

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: March-April 2018

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

Disposition of the Historic Ayer Central Fire Station:

At the 3/20/2018 Ayer BOS meeting the proposal submitted by C. Moore for the redevelopment of the Historic Ayer Central Fire Station was selected from the six (6) proposals received. The Dir. of AOCED promptly composed & drafted new proposed terms of the Purchase & Sales Agreement (P&S) and Historic Preservation Restriction Agreement (HPR) based upon the proposal submitted and selected. The Ayer Town Administrator, Dir. of AOCED, and municipal legal counsel reviewed draft P&S and HPR, forwarded to developer's legal counsel for review/comment/negotiation/finalization. Ayer Town Administrator & Dir. of AOCED met with developer & developer's legal counsel to finalize contractual items. The draft P&S and HPR has been reviewed by both municipal legal counsel & developer's counsel, with approval reached by both parties. The completed P&S will be forwarded to Ayer BOS for review, comment, modification, and vote for their next scheduled meeting. A real estate closing is proposed for May 1, 2018, but no later than May 18th.

Ayer Master Plan Process:

The completed draft of the Ayer Master Plan document was forwarded to the AOCED by consulting firm Community Opportunities Group on 3/30/2018. The completed draft document has been forwarded to the members of the Master Plan Steering Committee for final review/comment/correction/refinement. The completed draft of the Ayer Master Plan was also posted on the Ayer municipal webpage under "Master Plan" for public access/review/comment. The completed draft document was forwarded to Town Planner Mark Archambault for administrative review and distribution to the members of the Ayer Planning Board for individual review/comment/preparation of Planning Board meeting/s. The Dir. of AOCED will conduct a completed draft Master Plan document Review/Comment Session with Ayer Planning Board on 5/8. The final draft Master Plan document will be placed on the 5/22/2018 Ayer Planning Board Agenda for vote on adoption.

IDFA Loan Program Administration:

On 3/30/2018 the Dir. of AOCED scheduled and conducted a meeting of the Ayer Industrial Development Finance Authority (IDFA) Board. The Dir. of AOCED prepared and presented a full review & disposition status of the current IDFA Loan Portfolio. Board action was taken with regard to a commercial (loan write-off). A vote in favor of a Certificate of Deposit (CD) rolled-over/conversion to a more favorable rate was taken. The Board also directed the Dir. of AOCED to launch a new effort to promote and engage a "commercial building façade & sign improvement" loan program. The Dir. of

AOCED maintains working relations/communications with our partners at the Loan Operations Division of Main Street Bank.

Ayer Rotary Planting Island Design Improvement Project:

The Dir. of AOCED has been actively engaged in leading the effort to establish a feasible, viable, safe, legal, and manageable design, funding-approach and solution to the complex and challenging issue of making the proposed Ayer Rotary Planting Island Design Improvement project effectively work. The Ayer Rotary Planting Island program launched in 2014-15 was in clear and direct violation of numerous Massachusetts Dept. of Transportation (MassDOT) rules and regulations; as the Ayer Rotary is MassDOT property, and therefore subject to their rules and regulations. The Dir. of AOCED has established direct communication and working relations with MassDOT officials (at the Division 3/Worcester Office), and we are now working in partnership with MassDOT under their "Adopt-A-Visibility Spot" Program to design, develop and engage in a legal, safe, and manageable project. The Dir. of AOCED was tasked with creating a design solution for the planting islands. The Dir. of AOCED was successful in locating, negotiating and securing approx. 400+ cobblestones from MassDOT at no cost; MassDOT has also agreed to transport the cobblestone material from their N. Oxford Yard to the Ayer Rotary at no cost. The Dir. of AOCED has formulated & produced a new design approach based on a "hardscape treatment" of a cobblestone border treatment, with landscape-quality river stone surface treatment, and with a 4ft. diameter planting-well which will serve to effectively concentrate the visual planting presentation impact of each island, and provide for a more effective quality in terms of plant acquisition costs, and provide for high-quality planting maintenance, and to better control the quality of the planting presentation in the extreme & harsh environment that is the Ayer Rotary. The Dir. of AOCED in partnership with Ayer Conservation Administrator have researched and selected the types of planting species that will have the best chances of surviving and thriving in the extreme and harsh environmental conditions of the Rotary traffic islands, and are (visually beautiful). The Dir. of AOCED & Conservation Administrator will "compose" each of the traffic island planting presentations; each composition will be "packaged" and priced for prospective planting island sponsors/adopters selection. Final cost estimates for project components are being prepared for presentation on the week of 4/22/2018. Dir. of AOCED is actively engaged in identifying, meeting with, and securing financial sponsors/adopters for the islands. \$10,000 was placed in the FY2019 municipal budget by Town Administrator/BOS in support of delivery of a successful project, which is subject to approval at Spring Town Meeting.

