

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: January 2019

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

Administration of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Prospect & Oak St. Infrastructure Improvement Project:

The Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development (AOCED) & Ayer Public Works Dept. conducted a joint-departmental coordination meeting on Jan. 30th at Ayer DPW to finalize project "Bid" documents/process/schedule. Project bid advertisements will be issued on February 6th with a bid submission deadline of February 27th. On January 24th the AOCED met with Mass Dept. of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) officials to provide update on Project status and to discuss Project administration. Also, AOCED has scheduled a Project site visitation with DHCD official (Kathryn McInnis) for early February. Project preparation & coordination with Ayer District Courthouse officials & the residents of the Grove Pond Neighborhood continues until the start of the Prospect St. & Oak St. Public Infrastructure Improvement Project scheduled for Spring-Summer 2019. The AOCED will schedule & conduct a Grove Pond Neighborhood "Pre-Project Start" Informational Meeting & Project Site Walk, and will serve as the primary contact for all communications/issues/concerns/matter resolutions.

Pursuit of (Competitive) 2019 US Dept. of HUD Community Development Block Grant for Redevelopment of the Historic 1934 Ayer Central Fire Station for New Downtown Affordable Housing:

During the month of January 2019 the (AOCED) fully engaged in and finalized the portions of the proposed grant submission for which we (the public sector partner) are responsible for delivering by the submission deadline of March 8th. The AOCED vigorously engaged with property-owner/private sector partner to assist in and strongly encourage the timely (time sensitive) delivery of proposed construction budget, architectural renderings, interior design layout, conceptual site plan document, affordable rental unit management plan, evidence of adequate property-owner financial capacity, etc.; all these items are critically required to compose, produce and submit a "winning" grant application. On Thursday, January 10th the AOCED scheduled, organized, promoted and conducted a highly-successful and exceedingly well-attended Ayer CDBG Affordable Housing Public Forum at the Historic Ayer Central Fire Station Building on Washington Street. In excess of 60 Ayer residents participated in this

important “Public Engagement” event critical to the success of the 2019 CDBG Grant Application Submission. On Thursday, January 24th the Dir. of AOCED & Community Dev Program Mgr. conducted meeting at Mass DHCD in Boston with Ayer’s CDBG Grant Administrator to advance the Grant Submission Request and to coordinate with DHCD Process Schedule & Grant Requirements. The next four-weeks will be exceedingly intense and challenging for the Dir. of AOCED & Community Dev. Program Manager to formulate, compose, produce and deliver a “winning-submission” for the deadline of February 27th. The AOCED pursues a grant of approx. \$500,000+. (Important): the grant submission requires the property-owner to provide all required items, documents, verifications and product in partnership – both parties must perform at the same high level to meet grant submission requirements. The AOCED only submits “winning” CDBG grants.

Sale & Redevelopment of the former Murphy Knives Building 13 Groton-Harvard Rd.:

The Dir. of AOCED has been actively meeting with the property owners of the former Murphy Knives Building, Mark & Mimi Furman, to assist in discussing and determining advantageous redevelopment/repurposing concepts for the 110+ year old light industrial building on Groton-Harvard Rd. Also, the Dir. of AOCED has met on-site (on several occasions) with commercial brokers of Van Nuss Realty & their architectural firm principals, at the request of brokers & property owners to discuss zoning issues, locational development trends, market conditions, design approaches, and to identify prospective buyers. The Dir. of AOCED has subsequently met with three (3) prospective buyers of the property, at their request, to discuss concepts & property redevelopment potential.

Park Street Corridor Form-Based Code Formulation/Production Process Schedule:

The Dir of (AOCED) is in full production mode with the Park Street Corridor Form-Based Code Zoning Bylaw. The Park Street Form-Based Code zoning bylaw is proposed to be placed on the Agenda for a Special Town Meeting on June 10th, 2019. The Dir. of (AOCED) will be delivering the regulatory text content of the draft Code for submission to municipal Legal Counsel for complete review and refinement by March 1st. on the working agenda of the Ayer Planning Board (and in attendance) for all scheduled meetings between now and the scheduled June Town Meeting. During the month of March the Dir. of (AOCED) will launch an innovation local voter engagement platform whereby the Dir. of

(AOCED) will conduct “Park St. Form-Based Code Design Input Neighborhood House Gatherings” for those residents who consistently demonstrate a high-level of civic responsibility by regularly attending Town of Ayer “Town Meeting.

Building Working Relationship with New Devens Shopping Plaza & former Laggis Building New Property Owners:

The Dir of AOCED has reached-out, contacted and is working in close communication with Mr. David Jiang & his wife Wei Yan of Cambridge, MA, who recently acquired both the Devens Shopping Plaza on West Main Street & the former Laggis Men’s Shop Building in Downtown Ayer at 67 Main Street. The Dir. of AOCED has met with the new owners at the subject properties and at Ayer Town Hall. The new owners propose substantial investment in both properties, and in particular, we will work with David & Yan on a most favorable redevelopment of the former Laggis Building parcel and its relationship to the Downtown Ayer Commuter Rail Station just across the street from the property.

