

What is a Super Town Meeting?

The concept of a “Super Town Meeting” was introduced in Chapter 498 of the Acts of 1993, the legislation that established the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone.

Recognizing that the redevelopment of Fort Devens was a matter of regional importance, Chapter 498 created the Super Town Meeting as the mechanism through which the voters in Devens’ three host communities (the Towns of Ayer, Harvard and Shirley) approve important decisions regarding Devens’ future.

The first Super Town Meeting was held on December 7, 1994 and resulted in the adoption of the Devens Reuse Plans and By-Laws.

Any subsequent changes to the Reuse Plan and/or By-Laws—such as the rezoning of Vicksburg Square for residential uses—require Super Town Meeting approval as well.

While similar to regular town meetings in the towns, Super Town Meetings have some unique aspects:

- The Super Town Meeting consists of three separate town meetings in Ayer, Harvard and Shirley, all held at the same time. The meetings are run by the three Town Moderators. Votes are tallied on a town-by-town basis.
- Each town votes to accept or reject the question as submitted. No amendments to the question are allowed.
- To pass, a question at Super Town Meeting must receive a simple majority (more than 50 percent) of the votes in all three communities. If one community does not pass the question, the question fails.
- Public notice and public hearing requirements are different from standard local practice. Two public hearings are required “in the Devens Region” and must be advertised in local papers at least 14 days prior. In practice, more than two public hearings are normally held.

In cooperation with the Towns, MassDevelopment is planning on bringing the Vicksburg Square rezoning to Super Town Meeting in October, 2020. A series of informational sessions and public hearings, starting in February, will help inform voters in the three towns and solicit feedback on the proposal. Keep an eye on the coUrbanize website for more information.

More Information

[Chapter 498 of the Acts of 1993](#)