” ([www.mass.gov/dhcd](http://www.mass.gov/dhcd))
- Online site provides information on obtaining funding for:
  - Downtown/commercial center development
    - Business Improvement Districts (BID)
    - Growth Districts Initiative (e.g. Devens)
    - I-Cubed (Infrastructure Investment Incentive Program)
    - Mass. Downtown Initiative (MDI)
    - Transit-Oriented Development Bond Program
    - Chapter 40R (Zoning Overlay district) with Chapter 40S reimbursement for cost of students in smart growth districts
  - Historic preservation
  - Industrial/business development

#### Possible Action items:

- Make contact with Nicki Tsongas about Fed. Proposal for Infrastructure/Police stations (in Nov. or Jan.)
- Jeff Mullan said to contact Wendy Stern from EOT office to help us (also working with Ayer) regarding Fitchburg line and IBM/Littleton transportation needs. Money available from bond bills.
- Verify 2.2% bond rate with Cahill’s office
- Keep in touch with Ayer BOS regarding SanVel/EPA study
- Contact BOS in Weston regarding septic
- Contact Southbridge and Ashland about Ec. Dev. initiatives. Consider Redevelopment Authority for Littleton
- Apply for peer-to-peer assistance to supplement support from Mass. Dev. and assistance in grant funding
- Review “Guide to State Development Resources” for Ec. Dev. support