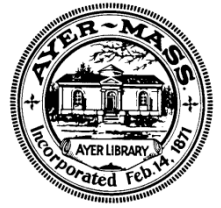


Town of Ayer

Office of the Town Planner



Town of Ayer | Ayer Town Hall | 1 Main Street, 3rd Floor | Ayer, MA 01432 | 978-772-8218 | www.ayer.ma.us

Monthly Staff Report

To: Robert Pontbriand, Town Administrator

From: Mark Archambault, Ayer Town Planner

Re: Monthly report for the period November 21, 2018 – December 20, 2018

Date: December 20, 2018

1. **Project Review:**

The Planning Board recently approved a Site Plan and Preliminary Subdivision Plan, with another Preliminary Subdivision Plan and Site Plan having just been submitted which will be heard by the Board in January, 2019:

- a. The **Site Plan** application for the Ayer Family Pharmacy at 13 Park St. (old La Sita building) was approved by the Planning Board on December 12, 2018, with several conditions. The conditions of approval address such items as signage, lighting, landscaping, curbing, stormwater management and a reserve strip for the future sidewalk along Park Street as provided for in Ayer's Complete Streets policy and forthcoming Form-Based Code zoning provisions.
- b. A **Preliminary Subdivision Plan**, submitted by GPR, Inc. for a 14-lot subdivision at 54, 56 and 64 Littleton Road, was approved by the Planning Board on November 27. The applicant has submitted a Conservation Analysis of the property, which must be reviewed by the Conservation Commission who will then issue comments back to the Planning Board prior to the submission of a Definitive Plan.
- c. A **Preliminary Subdivision Plan** was submitted on December 18 by Places Associates, for a 23-lot subdivision along the shoreline of Shaker Mill Pond, which is accessed from Shaker Road. I am currently reviewing the Plan and Conservation Analysis in preparation for my Staff Report which will be sent to the Planning Board prior to their January 8, 2019 public meeting on the proposal. This Preliminary Plan will likely require two Planning Board meetings and then coordination with the Conservation Commission on the conservation findings prior to the applicant's submittal of a Definitive Plan in the near future.

- d. A **Site Plan** and **Special Permit** application was submitted in December by GPR, Inc., for an accessory (storage) building on property owned by North Atlantic Concrete at 21 Westford Road. This property is in the Industrial District, and is also in the Aquifer Protection Overlay District, thereby also requiring a Special Permit from the Planning Board after review and recommendations are received from the Board of Health.

2. Continued work on Subdivision Regulations:

I have continued working with Town Engineer Dan Van Schalkwyk and Planning Board member Ken Diskin on developing new Subdivision Regulations. As of December 19, a close to complete draft has been prepared. There is still work to be done on proof-reading the document, checking for inconsistencies and compatibility with the Zoning Bylaw and other Town regulations, and incorporating guidance on the Conservation Analysis and Development Impact Statement as they apply to Open Space Residential Development subdivisions.

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

It was decided by the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen that two major Zoning Bylaw amendments will be brought before voters at a Special Town Meeting on June 10, 2018. One of these is a Form-Based Code Bylaw for the part of Park Street that is currently zoned 'Downtown Business'. The Economic Development Director is in charge of that effort. I have been tasked with coordinating the preparation and public review of a Recreational Marijuana Bylaw, which will address the full scope of uses under the authority of the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission. As the Town has already limited the number of RETAIL establishments to one, this Bylaw will mainly address the other operations such as growing facilities / cultivation, product refining and manufacturing, independent testing laboratories, and transporters. The Bylaw will address such considerations for retail operations as parking, traffic impact, and other operational issues pertinent to local Site Plan review and/or Special Permit processes. I will be convening a Recreational Marijuana Bylaw Working Group in January of 2019 which will assist me in ensuring that the Bylaw put forth at the June 10 STM covers all the important issues and is of maximum benefit to the town.

4. Open Land Priorities and Mapping Project:

On December 17, the Open Land Working Group, formed to oversee a District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) grant awarded by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC), received its final report from the MRPC. The final report, which includes narrative, tables and maps, identifies Ayer's remaining significant undeveloped parcels and prioritizes them in terms of their ecological importance in terms of size, natural habitat value, contiguity with already protected land, and other criteria developed by the Open Land Working Group together with the MRPC. This report will assist the town in determining whether land in one of the current use tax classifications (Chapter 61, etc.) is worth pursuing for acquisition when taken out of such program, as well as in guiding future regulatory and zoning approaches to better protect land of high conservation value.

The members of the Open Land Working Group included Robert Pontbriand, Alan Manoian, Jo-Anne Crystoff, Mark Wetzel, Ken Diskin, Janet Providakes and Beth Suedmeyer. Karen Chapman of the MRPC was the principal lead and author of the report.

5. Misc. and Upcoming Projects:

On December 19 I attended a workshop at the MRPC on the upcoming technical assistance grants for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program, the aim of which is to assist towns with readiness for the impacts of extreme weather events and public health risks associated with our increasingly erratic climate. Towns must first apply for a Planning Grant to identify such risks, which then qualifies them for to later apply for Action Grants which can be used to rectify the vulnerabilities identified in the planning phase of the effort. I will work with other town officials to prepare an application for a Planning Grant early in 2019.