

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 Manager

From: Mark Archambault, Ayer Town Planner

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

Date: July 20, 2019

1. Project Review:

The Planning Board continued its review of a **Definitive Subdivision Plan at 54 & 56 Littleton Road**, which is now showing 19 lots. 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 (see # 2 below). At the July 9 Planning Board meeting, the applicant granted the Planning Board an extension past the 90-days normally required to act on a Definitive Subdivision Plan. The Planning Board now has until August 27 to act on the Plan. This will enable the Planning Board and Conservation Commission time to engage the services of an engineering firm for a Peer-Review study of the project’s stormwater management plan in light of the site’s high seasonal groundwater table. As of this writing I am in the process of securing the services of a consulting firm for such Peer-Review study. As of this writing four consulting firms have been approached for proposals, with the final selection to be made the week of July 22.

2. Begin Preparing Zoning Bylaw Amendments for October Special Town Meeting:

I have begun revising the **Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) section** of the Zoning Bylaw by replacing the formula currently being used to calculate the number of lots / units with a description of the information to be required in a Yield Plan, which will result in a more realistic number of lots in subdivisions going forward (*assuming these revisions pass at the October STM*).

The formula developed by the Zoning Bylaw consultant is too generous, and is resulting in overcrowded subdivisions with a much higher density of units than allowed by the underlying zoning. I spoke with the consultant recently who endorsed my approach to determining the number of lots / units. The Yield Plan approach will result in less crowded subdivisions and will make preserving open space and designing subdivision layouts much easier for both applicants and the Planning Board. Planning Board members Ken Diskin and Jonathan Kranz will also be involved in this effort.

I am also continuing research into a **Petapawag Overlay District** to better protect north-central and northeastern Ayer, though this amendment may need more research and intensive work with the Planning Board, making a Spring, 2020 Annual Town Meeting a more realistic goal for bringing this before Town Meeting.

I have begun working with Community Development Housing Specialist Alicia Hersey to also amend some of the provisions of the Affordable Housing section of the Zoning Bylaw to be more in line with the standards of the Mass Housing Partnership and the Commonwealth's housing best practices. I also anticipate that the Accessory Apartment section that was removed from the Zoning Bylaw prior to the March 2018 Annual Town Meeting will be voted on at the October 28, 2019 Special Town Meeting.

3. Zoning Map:

Over the last few weeks I coordinated revisions to the official Ayer Zoning Map with the GIS staff at the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC). The revised Zoning Map includes the title and signature block called for in section 4.3 of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw, as well as a corrected delineation of the Zone II (Aquifer Protection Zone) for the Grove Pond well, and a new designation for the Form-Based Code district which is replacing 'Downtown Business'. Once the Town receives approval of the Form-Based Code district from the Attorney General's office I will contact MRPC to have them print out the official map for Planning Board endorsement and signing.

4. Subdivision Regulations:

The Planning Board will be systematically reviewing the complete draft of new Subdivision Regulations starting at its July 23 meeting and will continue until it is ready to hold a Public Hearing on adoption of these regulations.