

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development October-November 2016 Report

RFP Process-Proposal-Prospective Redevelopment Ayer Central Fire Station:

The deadline for Proposal Submissions for the 2nd issuance of the RFP was Monday, November 14th. The AOCED received one (1) Proposal Submission from a local developer. The AOCED will compose and submit a Staff Recommendation to TA and make formal presentation at the Dec. 6th Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Coordination & Competitive Positioning DHCD EDF Grant for Central Fire Station:

The AOCED has kept in regular contact with DHCD EDF Grant administrator in Boston during the RFP process to secure a strong & competitive position for the remaining 2016 EDF Grant program funds of up to \$750,000. DHCD administrator visited Ayer Town Hall last week for update & coordination meeting, to review submitted proposal, etc. DHCD administrator recommended completion & submission of Grant Application Part 1, and to strongly proceed with full Grant Application Part 2. DHCD administrator will forward Part 1 grant application to AOCED on Nov. 28th.

Ayer Municipal Master Plan Committee & Production Process: At the last Master Plan Steering Committee meeting the Dir. Of Community & Economic Development was designated as the Chairman of the Ayer Master Plan Steering Committee. Our two former Co-Chairs, and been designated as Vice C-Chairs and they with the Chairman will work as a leadership team to further enhance the structure, efficiency and public-engagement of the civic & committee process. We have conducted two (2) very successful Economic Development Work Group sessions (at Grady Research/Ice House & Nashoba Valley Medical Center) with a third and final session at the Ayer Industrial Park in December. Also, the Housing & Neighborhood Work Group has conducted two (2) highly engaging and well-attended sessions, both at Ayer Town Hall; a third and final session to take place in December. Upcoming Work Group Sessions include Infrastructure & Public Safety & Natural & Environmental Resources, etc.

The Community Development Office finished their third Master Plan housing workshops on November 16th. The Office has signed contracts with our first three family for the housing rehab program and expect work to begin on this property the first week of December. We are in the process of bidding another three family and a single family home this will bring the number of unit to be rehabbed to seven.

Depot Square/Rail Station Parking Facility Design & Development: The AOCED organized, planned, scheduled and conducted a dynamic 2-day Depot Square Public Design Charrette on November 4th & 5th. The Public Design Charrette provided a formal opportunity for Ayer's citizens to better understand the historical land-use development of the Depot Square district; to consider how it is functioning today to serve our residents, rail commuters, train watchers, downtown customers & clients and the visiting public; and how Depot Square could possibly resurrect itself as Ayer's authentic & original "Town Square" as part of the comprehensive redesign and development of the new Rail Parking Facility on Park Street & Depot Square. The entire Public Charrette day on Saturday was videotaped by APAC and will be broadcast in December. Primary Outcome: The demolition of the so-called Advocates Building will re-open the original Depot Square area for the first time in generations and wonderfully accommodate the redesign and resurrection of Ayer's downtown "Town Square" for current and future generations. Ayer, like all New England towns and cities, needs a proper Town Square to advance its social, cultural & economic lifestyle.

Meetings with Next Generation Downtown Leaders: The AOCED has been engaging in one-on-one meetings with Downtown Ayer's young and dynamic downtown property-owners and business-owners. Together, we will be organizing, scheduling and conducting a "Downtown Ayer Next" community gathering and visual presentation in mid-December, and establishing a new downtown design/development/promotion network going into January 2017.

Railroad Corridor Fence Across from Town Hall: The AOCED has been working in partnership with Kevin Biggins of MBTA to advance the proposed removal of the old and unsightly chain link fence running along the railroad corridor & Main Street across from Town Hall. The removal of the chain link fence shall be done in coordination with the general clean-up and removal of piled discarded debris (asphalt, rail ties, rail track, etc.) behind the fence and the Ayer Waiting Station structure across from Town Hall. The proposed new and proper fencing treatment will be an Ameristar Echelon Plus Aluminum Fence (faux wrought iron, black, 3/4" thickness). The proposed new fencing product has been approved by Kevin Biggins MBTA & Mark Wetzell Ayer DPW Director. Estimates range from approximately \$14,000-\$19,000 for 340 linear ft. The new fence and area clean-up project is scheduled for Spring 2017.

Main St. Property Transaction & Pay-Off of IDFA Loan: The commercial property located at 5 Main Street, recently known as the New England Flatbread

Restaurant Building, was sold and closed upon approximately 2-weeks ago. The AOCED was directly involved in bringing together the current property owner with the prospective buyer during the past summer months. The new owner proposes a new, distinctive and high-quality restaurant experience in Downtown Ayer. The former owner was a recipient of two (2) IDFA loans totaling \$130,000 to fund the development and operation of the proposed New England Flat Bread Restaurant concept. The commercial loan agreement stipulated that upon sale of the property the outstanding loan balance would be paid-off. The outstanding loan was paid-off, and this means the IDFA benefits from replenished funds for future strong new commercial lending prospects. The AOCED will work closely with the new property owner and the new restaurant launch.

Town of Ayer Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony & Main St. Candle Light Stroll:

The AOCED in cooperation with the Town Administrator's Office, Ayer Police Dept., Ayer Fire Dept., Ayer Public Works, & Ayer Parks & Rec. Dept. is actively engaged in planning, organizing, scheduling, promoting and conducting the Town of Ayer Holiday Tree Lighting & Main St. Candlelight Stroll on Saturday Dec. 10th from 5:00PM-6:30PM. The Town of Ayer Holiday activities will be conducted cooperatively with the Ayer Business Alliance Holiday activities between 11:30AM-4:00PM (in Downtown Ayer).