

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: May-June 2017

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

Redevelopment of Historic Ayer Central Fire Station: As contained in last month's report, the AOCED was diligently working at composing & completing a Mass Dept. of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) Economic Development Fund (EDF) Pre-Application Grant Submission (in pursuit of between \$500,000-\$750,000 in funding) to meet the 5/26 deadline. The AOCED completed and submitted to Mass DHCD what we believed to be a highly-competitive Pre-Application Grant Submission by the deadline. The AOCED received communication from Mass DHCD EDF Grant Administrator on 6/19/2017 stating, *"I just wanted to let you know that Ayer's EDF pre-app has been approved and you will be receiving a letter soon inviting the Town to apply and including further instructions."* This places the Historic Ayer Central Fire Station Redevelopment Project in "strong running" for successfully receiving substantial grant funds; which is critical to the future financial viability of the project for both the Town and the private developer. The Purchase & Sales Agreement was forwarded (on 5/17/2017) to the Attorney representing the prospective developer/new owner of the Fire Station. The AOCED awaits the developer & developer's attorney to schedule meeting to finalize negotiations and execute Purchase & sales Agreement; the AOCED will begin to directly encourage and firmly request meeting to execute Purchase & Sales Agreement. The full EDF Grant Application submission will be composed and completed, and submitted to Mass DHCD by August 31, 2017; this will require a highly-structured and scheduled process, including weekly meetings with developer, developer's architect, developer's management staff, and AOCED staff.

Ayer IDFA Loan Portfolio Administration: The AOCED was contacted by Loan Operation officials of Main Street Bank (former N. Middlesex Savings Bank) with regard to an internal bank administrative error with one of our Ayer IDFA Loan clients. The bank informed AOCED that a commercial loan that was scheduled to convert from a monthly (interest-only payment) to a (principal & interest payment) was never converted at the scheduled date as per Loan Terms. The AOCED immediately scheduled and conducted a meeting of the IDFA Board, the Board reviewed and discussed the alternatives to resolving the matter, and voted to provide the borrower with alternatives to the ongoing payment structure in order to resolve and retire the outstanding principle amount. Dir. of AOCED met with the commercial borrower on 6/23/2017 and will work closely with the commercial borrower, IDFA closing attorney, and Main St. Bank Loan Operation Dept. to promptly resolve the administrative error.

New Webpage Community & Economic Development: The AOCED, having executed a contract for professional service with Virtual Towns & Schools, Inc. of Boxboro, MA (in April 2017) for the design, production & launch of the new Ayer Community & Economic Development Webpage, have been working at the overall design approach & composition of the new site; working at compiling strong visual/photographic content; and working at the production of written narrative, data sets, numerical profiles, demographic sheets, etc. The AOCED is working directly with the Ayer IT Dept. and consultants at VTS, Inc. The first rough mock-up of the front page was provided to AOCED from VTS, Inc. last week, and it we are most pleased with the new design look of the page. Substantial written content/narrative and data sets will be submitted to VTS, Inc. over the next 2-weeks, with a 1st draft ready for presentation for next July's monthly report.

Cains Property Future: The AOCED continues to lead the Town of Ayer Team effort to attract a world-class 21st century innovation-technology firm to the former Cains pant site. In June, Dir. of AOCED & Dir. Ayer Public Works Dept. provided a driving & site tour (of the former Cains plant & of the Town of Ayer) for a CEO & CFO of a prospective innovative-technology firm interested in the site and our community. Also in June, an information exchange session was scheduled and conducted at Ayer Town Hall including representative executives of the prospective company, commercial property brokers, prospective property-owner, representative from Mass Office of Business Development, and several Town of Ayer Dept. Directors. The prospective attraction effort & process continues during the week of 6/26 with additional discussion, investigatory & information exchange meetings scheduled with the Ayer Board of Selectmen.

Ayer Master Plan Process: The Ayer Master Plan Steering Committee scheduled and conducted a great meeting on the evening of June 14th in the Great Hall. The main topic of the evening was reviewing, discussing and determining the (Presentation Design Format) of the new Ayer Master Plan. The Committee is excited and energized to move past the old, conventional and really obsolete Master Plan formats of years past which are formatted as dense written technical narrative, paragraph after paragraph for hundreds of pages; this old format approach "turns people off" from connecting with the Master Plan. Our new Design Format approach will be highly visual, illustrative, graphic, concise, compact, comfortable, understandable and engaging for the regular person. Most importantly, the Implementation Section of the new Master Plan will be user-friendly, clear in terms of responsibility & timing of delivery of implementation, and accessible to the entire community. The next meeting of the Ayer Master Plan Steering Committee is scheduled for 6/27/2017. Also, a great and energetic new community engagement event has been scheduled for Wed. July 19th at Union Coffee Roaster titled, "The Young Ayer Town Plan Slam!"; this event is designed specifically to provide the young people of Ayer (late teens, 20s & 30s) with a direct

and fun opportunity to express their plans for how the town could be best planned & designed & regulated for the attraction and retention of young people to Ayer.

Prospective Residential Development on the Rise: Over the course of the past two-months the AOCED has been regularly and increasingly contacted and approached by developers expressing strong interest in building new residential development in the Town of Ayer. Residential property selling prices are also rapidly escalating in the Town of Ayer. More than ever, Ayer's planning & development standards, codes and regulations must be clear, strong, defensible, and smart in terms how and where residential growth will best benefit the long-term value, safety, resiliency and sustainability of the people and neighborhoods of Ayer. The AOCED looks forward with great promise to the proposed hiring of a new Town Planner!

The Community Development Office: Major focus this past month has been the CDBG FY 15 Pleasant Street and Rehab grant. Pleasant Street is scheduled to be completed this week and the office is finishing off the last two properties in the rehab program. Mid-month the grant was monitored by DHCD. At the advice of our monitoring agent we have requested a three month extension. This will leave time to finish the last rehab unit and close out the grant. In addition the office has been updating accounts in the Behavior Health grant, OCED, Program Income and IDFA in an effort to close out this fiscal year.