

# Town of Ayer

## Office of the Town Planner



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Town of Ayer | Ayer Town Hall | 1 Main Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor | Ayer, MA 01432 | 978-772-8218 | [www.ayer.ma.us](http://www.ayer.ma.us)

### Monthly Staff Report

To: Robert Pontbriand, Town Administrator

From: Mark Archambault, Ayer Town Planner

Re: Monthly report for the period October 19, 2018 – November 20, 2018

Date: November 20, 2018

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#### 1. **Project Review:**

The Planning Board is currently reviewing two cases over the months of October and November:

- a. A **Site Plan** application for a new Ayer Family Pharmacy at 13 Park St. (old La Sita building). The Planning Board accepted the Plan for consideration and public meeting at their November 13 meeting, and continued the case to its November 27 meeting. Due to 2 parking spaces being closer to the front lot line than the front line of the building, a Special Permit from the Planning Board is also required, which will be heard at the Board's December meeting (TBD). The Board of Selectmen have approved a license agreement to address the pre-existing lot line that goes through the building and the rear portion of the lot. The Planning Board will be working with the applicant and her engineer to ensure that the site is developed as closely as possible in conformance with Form-Based Code principals anticipated for this part of Park St. The Board will work to ensure that the site is developed in an attractive manner so as to provide a model for attractive site development of the Park St. corridor.
- b. A **Preliminary Subdivision Plan** was submitted by GPR, Inc. for a 14-lot subdivision at 54, 56 and 64 Littleton Road. The parent parcel totals 11.12 acres and is predominantly wooded. Approval of a Preliminary Plan does not constitute final approval of a subdivision or enable building permits to be issued, but is intended as a first step in designing a subdivision. As this subdivision will need to be developed in accordance with the Open Space Residential Development section of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw, the Conservation Commission must also review a Conservation Analysis and inform the Planning Board of its findings before action on a Definitive Plan can be taken. As the timeline for action on a Preliminary Plan is only 45 days from the date of submittal, the Planning Board must take action on this Plan at their November 27 meeting.

## 2. Continued work on Subdivision Regulations:

I have continued to work with Town Engineer Dan Van Schalkwyk and Planning Board member Ken Diskin on developing new Subdivision Regulations. Due to various conflicts with meeting spaces and early voting, there was only one meeting on this project over the course of the last month. Work will pick up again on these Regulations after Thanksgiving. Following compilation of a complete draft, the Regulations will need to be reviewed by Town Counsel and the Ayer DPW. Adoption of these Regulations is now anticipated for the winter of 2019.

## 3. Consideration of Major Zoning Amendments for the Spring, 2019:

The Town Planner and Economic Development Director are working with the Town Manager to finalize the list of **major** zoning bylaw amendments that would be presented at a spring, 2019 Town Meeting. These include the Petapawag ACEC Overlay District, which would enhance protection and promote careful development of Ayer's remaining wild lands on its north-central and northeastern border with Groton, a high priority of the recently adopted Ayer Master Plan; a Recreational Marijuana Bylaw to address the wide range of potential legal cannabis uses as described by and overseen by the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission; and Form-Based Codes for portions of Park Street and West Main St.. In addition, the issue of Accessory Apartments will hopefully be taken up again after delay at the previous two Town Meetings. This may not be a complete list, but such will be developed over the course of the next monthly period (ending December 20). In addition to these major projects, the Town Planner anticipates proposing several refinements to various sections of the Zoning Bylaw that still need clarification. All Zoning Bylaw amendments will undergo Planning Board public hearings *prior* to finalization and printing of the applicable warrant for Town Meeting so that the confusion that ensued at the October 22 Town Meeting never happens again.

## 4. Planning Board Training:

The goal of the Planning Board training project is to develop a Planning Board conversant in Massachusetts Planning law and best practices, which will help to raise the standards for planning and project review in Ayer. The **first such training** was held at the Planning Board's November 13 meeting at which **Planner Jeff Lacy**, a state-recognized expert on open space and natural resource protection zoning, gave a presentation on this topic. His presentation will help to inform discussions and decisions related to any future refinement of the existing OSRD section of the Zoning Bylaw, as well as the Petapawag ACEC Overlay District. The Town Planner is working with the **Citizen Planners Training Collaborative** to provide an on-site training in off-site improvement as they relate to Special Permits, Site Plans and Subdivision applications so that the Board has a good foundation in the legal framework pertinent to any such off-site improvements that the Board may want to require in future developments.

