

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: May-June 2018

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

Creation of New Downtown Ayer Business Group:

On the evening of Monday, May 21st the new Ayer Business Group conducted its first gathering at Union Coffee Roaster at 25 Main Street. The inaugural gathering was organized through the efforts of Downtown Ayer business owners, the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development (AOCED). The attendance was most impressive with 30+ downtown business owners & property owners, as well as Selectman Jannice Livingston. Visions, aspirations, opportunities, ideas, and concepts for the future of Downtown Ayer were presented, discussed and encouraged. The "vibe" in the room was dynamic & exceedingly positive for working together as a unified & creative group of Downtown Ayer businesses. A follow-up meeting was scheduled and conducted on June 18th at Markoh's On Main where the participants advanced organization structure, mission, objectives and goals for the new group. The Downtown Ayer Business group will meet on a monthly basis and will be working in partnership with the Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development.

Historic Ayer Central Fire Station Redevelopment:

The new owner of the Historic 1934 Ayer Central Fire Station, Cowfield Station LLC (Mr. Calvin Moore) has begun the process of stabilizing and thoroughly inspecting the landmark building. The beautiful & original Colonial-Revival Cupola has been specifically examined by professional contractors, and it has been determined to remove the Cupola from the roof in order to complete a full and proper restoration/preservation of the Cupola which will be placed back on the roof when restored. Cowfield Station LLC is also currently in the process of mitigating/removing hazardous asbestos material & lead paint from the interior of the building. Next steps include closing-up the exposed cornice line of the building & interior gutting. The (AOCED) is preparing to engage in the pursuit of both a local Community Preservation Act (CPA) Fund grant, and a US Dept. of HUD CDBG Grant for Jan./Feb 2019 which would fund a substantial portion of the comprehensive redevelopment of the significant historic building & would provide for the construction of high-quality affordable residential units going into 2019.

Ayer Master Plan Process:

On 5/22/2018 the completed draft of the Ayer Master Plan was presented to the Ayer Planning Board by Alan S. Manorian-Dir. of AOCED and Courtney Starling-Senior Planner with Community Opportunities Group (COG), our Master Plan consulting firm, for consideration and vote on official municipal adoption of the 2018 Ayer Master Plan.

The (AOCED) is pleased to inform that the Ayer Planning Board voted unanimously in favor of adoption of the 2018 Ayer Master Plan on May 22nd. On 6/5/2018 the Dir. of (AOCED) went before the Ayer Board of Selectmen to present the adopted 2018 Ayer Master Plan & to discuss next steps for final packaging and submission to the Mass Dept. of Housing & Community Development for review, comment and final approval. Also, the most important "Implementation Plan" section of the Master Plan was discussed and agreed that a clear, cohesive and structured process for engaging all municipal departments, boards, & commissions in advancing and fulfilling the Objectives & Goals of the Implementation Plan is the primary mission going forward. At the June Monthly Department Head Meeting, Town Manager Pontbriand set out a clear directive and solid plan for immediate and unified engagement in meeting the deliverables and timeline of the Implementation Plan. To this end the (AOCED) in partnership with Community Opportunities Group formulated and produced a Ayer Master Plan "Implementation Plan Dept./Board/Commission Progress Checklist & Self Evaluation Form". As we have proclaimed through the 2+ year process, "This 2018 Master Plan will not end up on a shelf – but rather will be a living, active and measurable action item going forward from today!" The (AOCED) will begin a process of presenting the 2018 Master Plan & most importantly the Implementation Plan to all municipal Depts., Boards & Commissions; and establishing a regular schedule of monitoring & measuring progress through the Progress Checklist & Self Evaluation Forms. The 2018 Master Plan, Implementation Plan & Progress Reports will be posted on the Ayer municipal website and other municipal social media platforms.

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. (AOCED) has established working relations with MassDOT through the MassDOT "Adopt-A-Visibility Site" Program, under which the re-invented Ayer Rotary Improvement Project will be advanced. The Dir. of AOCED has secured the commitment of four (4) private companies to agree to adopt/sponsor the new Ayer Rotary Planting Island Project, they include: Ayer Moving & Storage, Pinard's Landscaping, American Superconductor & Gervais Ford. The (AOCED) working in partnership with Ayer Conservation Administrator & credentialed Landscape Architect Jo-Anne Krystoff formulated an outstanding new & improved unified design composition for both the triangular planting islands and the specialized perennial plantings. Installation of the new, authorized, safe, proper and high-quality Planting Island composition is scheduled to take place in mid-July.

Scully Rd. Neighborhood/Molumco Industrial Park Meeting & Initiative:

On April 9th the Dir. of (AOCED) attended a municipal team meeting to discuss and determine possible action steps to engage in efforts to address & improve the physical conditions and significant public safety concerns of Scully Rd. for both the neighborhood residents and the business tenants of the Molumco Industrial Park district. The Dir. of (AOCED) was tasked to lead an effort to outreach to all neighborhood residents and all businesses in the Molumco Industrial Park in order to organize, schedule and conduct an unprecedented gathering of all parties involved in the Scully Rd. safety & roadway design issues. The Dir. of (AOCED) walked the neighborhood several times during April and May personally visiting all the homes, and making contact and meeting with the owners/principals of the businesses located at the Molumco Industrial Park. The Dir. was successful in bringing together all parties concerned, and scheduling a Neighborhood/Industrial Park Meeting at the Caleb Butler Masonic Lodge Building located on Scully Road on Wednesday June 13th. The Unified Gathering included Scully Rd. residents, Molumco Industrial Park businesses, Ayer Town Manager & Assistant Town Manager, all members of the Ayer Board of Selectmen, municipal Dept. Heads & staff from Ayer PD, Ayer FD, Ayer Building Commissioner, Ayer PW, and Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development. The meeting was very well-attended and most productive. All comments from the participants were recorded and documented in real-time, "Next Steps" were discussed and agreed-upon by all participants, and the gathering concluded with a group walking tour/inspection of the entire run of Scully Rd. The Ayer municipal team is currently advancing all immediate (short-term) actions & improvements including but not limited to new directional signage (Map Sign) for access to Molumco Industrial Park, new Molumco Industrial Park Directory Signage, possible new roadway center-line painting, possible relocation of School Bus Stop, investigation of removal of old concrete retaining wall & slope at bend of Scully Rd., and additional items. A Scully Rd. "Next Steps" municipal team meeting schedule is being finalized with established project goals, objectives and time-line.