

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: December-January 2016-2017

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

1. **1934 Ayer Central Fire Station:** The Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development (AOCED) is engaged in the preparation and production of a 2017 US Dept. of HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through the Mass Dept. of Housing & Community Development in the amount of \$150,000 to fund the rehabilitation and preservation of the Ayer Central Fire Station "Colonial-Revival" cupola, slate roof and cornice/fascia structure. The grant is submitted as a "Remediation of Spot Blight" and as a "Public Safety" project. The completed grant application is due to Mass DHCD on March 10, 2017. The grant process will require two (2) public informational sessions; one session to be held prior to grant submission. In conjunction with and in support of the \$150,000 grant submission request, the AOCED has requested and been placed on the Feb 1st Agenda of the Ayer Community Preservation Commission, at which time the AOCED will make presentation and make formal request for approximately \$25,000 as a financial match for the CDBG grant. The AOCED has engaged a local building contractor to prepare and submit rehabilitation project estimate for grant submission. (Additional Note: AOCED was contacted by an individual, based in the local region, expressing interest the acquisition of the property. AOCED conducted a tour of the Fire Station with the interested individual on Jan. 10th, and subsequently have provided all background material on the property to the interested individual; the AOCED will continue to working with the prospective individual and report on any tangible progress.)
2. **Industrial Attraction, Retention & Partnership:** The formation of an Ayer Freight Railway Exchange Group (among our local industrial freight customers) is progressing, as we have established new and promising working relationships with Jeffery Turner – Senior Dir. of Sales & Intermodal, Pan Am Railways & Michael S. Tetler – Dir. of Finance, Pan Am Railways & Hal T. Raven – Supt. West, Pam Am Southern. These new business relationships resulted from meetings between the AOCED, the owners of industrial property located at 95 Fitchburg Rd. (Woodle Family), and industrial tenants of 95 Fitchburg Rd. Adam Lorance – Gen. Mgr., Splash, Michael Comfort – Operations Mgr., PAK Technologies. Both Ayer-based companies have continually experienced significant rail tanker-car

delivery delays, pick-up delays, track-switching delays, and cost penalties associated with contractual agreements between the Ayer-based companies, Pan Am Railway and national company vendors. Pan Am Railway, the owners of 95 Fitchburg Rd. (Woodle Family), the AOCED, and Splash & PAK Technologies are partnering to prepare, produce and submit an application for a MassDOT Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP) Grant to fund physical improvements to the freight rail-line running along Fitchburg Rd. in Ayer (known as the Greenville Industrial Line), as well as spur-line improvements at 95 Fitchburg Rd.

3. **Ayer Master Plan:** Both the Ayer Master Plan Economic Development Work Group & the Housing Group have substantially completed their work; currently the formation of the "Transportation & Circulation" Work Group is finalizing, with sessions beginning within the next two weeks. The "Community Facilities & Services" Work Group begins formation this week. AOCED has organized, scheduled, promoted and will conduct the landmark "Ayer Master Plan Inter-Board & Commission Invitational" on Wed. Jan. 25th 6:30PM at the Great Hall. A noteworthy feature of the special Master Plan gathering will be the Ayer-Shirley Regional High School Drama Club performing "dramatic readings" of excerpts from Ayer's Master Plans of 1964, 1997 & 2004. This important performance will accentuate the point that the Master Plan is very much about the future of the young and rising generation of Ayer, and that engaging these bright young people of Ayer will raise their consciousness and interest in actively planning the shape, form, culture, values, and resources of their future lives and community in Ayer. Also, the "Ayer Business Survey" instrument has been designed, produced and will be issued the week of Jan 23rd.

4. **West Main Street Corridor Innovation District & Park Street Corridor Planning:** The AOCED conducted 2nd meeting with Liisa Marino of Grady Research/Ice House Partners at 323 West Main Street. Continue discussions in planning "West Main Street Corridor Visioning Forum". Invitees will include all West Main Street Corridor property-owners, and business operators, as well as, Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, Devens Enterprise Commission, Ayer Planning Board, Ayer Public Works, Ayer Conservation Commission, MassDevelopment, Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, Massachusetts Office of Business Development, New England Chapter CNU, Mass Chapter APA, & Shriver Job Corps. The West Main Street Corridor Visioning Forum will be conducted in late-

February/early-March. The AOCED has also begun the groundwork for the Park Street Corridor "Great Street" Project. Most of the organizational/agency participants of the West Main Street Corridor Project will also be engaged in the Park Street "Great Street" Project. In support of the Park Street "Great Street" Project effort the AOCED will be preparing, producing and submitting a District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Grant through the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission & the Mass Dept. of Housing & Community Development. AOCED will be meeting with MRPC official John Hume on 1/24/2017. The (DLTA) is a "planning grant" which would fund basic planning, design concepts, landscape architecture options, design standards, analysis of zoning alternatives, etc. work. (DLTA) Grant submission has two deadlines; Jan. 20th 2017 & April 3 2017.

5. **Local Company Prospective Re-Location from Ayer:** The AOCED was contacted by Mika Brewer - VP Real Estate, MassDevelopment on 1/16/2017 as per Ayer/Devens Non-Compete Protocol and informed us that an Ayer-based company has contacted Devens Enterprise Commission expressing interest in available site at Devens for current Ayer-based business. AOCED promptly contacted the owner of the Ayer-based business to discuss the matter, and to better determine reasons for possible relocation from Ayer to Devens. AOCED expressed strong desire to identify and prepare package of viable new/alternative business locations in Ayer in order to keep the company here. The owner agreed to consider viable alternative locations in Ayer. AOCED will make every effort to retain this Ayer-based business and report on progress.
6. **Local Business Outreach/Working Relationships:** AOCED made contact with Bob Hebb Jr. of Nashoba Valley Express Co. to schedule and conduct a business visitation, to learn more about the Nashoba Valley Express Co. business & "Transportation/Distribution/Logistics" sector in Greater Ayer, and to discuss the future development Central Ave. Industrial Corridor.
7. **The Community Development Office** major focus this past month has been in three areas, Court Collaborative Mental Health (Drug Court) grant, the CDBG rehab program and updating the SHI (Subsidized Housing Inventory) state list. We spent this past month closing out year 2 of our four year grant for our drug court program. We are currently in year 3 of this grant and have just finished our first quarterly report. In the CDBG housing rehab we are under construction with six units, three two families and

have completed both roofs. We are in the process of approving a seventh unit (a single family home) for rehab. We received the Subsidized Housing Inventory state list from DHCD. This list is generated ever two years. DHCD has requested our review of this list. We are currently compiling information to add an additional 12 units to our Town's SHI list.