

Town of Ayer

Office of the Town Planner



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Monthly Staff Report

To: Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager

From: Mark Archambault, Ayer Town Planner

Re: Monthly report for the period May 21 – June 20, 2019

Date: June 20, 2019

1. Project Review:

The Planning Board began its intensive review of a **Definitive Subdivision Plan at 54 & 56 Littleton Road**, which is showing 20 lots where the Preliminary Plan had 14. The Preliminary Plan was submitted prior to the October, 2018 Town Meeting vote which put limits on the amount of wetlands and steep slopes that can count towards the required amount of open space. The Planning Board accepted the Definitive Plan for consideration and opened the public hearing on June 11. There are many issues to resolve for this subdivision, and in many ways it is a ‘test case’ of the Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) section of the ‘new’ 2018 Zoning Bylaw, indicating provisions that will require further refinement at a future Town Meeting. I anticipate that the Planning Board will require the full 90-day review period before approving this Plan, which would be by the second meeting in July. This plan also requires the issuance of an Order of Conditions from the Ayer Conservation Commission.

The Planning Board is also researching how best to address property owner concerns about a 2-lot subdivision called ‘Joyce Lane’ that was approved in 1994 but never built. At this time it looks like the landowner will either file a new ‘minor’ subdivision plan or apply for a variance to allow access to the lot that fronts on Flanagan Pond.

During May, the Planning Board also approved the Site Plan for the new PFAS treatment facility at the Ayer Water Department. That is the last of three projects for the DPW requiring Site Plan approval from the Planning Board over the last two months.

2. Preparation for and June 10, 2019 Special Town Meeting:

In May I refined the presentation on the Marijuana Establishment Zoning Bylaw (MEZB) to be presented at the June 10 STM. I also recorded a public service announcement with APAC in advance of the Town Meeting to describe its purpose and intent and to address any potential misconceptions. I was very pleased to see that the MEZB was overwhelmingly approved at the June 10, 2019 STM.

I am now working with Administrative Coordinator Heather Hampson to develop a checklist and application form(s) for Site Plan and Special Permits that will come under this bylaw.

3. Misc. and Upcoming Projects:

I have continued research in connection with the planned **Petapawag Overlay District** which would develop special standards for any development in the currently forested part of Ayer in the A-1 Residential zoning district. These standards could involve protecting additional open space in subdivisions, transfer of development rights and other planning techniques that would better guide development in a more environmentally sensitive manner.

I am still researching ways to improve the **Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) section** of the Zoning Bylaw, as I believe that the mathematical formula developed by the consultant back in 2016 is resulting in more lots / units than would have been possible in a conventional subdivision on the same properties. I am consulting with other planning experts on this topic to develop the best possible approach to amending this section. A group consisting of Planning Board members Ken Diskin, Jonathan Kranz and I will be working on this over the summer.

I have also been discussing the timing of several other amendments to the Zoning Bylaw with the Town Manager and Housing Specialist Alicia Hersey, including 'Accessory Apartments', which would help Ayer to meet its affordable housing obligations.

Lastly for this monthly update, I have compiled the changes that need to be made to the official Ayer Zoning Map as described in Section 4.3 of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw, and will be meeting with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission's GIS Specialist to develop a new, up to date Zoning Map, which should be ready for official adoption by the Planning Board at one of their July meetings.

4. Subdivision Regulations:

The completed draft Subdivision Regulations are now being reviewed by the Superintendent of Public Works, who needs to be comfortable with the new Regulations given his vital role in advising the Planning Board on technical engineering issues related to subdivision applications. If his review can be completed soon, we will move as quickly as possible to have these Regulations approved by the Planning Board and 'on the books' before more Subdivision applications come in. I want to thank Asst. Town Manager Carly Antonellis for her assistance in correcting the formatting of these draft Regulations.

