

# **Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development**

Monthly Report: July 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 neighborhood infrastructure improvement project has progressed on schedule through July. New water lines (originals dating from 1896) and sewer lines (originals from 1948) are being replaced and re-designed during the month of July. Storm-water management systems are also being reconstructed during the month of July. The residents/neighbors of Prospect & Oak Street and the entire Grove Pond Neighborhood have been most tolerant and supportive of the ongoing intensive construction activity literally at their front doors, and lines of direct communication have kept the project on track and the neighbors well-informed of progress. Dir. of AOCED & DPW Town Engineer met with DCAM officials (on construction site) regarding the design/re-design of the proposed set-in curbing along the District Courthouse Parking Lot on Prospect Street. Agreement was reached on not recessing the curbing/sidewalk along parking lot front; this is an important issue for manageable parking for the District Courthouse. Constant monitoring of Federal labor wage rate requirements associated with CDBG Grant has been conducted by the Dir. of AOCED.

## **Ayer Fourth of July Parade & Celebration Event:**

The Dir. of AOCED was tasked with the management, organization, formulation, fund-raising, advertising, promotion, directing, and conducting of the (2019) Town of Ayer 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade & Celebration Event at Pirone Park. Unstable weather conditions (severe thunderstorms/lightning) resulted in the cancellation of the Parade – however, the people of Ayer rallied, demonstrated their love of community, and the event at Pirone Park went forward (approx. 3,000 event-goers) – with the grand fireworks display taking place with the passing of the storm-front at 9:15pm. It was a tough day and night – but we made it happen – and our community bonds are stronger than ever.

## **West Main Street Corridor Form-Based Code Formulation/Production Process Schedule:**

The AOCED, having conducted the successful “West Main Street Corridor” Planning & Visioning Day” event last year (May 2018), and consistent with the

2017 Ayer Master Plan Implementation Objectives/Goals & municipal Complete Streets Policy, has begun formulating and composing the new West Main Street Form-Based Code (FBC) zoning bylaw. The West Main Street (FBC) is being produced in coordination with the production and competitive pursuit of a 2019 MassWorks Grant in the amount of \$3 million+ for comprehensive public infrastructure improvements to the West Main Street Corridor. The goal is to transform the low-value, low-performing, unstable, auto-centric, disconnected, and poorly-composed West Main Street Corridor into a well-designed, traditional, mixed-use, livable, multi-modal transportation, attractive and higher-value district village. The Dir. of AOCED is working directly with the Ayer Planning Board and Office of the Town Planner to schedule required public hearings, and the AOCED will be organizing, scheduling and conducting a series of Public Design Charrettes, West Main Street Design Walking Tours, and a series of informational videos posted to social media – in order to fully engage the residents of Ayer in the Form-Based Code design/production process. The AOCED proposes to place the West Main Street Form-Based Code on the Warrant for the upcoming October 28<sup>th</sup> Special Town Meeting.

**West Main Street Corridor Redevelopment/Transformation Partnership Project:**

The partnership process organized and administered by the AOCED (between the Town of Ayer, the Devens Enterprise Commission & MassDevelopment) for the pursuit of a highly-competitive (2019) MassWorks Public Infrastructure Grant in the amount of \$3 million+ is fully engaged during the month of July - with a grant application submission deadline to the Mass Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development of August 9<sup>th</sup>. A series of Grant Work Group Meetings took place at both the Ayer DPW Office and the Devens Enterprise Commission Office during which great progress was made with formulating a competitive grant application.

**“Welcome to Ayer” Granite Sign Project:**

As part of the Community Host Agreement executed between Central Ave. Compassionate Care, Inc. and the Town of Ayer, \$12,000 is provided to fund the production and installation of a “Welcome To Ayer” Granite Sign. During the month of July the Dir. of AOCED working in coordination with Assistant Town Manager reviewed/finalized cost estimates, design elements, installation logistics, etc. The Town of Ayer has entered into a contract with Swenson Granite Co. of Amherst NH to produce, deliver and install the new “Welcome To Ayer” Granite Sign which will be placed westward of the Ayer Rotary (Carlton

Circle) on the triangular piece of land coming into the East Main Street historic gateway to the Township. It is proposed for the new granite sign to be installed in approx. early September with appropriate public ceremony.

**Nashua River Watershed Association 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Heritage Walking Tour – Nashua River Dam/Falls at Historic Ice House/Grady Research:**

Officials of the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) contacted Dir. of AOCED requesting that Dir. of AOCED compose, prepare and conduct a Heritage Site Walking Tour in partnership with Ice House Partners/Grady Research and the (NRWA) for July 2019 in recognition of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the (NRWA). The Tour took place on Tuesday evening, July 30<sup>th</sup>, with an unprecedented 60+ people registering and participating in the Tour event; especially grateful to State Senator Jamie Eldridge for joining with us for the evening. Special thanks to Liisa Marino & her father John Grady of Ice House Partners/Grady Research for conducting this fascinating tour of innovation, technology, hydro-power, and the heritage of the Nashua River in Ayer, with the Dir. of AOCED.

**Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC)**

The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee met on July 19<sup>th</sup> with special guest Jessica Strunkin, Ex. VP MassDevelopment/Devens. The (AAHC) meeting included not only preparatory work for the upcoming Ayer Housing Production Plan project (in partnership with Montachusett Regional Planning Comm.), but also an important discussion/dialogue on the proposed (residential) redevelopment of Vicksburg Square on Devens. The committee members and Jessica Strunkin engaged in a very productive and informative dialogue with regard to local/regional affordable housing needs, potential municipal impact resulting from proposed redevelopment, community engagement opportunities, and local/state/regional/Federal resources.