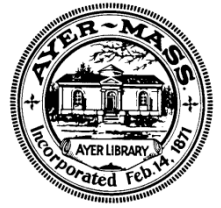


# Town of Ayer

## Office of the Town Planner



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### Monthly Staff Report

To: Robert Pontbriand, Town Administrator

From: Mark Archambault, Ayer Town Planner

Re: Monthly report for the period February 21 – March 20, 2019

Date: March 20, 2019

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#### 1. Project Review:

- a. The **Preliminary Subdivision Plan** for a 23-lot subdivision along the shoreline of Shaker Mill Pond was approved by the Planning Board on March 12, 2019. Preliminary Plan approval is only the first step in developing a subdivision, and is intended to determine general features of the Plan including the length of the subdivision road and the amount of and configuration of open space. In this case the Preliminary Plan calls for a 750 foot cul-de-sac road and the preservation on the majority of the land within the 100-foot Wetland Protection Act buffer from the Shaker Mill Pond. The applicant will now need to submit a Definitive Plan application to the Planning Board, which will also entail detailed engineering review of water, sewer, stormwater and other infrastructure by various town boards and personnel.
- b. On March 12 the Planning Board also approved the **Special Permit** 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.

#### 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. Work is ongoing on filling a few gaps, 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. The very next step in the process will be to have the draft Regulations properly formatted. This formatting can take place concurrently with the steps described below.

After our internal review we would then like to have the new Subdivision Regulations reviewed by several local engineers / engineering firms in order to fine tune it; followed by review of Town Counsel. This ‘peer review’ and legal review will likely result in further amendments to the draft Regulations, which will then lead to a Public Hearing version for the Planning Board Public Hearing(s). Subdivision Regulations do not require a Town Meeting vote, but are approved by a majority vote of the Planning Board after public hearing.

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

I have been tasked with coordinating the preparation and public review of a Recreational Marijuana Zoning Bylaw for the Town of Ayer, which will address the full scope of uses under the authority of the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission. This project took up much of my time over the last month. This Bylaw will mainly address non-retail operations such as growing facilities / cultivation, product refining and manufacturing, independent testing laboratories, and transporters. I completed the draft Bylaw on March 1, and it was vetted by the Marijuana Zoning Bylaw Working Group prior to being submitted to Town Counsel for legal review.

The draft Bylaw is still (March 20) being reviewed by Town Counsel prior to the Planning Board Public Hearings which will be on April 9 and, if needed, April 23. Town Counsel has stated that they have only identified minor items that will need further clarification for the final version, which will be ready in time for the April 9 Public Hearing. The Planning Board will have the opportunity to continue the Hearing to April 23 if needed to address any changes warranted by the March 20 Public Information Session and/or the April 9 Public Hearing.

### 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 to complete and formalize through amendments to the Planning Board administrative Rules and Regulations and the new Subdivision Regulations, both of which can be amended at a Public Hearing.

### 5. Planning Board Training:

The Planning Board and I attended the annual **Citizen Planners Training Collaborative** Conference on Saturday, March 16 at Holy Cross in Worcester. There were sessions on affordable housing / 40Bs, site plan and special permit review, climate change adaptation, Open Space Residential Development, Historic Preservation and Recreational Marijuana Zoning, among other topics. This is part of an ongoing series of Planning Board training sessions that I would like to facilitate this year.

