

# Town of Ayer

## Office of the Town Planner



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Town of Ayer | Ayer Town Hall | 1 Main Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor | Ayer, MA 01432 | 978-772-8218 | [www.ayer.ma.us](http://www.ayer.ma.us)

### Monthly Staff Report

To: Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager

From: Mark Archambault, Ayer Town Planner

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

Date: August 20, 2019

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#### 1. Project Review:

At its July 23 and August 10 meetings, the Planning Board continued its review of a **Definitive Subdivision Plan at 54 & 56 Littleton Road**, which is now showing 19 lots, down from the previous 20. The Ayer Planning Board and the Ayer Conservation Commission jointly hired a consulting firm, BSC Group, to assist with review of the stormwater, groundwater, wetland and other environmental issues of this subdivision. BSC Group will be submitting its preliminary report and findings to the Planning Board in advance of its August 27 meeting, where the issues raised will be discussed with the Planning Board and the applicant's engineering firm, GPR, Inc.

The Planning Board will also be starting consideration of the second **Definitive Subdivision Plan submitted under the 'new Zoning Bylaw', at Shaker Mill Pond off of Shaker Road** near the Harvard Town line. The public hearing for this 23-lot subdivision will begin on August 27 and likely continue through September.

The Planning Board also reviewed a revised approval not required (ANR) plan for lots on Shaker Road. This property is also subject to a local Stormwater Management Permit under Ayer's Stormwater Management Bylaw. The Planning Board is the permit issuing authority, though they will rely heavily on the recommendations of the Department of Public Works in determining the adequacy of the stormwater plan. The Stormwater Permit hearing will be held on August 27.

#### 2. Zoning Bylaw Amendments for October 28 Special Town Meeting:

I have completed amendments to 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 and process 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. 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.

In addition to the Yield Plan for the OSRD section, other zoning amendments to be presented at the October 28 STM include **restoring provisions for Accessory Apartments** to the Zoning Bylaw, **minor changes** to the **Affordable Housing** section to make it clear that the provisions therein apply whether the proposal requires a Special Permit or is allowed by right, and a **Form-Based Code for the West Main Street corridor** to replace the current General Business zoning in place there. The Community and Economic Development Director wrote the latter and has presented the key elements of this Form-Based Code to the Planning Board at its July meetings.

The Planning Board will be holding Public Hearings on the above amendments at their September 10 and 24 meetings.

I am also continuing research into a **Petapawag Overlay District** to better protect north-central and northeastern Ayer, though this amendment will need to wait to be presented at the spring 2020 Annual Town Meeting. The Petapawag Overlay District will likely entail the use of transfer of development rights and other more complex zoning approaches that will require a great deal of research over the fall and winter months. The Yield Plan amendment is, in a sense, a pre-requisite for the Petapawag Overlay District.

### 3. Zoning Map:

The GIS staff at the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) have prepared a revised Zoning Map for the Town of Ayer. 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 Downtown / Park Street 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 is continuing its review of the complete draft of new Subdivision Regulations. The DPW Superintendent is currently reviewing them as well and has said he will get written comments to the Planning Board by the end of August. The Planning Board will then be able to incorporate DPW's suggestions into a final draft which will then be reviewed by Town Counsel prior to a Planning Board public hearing on the regulations.

### 5. Packet of materials for new Planning Board member:

The Planning Board and Board of Selectmen jointly appointed Nathan King to the Planning Board at their August 13 meeting. I have put together a packet of materials to get Mr. King started and up to speed on the Master Plan, Zoning Bylaw and the various Regulations administered by the Planning Board. The Planning Board now has a full contingent of members.