West Main Street Corridor “Visioning Day” Event:

The Dir. of AOCED has formulated and launched the proposed “West Main Street Corridor Visioning Day” Event, in partnership with Grady Research Partners/Ice House, and the Devens Enterprise Commission. The Ayer “West Main Street Corridor Visioning Day” is scheduled for Thursday, May 17th from 11:00AM-4:00PM. The main venue for the “Visioning Day” will be the beautiful Grady Research/Ice House Building located at 323 West Main Street. The “Visioning Day” will include a series of visual presentations, panel discussions, mobile workshops (walking tours), and open design session. Invitees include all West Main St. Corridor property-owners, West Main St. Corridor business-owners, Ayer municipal staff, Devens Enterprise Comm. officials, MassDevelopment officials, regional commercial/residential real estate brokers, local & regional building developers, local banking & lending officials, Montachusett Regional Planning Commission representatives, Ayer board & commission members, regional media & reporters, and the general public. The day-long visionary planning, design and development event is intended to serve as a guiding platform to begin and deliver a more unified, orderly, predictable, walkable, high-quality new development pattern to the West Main Street Corridor – more consistent with a traditional New England village destination place.

Designated 15-Minute On-Street Parking on Main Street:

In response to a long-standing request by the owner of Du's Tailor/Dry Cleaner Shop located at 47 Main Street in the Page Block with the Town of Ayer, the Dir. of AOCED in partnership with Ayer Public Works Dept. & Ayer Police Dept. have worked together to design and soon deliver a new “15-Minute On-Street Parking Space” at the front of Du's Shop. Ayer Public Works will be measuring and preparing to introduce properly painted on-street parking spaces along Main Street for Spring/Summer 2018, as recommended in the recently completed and adopted Downtown Ayer Parking Demand Study. The new 15-Minute Space will be introduced as part of the overall new Downtown Ayer parking space painting project.

Creation of New Downtown Ayer Business Group:

In response to request by several local Downtown Ayer business-owners & property-owners, and the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Dir. of AOCED & Ayer Town Administrator have been working and meeting with downtown businesses to directly assist and support in the formation of a new Downtown Ayer Business Group. The first gathering of the new Downtown Ayer Business Group is scheduled for 5/21/2018 at Union Coffee Roaster from 5:30PM-7:00PM. The Dir. of AOCED will play an important role at this first-time formative gathering by presenting the current/existing conditions of Downtown Ayer, and making a strong case that with the benefit of a well-organized and active Downtown Ayer business group, the municipality can better coordinate, share resources, and deliver greater success in the critical work of transforming

Downtown Ayer into a more high-quality (destination place for visitors and customers) over the next 2-years.

