

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: July-August 2017

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

Redevelopment of Historic Ayer Central Fire Station: The Purchase & Sales Agreement and the Land Development Agreement have been executed by both the "Buyer" (C. Donell Homes, Inc.) and the "Seller" (The Town of Ayer, MA/BOS) as of 8/15/2017. The redevelopment plan is for a total of seven (7) residential dwelling units, with six (6) market rate and one (1) designated as affordable; the units will be rental units. The "Buyer" informed the AOCED, through their attorney just prior to P&S execution, that they have elected not to pursue the \$750,000 Mass Dept. of Housing & Community Development Grant (CDBG Grant). The AOCED put many staff hours into grant preparation meetings and pre-production; the AOCED's grant pre-application was approved and the funds were set-aside by Mass DHCD and designated for this landmark downtown redevelopment project. The Buyer will proceed with funding the entire project with their private funds & financing. Next step is application to the Ayer Zoning Board of Appeals to secure a zoning variance to permit residential dwelling units on the ground floor of the Fire Station Building in the Downtown Business District Zone. If the variance is approved, the AOCED will proceed with scheduling a Closing with full payment of the purchase price for the property. The AOCED in coordination with Ayer Building Dept. & Code Enforcement Office will work closely with the Buyer to assure compliance with all Contractual obligations for redevelopment of the historic downtown property.

Ayer Master Plan Process: The Ayer Master Plan Steering Committee conducted a great meeting on July 25th, with its next meeting scheduled for August 29th. The July 25th meeting involved the review of various Work Group (Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, etc.) baseline Sections. The Committee also established an Editing Committee to begin the formidable task of distilling the entire production content into a concise, illustrative, and user-friendly Master Plan document. The AOCED engaged Ayer's Business & Corporate Community into the Master Plan process through the distribution, collection and review of an Ayer Business & Corporate Master Plan Survey platform. Also, the AOCED organized, scheduled and conducted a noteworthy Ayer Natural/Heritage/ Historic/Cultural luncheon roundtable Work Group at Ayer Town Hall, including representatives from Ayer Gun & Sportsmen Club, Nashua River Watershed Association, Ayer Library, Ft. Devens Museum, Freedom's Way National Heritage Area, Ayer Community Preservation Committee & Ayer Historical Commission. The AOCED has organized and scheduled a final Master Plan Work Group session for Ayer Athletic/Sports/Recreation community for 8/29/2017. The Ayer Master Plan is now in its "End-Game" process. A large Ayer Master Plan Public Form will be scheduled for the month of September.

Ayer IDFA: The AOCED is working on a comprehensive review of the Ayer IDFA Loan Portfolio. As the Ayer IDFA's loan administration partner, the former Northern Middlesex Bank having merged with Marlborough Savings Bank (now Main Street Bank) has reorganized their internal Loan Administration Office. The AOCED is working in coordination with new Loan Account Administrators to verify account status, terms, and payment schedules. A comprehensive report will be prepared and presented at the next scheduled Ayer IDFA Meeting.

Cains Property Future: The AOCED working collaboratively with Town Administrator's Office & Assessor's Office has continued to negotiate, review, redraft, refine and prepare a local incentive package to attract and retain a proposed new Innovation Technology Firm to the former Cains Plant location. The new property owner, GFI Partners, Inc. & the CEO of the subject innovation technology firm are scheduled to participate in the 9/5/2017 Board of Selectmen's Meeting at which time the prospective local incentive package will be presented for discussion, determination and directive by the Ayer BOS for next steps.

The Community Development Office: Major focus this past month has been the CDBG FY 15 Pleasant Street and Rehab grant. Pleasant Street is finished and the final punch list is being completed. The Department was able to rehab a total of 9 units of housing this represents a total of 5 houses. The office received notice from SAMHSA of the approved continuation of our Behavioral Health/ Drug Court Grant, which runs from Sept. 30th 2017 through Sept. 29th, 2018. We are currently drafting a contract between the Town and Advocates.

Movie & Film Industry in Ayer: The AOCED has engaged through various requests by Film Location Scouts and Production Location Managers (associated with Sony Films/Screen Gem Productions & Castle Rock "Stephen King"/Bad Robot Productions & New England Studios at Devns) to assist with identifying preferred location sites and contacting and negotiating with various public & private property owners for movie filming and associated positive economic impact in Ayer. The AOCED is now working to improve and refine the Town of Ayer Film Production Application Form, Policy & Protocol, as this industry is now emerging as a powerful growth industry in the Nashoba Valley Region. The AOCED was contacted on 8/18/2017 by a new Independent Film Company planning on filming another movie in and around Ayer in the Fall. Hollywood has definitely discovered Ayer, Massachusetts.

Ongoing Meetings, Discussions & Participation with Various Property Owners & Developers & Organizational Partners:

The AOCED continues to engage in constant daily meetings and discussions with various parties including:

- MART Ayer Parking Deck Design & Construction
- MART New Depot Square Park Design & Construction

- MART & Devens Public Transportation Shuttle
- New Railroad Corridor Fence Design & Installation
- Railroad Corridor (Downtown Commuter Station & Willow Rd) Site Improvements
- Vacant Park Street Commercial Properties Redevelopment Outreach
- Discussions with Owner of Devens Shopping Plaza re: Site Improvements
- Etc.