

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: September-October 2017

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

Redevelopment of the Historic Ayer Central Fire Station: On 10/18 Dir. of AOCED went before the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Public Hearing in support of the requested \$30,000 for the restoration & preservation of the historic Cupola, Stepped Brick Gables & Slate Roof of the historic Fire Station; approved unanimously. On 10/23 Ayer Town Meeting voted in favor of the \$30,000 CPC funding request for the historic Fire Station redevelopment. Therefore, as of 10/23 the AOCED & Town of Ayer has successfully delivered on each & every funding incentive, land-use variance, and resource that we pledged to the proposed developer (C. Donell Home, Inc.) when the Town selected them as the proposed developer through the RFP Process. It is therefore most troubling and discouraging that as of a meeting scheduled & conducted by the Dir. of AOCED on 11/16 at Ayer Town Hall with proposed developer Mr. Conrad Donell & his legal counsel Atty. Thomas Gibbons, the Dir. of AOCED was informed (at this critical late date) that Mr. Donell has not met his contractual obligations as per P&S Agreement, executed by Mr. Donell on 8/11/2017 and executed by Ayer BOS on 8/15/2017; specific items being contained in P&S Item #21 Contingencies, (b) Financing & (d) Approved Plans & Specifications. As per meeting on 11/16 it was confirmed that Mr. Donell has not secured and therefore cannot evidence any commercial financing or any personal/self- financing funds towards the project (as required in (b) Financing). Also, it was confirmed that Mr. Donell has not produced any detailed and required redevelopment project Plans & Specifications (as required in (d) Approved Plans & Specifications). The closing deadline as contained and agreed upon in the P&S is 12/31/2017. As of the writing of the report it is unclear and uncertain if C. Donell Homes, Inc. will meet their contractual obligations as contained and agreed upon in the P&S.

Ayer Master Plan Process: The past month has been dedicated to the deep & detailed review, editing and re-editing of the submitted Master Plan Chapters & Sections including Economic Development, Housing, Resources, and Transportation. The Recreation & Open Space Plan Committee have been working directly with Dir. of AOCED and Master Plan Consulting Planner Courtney Starling of COG to complete and integrate the Recreation & Open Space Plan into the Master Plan "Resources" Section. Dir. of AOCED & C. Starling and currently also working with new Town Planner Mark Archambault to integrate ongoing Ayer Land-Use Zoning Bylaw improvements into the "Land-Use" Section of the Master Plan. Dir. of AOCED will complete edits & rewrites of submitted Chapters & Sections by 12/19/2017 for next submission and review by the Ayer Master Plan Steering Committee for the first week of January 2018. Dir. of AOCED, Ayer Master Plan Steering Committee & C. Starling of COG are currently planning & scheduling a large and interactive Ayer Master Plan Public Forum & Review Session for

January 2018 at either the Great Hall or Ayer/Shirley Regional High School. Propose completing the Ayer Master Plan Process for late February 2018.

Ayer Office of Economic & Community Development Webpage Design & Launch:

Following a face-to-face design session with web-page designer Tom Rose of Virtual Towns & Schools Inc. (VTS), the Dir. of AOCED presented the draft product before the Ayer Information Technology Committee. The Committee members agreed with Dir. of AOCED that the original design submission made by AOCED was better than the product submitted by (VTS) after meeting with Dir. of AOCED. Ayer IT Committee provided great design & preference insight and guidance. Ayer Dir. of IT & Dir. of AOCED then scheduled a design review meeting with Millard Rose (president of VTS) at Ayer Town Hall, which was also attended by Ayer Town Administrator Pontbriand. This proved to be a most productive design meeting, and the result is a greatly improved web-page design product. Dir. of AOCED was again greatly assisted by the Ayer IT Committee with a final design review meeting, and all voted unanimously to approve the final design product. The Dir. of AOCED looks forward to conducting a presentation for the members of the BOS in December in order to introduce (and launch) the new and very exciting Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development Webpage.

A Form-Based Code for Park Street Corridor: On 10/20 & 10/21 the Dir. of AOCED in partnership with the (MRPC) organized, scheduled, promoted and conducted the "Right Out On Park Street" Public Form-Based Code (Open Public Design Studio). The Dir. of AOCED spent 2-days, Friday & Saturday working, designing and producing a new Form-Based Code for the Park Street Corridor. The "public engagement" efforts proved to be most effective and successful, as many residents, businesspeople and visitors to Ayer took great notice of our activities on Park Street and came by to talk, understand and participate in the visioning and new zoning design process for the currently unsightly and developmentally "rudderless" downtown corridor. A good deal of advanced zoning code design work including photographic surveys, detailed parcel measurements, detailed roadway profile "right-of-way" measurements, new sidewalk design concepts, new on-street parking design concepts, determination of "Transect Zones" along the corridor, and preliminary Street & Building Form Standards were all produced and advanced. The steps include the production of a preliminary Regulating Plan for Park Street Corridor, production of Future Development Street Illustrations, and production of preliminary Building Type & Frontage Type Development Standards for presentation to the BOS and the public. For information & understanding of Form Based Codes please check out the following link to the Form Based Code Institute:

<https://formbasedcodes.org/>

Pleasant Street School Building Historic Preservation Restriction: The Dir. of AOCED working with TA Executive Assistant Antonellis made a concerted effort to provide our municipal legal counsel KP Law with any and all outstanding items, documents, etc. in order to complete and bring to finality the Pleasant Street School Building Historic Preservation Restriction document. This has been completed. The final document will be presented at the 11/21/2017 Ayer BOS Meeting.

Ayer Land-Use Zoning Bylaw Review & Edit: The Dir. of AOCED has been actively meeting, on a weekly basis, with Town Planner Mark Archambault & Building Commissioner Charles Schultz to engage in a comprehensive, section by section review and edit of the proposed new Ayer Land-Use Zoning Bylaw in preparation for submission to Town Meeting in Spring 2018. As part of this important Zoning Bylaw update process, the Dir. of AOCED working with colleagues will prepare, develop, schedule, promote and conduct a number of Ayer Public Engagement & Discussion forums, events, and video productions (on how Land-Use Zoning touches and impacts all aspects of living, working, growing, and investing in Ayer) over the course of the next three months in advance of Spring Town Meeting.

Ayer New Pharmacy Attraction Group: The Dir. of AOCED is currently planning, developing, and constituting a dynamic civic effort and group of local professionals and advocates with the mission of attracting a new high-quality pharmacy to the Town of Ayer. Participants on the "Attraction Group" will represent the following sectors/interests in Ayer – Nashoba Valley Medical Center, Ayer Board of Selectmen, Ayer Council on Aging, Ayer Board of Health, Ayer Police Dept., Ayer Fire Dept., Ayer Planning Board, Ayer/Shirley Regional School District, Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, Devens Enterprise Commission, etc.

Update of the 2014-2015 Ayer Community Development Strategy: The Dir. of AOCED and Community Development Program Manager are currently reviewing the 2014-2015 Ayer Community Development Strategy (CDS) document in order to re-compose and complete a comprehensive update of the document. An approved and authorized Community Development Strategy document is required for the Town of Ayer to qualify for, pursue, compete for, and receive various state, regional and federal grants, funds, resources, assistance, etc. with numerous local community and economic development projects and programs. The Dir. of AOCED and Community Development Program Manager will be conducting a number of neighborhood and community-based meetings, walking tours, visitations, and partnership sessions in and around various Downtown-District & West Main St. Corridor neighborhoods during the next few months.