Scully Rd. Neighborhood Resident/Business Conflict Resolution:

Resident/s of the Scully Rd. Neighborhood have been expressing strong and direct concern to Town of Ayer officials (Town Administrator's Office & Police Dept.) for approx. 2-years, with regard to neighborhood public safety concerns, and quality-of-life concerns resulting from the increasing heavy tractor-trailer traffic along the residential section Scully Rd. as it leads to and from the Molumco Industrial Park (including Moore's Lumber, Atlantic Forest Products, RDI, and Newco Hauling). At the suggestion of Chief of Ayer PD, the involvement of the Dir. of AOCED was requested in order to work towards a manageable resolution to this long-standing and escalating conflict between neighborhood residents and important commercial business operations in Ayer. The Dir. of AOCED walked and photographed the neighborhood and industrial park and surveyed/analyzed the conditions. The Dir. of AOCED attended a Scully Rd. staff meeting on 4/9/2018. The Dir. of AOCED has been tasked with leading a resolution effort. To this end, The Dir. of AOCED made direct contact with neighbor at 31 Scully Rd., had good conversation, and has scheduled a Neighborhood Walking Tour with the residents of the Scully Rd. Neighborhood for Monday, April 23rd at 9:00AM. The Dir. of AOCED has contacted the property/business owners of the Molumco Industrial Park and will be meeting with them. Then, the Dir. of AOCED will organize, schedule and conduct a Unified Resolution Meeting between the Scully Rd. Neighbors, the Molumco Industrial Park Businesses and various municipal staff including Ayer Police Dept., Ayer Public Works, Dept., Ayer Town Planner, and additional. The Unified Resolution Meeting is proposed for mid-May.

Meeting with EPIC/Pepsi Management:

Dir. of AOCED scheduled and met with executive management of the EPIC Enterprise/Pepsi Bottling Plant at Copeland Dr., Ayer on 4/12/2018. The meeting involved discussion of the proposed 50th Anniversary of EPIC Enterprises location in Ayer, MA. EPIC would like to work with the Town of Ayer, through the AOCED, to recognize the half-century of great business conducted by EPIC in Ayer by various means/events/happenings into the summer & fall of 2018. In addition, the meeting involved discussion and concern expressed by executive management with the proposed location of the new retail marijuana store at the site of the former Mango Grille located at 38 Littleton Road. The concern involves the fact that the EPIC bottling plant is a work-place environment with large, fast-moving machinery, conveyor lines, heavy materials, loading docks, heavy trucking, etc. all of which requires an exceedingly high-level of personal focus, attention, awareness, concentration, and physical movement for the 300+ employees at the plant. EPIC executive management is concerned that the location of the retail marijuana at the front entrance to the plant

may result in EPIC plant workers purchasing and consuming marijuana-based edible products and coming to work at the plant, which may create a significant probability of worker personal injury or worse and associated litigation. The Dir. of AOCED offered to provide contact information and communication between the owner/operator of the proposed retail marijuana store (38 Littleton Rd.) and EPIC executive management, so as to mitigate and hopefully resolve concerns expressed.

Location Search for Proposed New Marijuana Cultivation Facility:

On 4/9/2018 Town Planner Mark Archambault & Dir. of AOCED met with Attorney Richard Silverstein, partner with "Seven Point" (a marijuana dispensary and cultivation company based in Illinois), and CEO of "Justice Grown LLC" (cultivation center) to discuss prospective Ayer locations and regulatory permitting items. Seven Point was previously approved by the Ayer BOS to locate a marijuana cultivation facility in the Town of Ayer. Their original proposal was to build new construction for the cultivation facility, but Attorney Silverstein informed us that Seven Point has since decided not to build new construction in Ayer, but rather to secure an existing commercial building that would accommodate their proposed operation. On 4/10 the Dir. of AOCED met again with Richard Silverstein (at his request) to have a deeper discussion about prospective commercial properties that may be currently or soon available, as well as general community & economic development in Ayer.

Community Development Office:

Over the past month the Office of Community Development has been continuing its work in Housing Rehabilitation through the US Dept. of HUD-CDBG Grant program by both initiating an emergency review for a Town resident without a functioning heating system, as well as, handling subordination requests on rehab loans held by the Town. The Community and Economic Development office is in the process of review and updating the Town's "Housing Resource Flyer" which will be prominently featured on the AOCED Website.