

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: December-January 2017/2018

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

Disposition of the Historic Ayer Central Fire Station: The Town of Ayer received correspondence dated 12/27/2017 from the Office of Atty. Thomas Gibbons stating, "...C. Donell Homes, Inc. has determined that it will be unable to meet the Town requirements for moving forward on the purchase of the old firehouse at 14 Washington St....Mr. Conrad Donell of C. Donell Homes, Inc. greatly regrets that he is unable to move forward with the purchase..." As was reported in the AOCED Oct-Nov Monthly Report; "As per meeting on 11/16 (with Mr. Conrad Donell & Atty. Thomas Gibbons) 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). Therefore, the Request for Proposals has been publically reissued as of 1/17/2018. As of 1/22/2018 the AOCED has been contacted by six (6) prospective buyers/developers requesting the RFP and a Tour of the Fire Station Building. Prospective buyer/developer tours were conducted on 1/16/2018, 1/18/2018 & 1/22/2018; with two additional tours scheduled for the week of 1/22-1/26. Ayer's residential development market is exceedingly strong going into 2018; therefore, favorable market conditions and trends are "with the Historic Fire Station" more than ever in the last 2-3 years. All proposals are due no later than 2/16/2018; a proposal will be selected and all parties involved will be subject to a property acquisition & deed transfer within 60 days of proposal selection.

Ayer Master Plan Process:

The following Ayer Master Plan Process Completion Schedule;

Thursday Evenings:

- Master Plan Steering Comm. Meeting - January 25th, 6:00PM-8:00PM, Great Hall, Meeting Topic: RESOURCES CHAPTER (finalize);
- Master Plan Open Office Hours - February 1st, 6:00PM-7:00PM, Great Hall;
- Master Plan Steering Comm. Meeting - February 8th, 6:00PM-8:00PM, Great Hall, Meeting Topic: HOUSING CHAPTER (finalize);
- Master Plan Open Office Hours - February 15th, 6:00PM-7:00PM, Great Hall;
- Master Plan Steering Comm. Meeting - February 22nd, 6:00PM-8:00PM, Great Hall, Meeting Topic: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHAPTER (finalize);
- Master Plan Open Office Hours - March 1st, 6:00PM-7:00PM, Great Hall;
- Master Plan Steering Comm. Meeting - March 8th, 6:00PM-8:00PM, Great Hall, Meeting Topic: LAND USE CHAPTER (finalize);
- Master Plan Open Office Hours - March 15th, 6:00PM-7:00PM, Great Hall

- Master Plan Steering Comm. Meeting - March 22nd, 6:00PM-8:00PM, Great Hall, Meeting Topic: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (finalize)

Ayer Office of Economic & Community Development Webpage Design & Launch: The new AOCED Webpage design & framework production is completed. The new webpage was launched on 12/29/2017. The new webpage is a continual and perpetual platform and product. Data, profiles, projects, prospects, new enterprise, resources, partners, etc. will be constantly, continually and consistently updated, modified and improved. Dir4. Of AOCED will request placement on the Agenda of the next Ayer Information Technology Committee to conduct a hard-critique of the 1st version of the new Eco Dev webpage.

Pleasant Street School Building Historic Preservation Restriction: The Preservation Restriction legal document is fully executed by all required boards, bodies & commissions with all legal exhibits and attachments, and has been submitted to legal counsel and forwarded to Registry of Deeds for recording; finalized.

Ayer Rotary Design Improvement Project: The Dir. of AOCED organized, scheduled and conducted an Ayer Rotary Design Improvement Workshop on 12/12/2017 at Ayer Town Hall. On 1/3/2018 Dir. of AOCED contacted, scheduled and met with Jason Benoit, Design-Build Project Manager at the MassDOT District 3 Office in Worcester. Dir. shared with Jason our concept to "hard-scape" the Planting Islands and to introduce large bowl-shaped planting vessels upon the new hard-scape surface. The outcome - Jason Benoit (MassDOT) is totally supportive of the new Rotary planting island design concept; the Dir. of AOCED inquired directly, "Will MassDOT fund & install the new hardscape surface at the Planting Islands by May 2018?"; Mr. Benoit's response was "Yes". Mass DOT recommends going with a small granite-block or cobblestone hard-scape surface, again, that the large new planting vessels would be placed upon.



(Image of possible hardscape block material for Ayer Rotary Planting Islands)

Jason has requested that we provide a few visual/product examples of a small granite-block or cobblestone surface – which I will be working on this afternoon. Follow-up conversations with Benoit have resulted in a design change regarding proposed planting vessels – the proposed planting containers must be sunken into the new proposed hardscape surfaces as to be flush with the ground surface. Raised planting vessels cannot be used at the Ayer Rotary location as they may endanger motorists as “deadly objects to moving vehicles”. Jason Benoit and I will be keeping in very close (weekly) communication between now and May; this Project will be completed by the end of May (planting season) 2018. The Dir. of AOCED will bring the Ayer Rotary Improvement Group back together for a status meeting during the week of 1/29/2018, and throughout the design & installation process into the Spring.

\$600,000 CDBG Grant Grove Pond Neighborhood Improvements

The Dir. of AOCED and the Community Development Program Mgr., in coordination with the Ayer Public Works Dept., are working very intensely at meeting a March 2, 2018 Mass Office of Housing & Community Development application deadline for a large \$600,000 US Dept. HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) that would fund the design and reconstruction of roadways, sidewalks, water lines, sewer lines, etc. for Prospect Street & Grove Street in Ayer's historic Grove Pond Neighborhood. Ayer's comprehensive “Community Development Strategy” must be re-composed and updated. House-by-House income & occupant surveys are being conducted (by the Dir. of AOCED & Community Dev. Mgr.) on normal weekdays, as well as Saturdays. A Grove Pond Neighborhood Urban Design & Improvement Walking Tour for neighbors is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, Jan. 27th; a Grove Pond Neighborhood Improvement Public Input Gathering has been promoted, scheduled and will be conducted on Monday evening, Jan. 29th at St. Andrew's Episcopalian Church Hall, and a full Ayer Community Development Strategy Public Forum has been promoted, scheduled and will be conducted on Tuesday evening Jan 30th at Ayer Town Hall, Great Hall. This is a highly competitive federal grant – and the AOCED will spend many, many staff hours over the next month to produce a winning application for the Town of Ayer.