

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: November-December 2016

Respectfully submitted by Alan S. Manoian, Director of Community & Economic Development

1. **1934 Ayer Central Fire Station RFP Results & Next Steps:** The 2nd issuance of the RFP resulted in the submission of one (1) proposal. Proposal submitted by Page-Moore Realty Trust; purchase proposal amount \$1,000, in addition to requesting substantial local incentives including TIF, grants, reduction in permitting fees, etc. Following review by Ayer BOS, the Page-Moore Realty Trust proposal was rejected. Ayer OCED immediately engaged in pursuing an approximately \$75,000 Mass DHCD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to mitigate "spot blight" and "public safety concerns". The \$75,000 grant would fund the reconstruction/preservation of the Fire Station Cupola, stabilizing the slate roof, and repairing the fascia at the cornice-line. Next, Ayer OCED will pursue the award of an approximately \$40,000 grant from the Ayer Community Preservation Commission to the demolition of the two modern bay-wings. National Register of Historic Places designation with associated State & Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits will be pursued, and the property will be aggressively marketed for purchase throughout 2017.
2. **Industrial Attraction, Retention & Partnership:** The Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development (AOCED) initiated, scheduled and conducted a unified strategic meeting with Plant General Managers of both CPF/Epic Enterprises (Pepsi/ Aquafina Bottling) & Catantia-Spagna on 12/16. Plant operations and general local processing/production/transportation issues were deeply discussed. AOCED advanced the concept of a new and co-operative Ayer Food & Beverage Processing & Production Branding & Attraction Platform. Both plant managers expressed strong support for and leadership in the new Branding Platform project. Also, AOCED advanced the concept of establishing an Ayer Freight Railway Coordinating Group among local manufacturing plant management. This concept has met with great and positive response. AOCED will begin forming both project groups in January 2017.

3. **Ayer Master Plan:** AOCED facilitated final Economic Development Work Group Sessions with the final session at Anderson Funeral Home. Upcoming Work Group sessions in January & February include “Transportation & Infrastructure”, “Natural & Cultural Resources”, “Town Services & Facilities”, “Public Safety”, etc. AOCED proposes and will proceed with organizing, scheduling and conducting an Ayer Master Plan Inter-Board & Commission Invitational Forum to be held in the Great Hall in late January. Invited Boards & Commissions include Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Capital Planning Committee, Conservation Commission, Community Preservation Commission, Park Commission, etc. The overall theme of the landmark Forum will be “Commitment To Implement”. Next Ayer Master Plan Steering Committee meeting scheduled for December 27th, 2016.
4. **The Depot Square Public Design Charrette:** The successful 2-day Depot Square Public Design Charrette (Nov. 5-6) was documented by videographer Trevor Stillman. AOCED has worked with Trevor over the last few weeks to review, edit and produce a high-quality video production of the Depot Sq. Public Design Charrette. The video production will be aired on Ayer Public Access Station, posted on Facebook & YouTube. AOCED recommends conducting a “Mid-Game” or follow-up Public Design Charrette as the preliminary designs and plans for the new Ayer Commuter Station Parking Facility, demolition of the so-called Advocates Building, and Depot Square improvements plans move to the next step.
5. **North Central Industrial Lands Study/MassDevelopment:** Conducted meeting with Mika Brewer, Senior Vice President Real Estate for MassDevelopment in order to review & discuss new North Central Industrial Lands Study and program benefits for the Town of Ayer. The strategic study and program results in a highly-detailed industrial land capacity analysis of each community in the North Central Region. The program makes competitive funding available for local communities to plan, design, study, and cultivate current and prospective industrial parcels in order to attract new industrial/manufacturing enterprise to the Commonwealth.

6. **Shriver Job Corps New Management Meeting & Partnership:** AOCED engaged in an introductory & strategic partnership meeting with (Dr. Jennifer Wild – Pres & CEO and William Matteo – COO) officials of Alternate Perspectives, Inc. of Leesburg, VA; the new management firm of Shriver Job Corps. Discussed various ongoing and future partnerships between Shriver Job Corps & the Town of Ayer.
7. **Proposed West Main Street “Technology & Innovation District” Planning:** Met with Liisa Marino, Vice President of Grady Research & Ice House Partners at 323 West Main Street. AOCED is working in partnership with Grady Research/Ice House Partners to attract a medical-device engineering firm to the 323 West Main St. property; firm is currently located in Phoenix Park in Shirley. In addition, AOCED will be working in partnership with Grady Research to organize, schedule and conduct a West Main Street “Technology & Innovation” District visioning & future development Forum & Visioning Charrette. State business & economic development agencies & officials, regional business & economic development agencies & officials, MassDevelopment, Devens Enterprise Commission, professional industry organizations & officials, as well as regional technology & innovation company professionals will be invited to participate in this landmark economic development process to reinvent Ayer’s West Main St. Corridor & District.
8. **The Office of Community Development** continues to work on the Ayer housing rehab program. The department has one 3-family currently being rehabbed and another 3 family approved and ready to start work in the next two weeks. Along with the rehab housing work we have closed up Pleasant Street for the winter with a temporary binder coat. The intention is to finishing the street and sidewalks in the spring. An extension for the FY15 grant has been requested and granted by DHCD. We continue to work with COG our consultant on the FY15 grant updating housing rehab environmental reviews and department systems.