Ayer Commuter Rail Station “Historic Ayer Minton Tiles” Public Space Design Improvement Effort:

The Dir. of (AOCED) working in design partnership with Ayer’s Assistant Town Manager have completed all design formulations regarding the exciting new “Historic Minton Ceramic Tile Artistic Fence Project” at the Downtown Ayer Commuter Rail Station. The fabrication and production of the artistic fence Wrap product is currently underway – The AOCED proposes to have the installation of the Artistic Fence Wrap completed by late February 2019. We all look forward to the comprehensive and long awaited (federally-funded) Ayer Commuter Rail Parking Deck & Depot Square Improvement Project becoming a reality in 2019. In addition, the AOCED is working on concepts and approaches to designing and delivering an Ayer Depot Square Park Renaissance.

2019 Ayer Fourth of July Celebration Management:

The AOCED has been tasked with developing, managing, fundraising, scheduling and conducting the 2019 Ayer Fourth of July Celebration scheduled for Saturday, July 6th. This was not part of the AOCED’s 2018-19 work plan, however, as there is no longer an active Committee (having been disbanded last year) and the civic event is so very cherished by thousands of Ayer & Greater Ayer families – the AOCED accepts this task and will do our utmost to make the event a success once again this year.

Implementation of the Ayer Master Plan:

On Wednesday, January 9th the kick-off of the Ayer Master Plan Implementation Luncheon Roundtable was a great success. Full-attendance by all those invited, with Supt. of Ayer DPW presenting the "Transportation & Circulation" Chapter with Goals for discussion and advancement. Then on January 23rd Ayer Conservation Commission Administrator Jo-Anne Krystoff presented the "Resources" Chapter & Goals Ayer Master Plan Implementation Luncheon Roundtable. Once again, we are pleased to report that the Luncheon Roundtable was exceedingly well-attended and resulted in the strengthening of inter-departmental roles & relationships in working together to Implement the chapters of the 2017-18 Ayer Master Plan. For the month of February "Municipal Services & Facilities" Chapter is scheduled for presentation/discussion, as well as the "Housing" Chapter. The 2018 Ayer Master Plan will not "rest on a shelf"!

Ayer Master Plan "Off-the-Shelf"

Municipal Implementation
Luncheon Roundtable Series
Wednesday Afternoons
12:30PM-2:00PM
Ayer Town Hall

- Wednesday, January 9th – "Transportation & Circulation Goals"
- Wednesday, January 23rd – "Resources Goals"
- Wednesday, February 6th – "Municipal Services & Facilities Goals"
- Wednesday, February 20th – "Land Use Goals"
- Wednesday, March 6th – "Housing Goals"
- Wednesday, March 20th – "Economic Development Goals"
- Wednesday, March 27th – "Infrastructure Goals"

Each week the "Luncheon Roundtable Group" will focus their attention, perspective, resources, contributions and guidance to (support fellow departments & municipal colleagues) in working together to achieve the GOALS adopted in the 2018 Town of Ayer Master Plan.

New "Welcome to Ayer Sign" Project:

The Dir. of AOCED working in partnership with Ayer Assistant Town Manager has advanced the location & design aspects of the project which will deliver a long-awaited "Welcome to Ayer" Sign to our Town. The funding for the proposed "Welcome to Ayer" Sign is being provided through Mr. John Hillier owner of Ayer

Compassionate Care Inc. & Gage Cannabis Co. as per the municipal Host Agreement mutually agreed upon. The Dir. of AOCED has engaged with MassDOT in order to secure authorization to place the proposed granite sign in the triangular piece of land just to the west of the Carlton Circle (*Ayer Rotary*) where the historic (1907) Depot Square Fountain is currently located; this as MassDOT will not permit the placement of a "deadly object" within the State Route corridor. The Dir. of AOCED believes that the proposed location is just outside the State Route jurisdiction and would not present a danger to the public operating vehicles. (*The historic Fountain is proposed to be brought back to its original and proper location at the renewed Depot Square Park from where it was removed at the request of the US Army in 1917*).

Office of Community Development:

Through the months of January and February the office of Community Development has been working on our CDBG FY18 Housing Rehab program grant. We have identified two houses with emergency conditions, one of which did not have a working furnace. The project without a furnace went out to bid in January, at this point the property has a new working furnace. The CDBG FY18 grant has two components, the Housing Rehab and the Prospect and Oak Street infrastructure project. In addition the department has been working on creating a new Affordable Housing Committee. We have identified members from the COA, CPC, Master Plan Housing Working committee, Loaves and Fishes, local realtors and general residents to serve on this committee. The committee is scheduled to come together for their first meeting Feb. 15th \and we are looking forward to a productive upcoming year.