

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: April-May 2018

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

Disposition of the Historic Ayer Central Fire Station:

On Monday, May 7th the real estate closing for the purchase of the Historic 1934 Ayer Central Fire Station by Cowfield Station LLC (Mr. Calvin Moore) took place. The Historic Fire Station is now privately-owned and on the municipal tax rolls. The landmark downtown building will be redeveloped as high-quality residential units, with the potential for 25% of the units designated as low-to-moderate income units. A Historic Preservation Deed Restriction requires the owner to preserve and restore the historic 1934 cupola & raised-brick gables, and to replace the original 1934 slate roofing material with a high-quality "faux" slate roof material. All alterations/modifications to the certain exterior portions of the building that is visible from Washington St. will be subject to review and approval by the Ayer Historical Commission, as per the Deed Restriction. The Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development (AOCED) will proceed to work closely/directly with Mr. Moore, and to support the redevelopment of the landmark historic Downtown Ayer property with ongoing assistance in pursuing historic preservation grants, local Ayer CPC Funds, Federal CDBG Grants, and any & all additional funding sources that would deliver a world-class redevelopment of the historic Fire Station Building.

Ayer Master Plan Process:

On 5/8/2018 the completed draft of the Ayer Master Plan was presented to the Ayer Planning Board by Alan S. Manoian-Dir. of AOCED and Courtney Starling-Senior Planner with Community Opportunities Group (COG), our Master Plan consulting firm. All the Chapter sections were presented, and most importantly the "Goals & Objectives" section was reviewed in detail, as was the most important "Implementation Outline/Plan" Section by the members of the Planning Board. Great dialogue was engaged as each section was reviewed, discussed, commented upon and improved through suggestions and observations. The Master Plan completed draft presentation went very well. The Dir. of AOCED working in partnership with Ayer Town Planner-Mark Archambault and Courtney Starling then integrated the suggested improvements into the completed working drafts between 5/8 and 5/22. On 5/22 the Dir. of (AOCED) and Courtney Starling of (COG) will make the final presentation of the Final Draft of the Ayer Master Plan for proposed vote on adoption by the Ayer Planning Board.

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 Dir. of AOCED has secured the commitment of three (3) private companies to agree to participate in the new Ayer Rotary Planting Island Project, they include: Ayer Moving & Storage, Pinard's Landscaping & American Superconductor. The Dir. is currently seeking a fourth Island sponsor and hopes to have that secured by 5/25. The design composition of the Island Plantings have been finalized and approved; Dir. of AOCED has contacted partners at MassDOT to schedule delivery of 400+ cobblestones from MassDOT Yard in N. Oxford, MA to Ayer; cost estimates for installation & police details are being finalized week of 5/21; and at the May 14th Town of Ayer Town Meeting an appropriation of \$10,000 for the Ayer Rotary Improvement Project was approved. Project installation is proposed for the week of July 9th.

West Main Street Corridor "Visioning Day" Event:

On May 17th the Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development working in partnership with the Devens Enterprise Commission and Liisa Marino of Grady Research/Ice House successfully conducted the "Ayer West Main Street Corridor Visioning & Development Day" Event at the landmark Grady Research/Ice House Building at 323 West Main Street. The event proved a great success with higher than expected participation and attendance by both private & public sector interests; including West Main Street Corridor property-owners, business-owners, residents, as well as local/regional real estate developers, real estate commercial brokers, banking/lending professionals, prospective property investors, regional planners & transportation professionals, and municipal officials. The Event included engaging visual presentations on urban space design, infrastructure investment, property redevelopment, a tour of the hydro-electric facility at Grady Research, a dynamic Developers/Brokers Panel Discussion, and a full Mobile Workshop (walking tour) of the West Main Street Corridor by a large number of attendees. The energy and vision in the room was powerful, and we know have great momentum and a large group of interested and engaged professionals & property-owners that are ready to work together to transform the economic and urban design qualities of the West Main Street Corridor. The Dir. of AOCED recommends and will begin planning for a follow-up "West Main Street Corridor Public Design Charrette" for the summer of 2018 – we have the forward momentum.

Creation of New Downtown Ayer Business Group:

The Dir. of AOCED continues to meet and work directly with Downtown Ayer business leaders who propose the formation of a new Downtown Ayer Business Group. On Monday, May 21st the launch of the new Ayer Business Group is scheduled to take place with an inaugural gathering at Union Coffee Roaster at 25 Main Street, Downtown Ayer at 5:30PM. The Dir. of AOCED has consistently provided advice and guidance on effective and sustainable methods in forming a new downtown business

group. The new downtown business group will be a private-sector independent group that works in partnership with the (AOCED) and the municipal public sector. The first gathering on May 21st will provide an opportunity to determine if there is sufficient interest and participation to proceed with the creation of an official new group.

Metro-Boston Micro-Brewery Attraction Prospect:

The Dir. of (AOCED) was recently contacted by a commercial real estate broker firm based in Metro-Boston prospecting for a new location for an existing micro-brewery currently located in a metro-Boston community. The prospect company seeks 10,000-20,000 sq ft existing building with an original request for a 18ft-20ft floor-to-ceiling height requirement; that has been modified to a 12 ft floor-to-ceiling height requirement. The Dir. of AOCED provided the broker with a potential location for consideration. The prospect company inspected the property but determined that it was not the fit for them. The Dir. of AOCED subsequently identified and provided the prospect with an additional possible location as of 5/21. The AOCED will continue to vigorously work to attract this world-class micro-brewery and associated jobs to the Town of Ayer.