

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

Monthly Report: October 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 construction project, funded through a Federal CDBG Grant, was substantially & successfully completed in the month of October. Final inspections and minor treatments of infrastructure work are being conducted as well. The AOCED are now in full project "documentation & reporting mode" with extensive Federal/State project closeout requirements/submissions. Ayer's Mass Dept. of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) Project Manager is scheduled for a full project site inspection as well as in-office reporting/documentation monitoring & inspection for Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> with AOCED staff. The closeout reporting will require several weeks of demanding staff activity.

**West Ayer Village Form-Based Code:** The Director of AOCED scheduled and conducted several high-profile public Form-Based Code review & input sessions/tours during the month of October. Several informational videos were also produced & posted for enhanced public engagement. The Form-Based Code was placed on the Warrant for Fall Special Town Meeting for October 28<sup>th</sup>. At the Ayer Special Town Meeting the proposed "West Ayer Village Form-Based Code" was adopted by the voters of Ayer. The Town of Ayer now holds the distinction of being the only Massachusetts town or city with two (2) adopted Form-Based Code Districts; the Downtown/Park Street FBC & The West Ayer Village FBC.

## **Ayer IDFA New Commercial Building Façade & Signage Loan Program:**

The recently launched Ayer IDFA Commercial Building Façade & Signage Improvement Loan Program has resulted in the submission of two (2) loan applications. The Dir. Of AOCED is currently engaged in commercial loan underwriting & preparation for presentation to the Ayer IDFA Loan Committee in November.

**Proposed Ayer “Maker Space” Development & Public Forum:**

The Dir. Of AOCED was contacted by Ayer resident James Jones in late Sept./early October with the concept of proposing the creation and launch of a “Maker Space” in Ayer; and to be established as a 501 (c3) non-profit organization. The Dir. Of AOCED and Mr. Jones issued a press release on the proposed Ayer Maker Space resulting in an extensive article published in the Nashoba Valley Voice. The Dir. Of AOCED in coordination with Mr. Jones conducted a very successful & well-attended Ayer Maker Space Public Forum at Ayer Town Hall on Thursday, Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Jones is now in the process of identifying and bring-together a Board of Directors for the proposed non-profit organization, and with Dir. Of AOCED is prospecting for a potential local location/building space for the proposed Maker Space.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Grant Application:** The Dir. Of AOCED & the Manager of the Community Development Program formulated, composed, completed and submitted a \$30,000 grant application to fund the production of a much needed & updated Town of Ayer ADA Plan. The completed grant application package was submitted to TM Office on 10/2 for submission to Massachusetts Office on Disabilities.

**Meetings with Prospective Downtown Ayer Developers:**

In October, the Dir. Of AOCED engaged in several meetings with several developers who are expressing significant interest in identifying favorable locations in Downtown Ayer; in particular, around the Commuter Rail Station & Park Street Form-Based Code District, with the intent of constructing new mixed-use properties in Downtown Ayer. Dir. Of AOCED & Office of Town Planner are strongly advocating & assisting with driving new development in the recently established Downtown/Park Street Form-Based Code District.

**Historic (1934) Ayer Central Fire Station Redevelopment:** During October, the Dir. of AOCED & Community Development Manager actively met with Historic Fire Station owner to advance, formulate, produce & submit a \$750,000 US Dept. of HUD CDBG Grant; which will be due for submission to Mass DHCD in February 2020. The redevelopment of the Historic Fire Station will serve accommodate six (6) new & high-quality residential units, which shall be deed-restricted as “low to moderate income” dwellings & to accomplish the preservation of one of Ayer’s most notable landmark heritage buildings/resources.

**CDBG FY 18 Grant:** In October, the Community Development Program had three rehab projects under way, of these three projects one was completed by the end of the month. The other two projects included roofs and have been slowed down due to the weather. We are in the process of qualifying an addition two units.

**Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC):** The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee met on October 18th. The Committee reviewed and supported the Inclusionary Housing Zoning Warrant for the Fall Special Town Meeting. In addition, the AAHC reviewed and supported the CPC (Community Preservation Committee) Warrant Article to increase the local tax surcharge from 1% to 3%.

**Housing Production Plan:** It was decided that the Ayer Affordable Housing Committee would host a public input session on November 14<sup>th</sup>. A goal was set of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019 for the completion of the Ayer Housing Production Plan.