

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 December 22, 2018 – January 20, 2019

Date: January 20, 2019

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. 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. Due to a lack of a quorum, the Planning Board was not able to hold its first meeting on the Plan on January 8, but it is meeting on the plan on January 22. There are several issues that the Planning Board must resolve for this case, including the length of a dead-end road, a potential emergency access agreement with the abutting Shaker Hills Golf Course in Harvard, and the configuration of the open space. 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.
- b. 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. The Planning Board is considering this application at its January 22, 2019 meeting.

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. A close to complete draft has been prepared. Work is commencing 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 (see item 4.below) 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 have convened a Recreational Marijuana Bylaw Working Group, which will begin meeting on January 24, 2019. The Working Group will meet twice per month, and will enable me to produce a Bylaw that has been thoroughly vetted by the pertinent town departments and officials.

4. Misc. and Upcoming Projects:

Another key project that I’ve been working on is the ‘**Conservation Analysis**’ guidance for the Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) section of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw. I am coordinating work on this guidance document with the Conservation Administrator, since the Conservation Commission has a key role in reviewing any conservation analysis and getting their recommendations to the Planning Board prior to their action on a subdivision plan. This is a fairly tricky document to prepare, since it requires consideration of both Conservation Commission and Planning Board timelines and permit requirements. A first draft of this document has been prepared, which will likely take another month or two to complete and formalize through amendments to the Planning Board administrative Rules and Regulations and Subdivision Regulations, both of which can be amended at a Public Hearing.

