

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 October 21 – November 20, 2019

Date: November 20, 2019

1. Project Review:

Over the last month the Planning Board approved a lot-line adjustment ANR at Mulberry Circle, and needed to postpone consideration of a lot-line adjustment for property owned by St. Mary's Church at 31 Shirley Street due to the lack of a quorum to act on such at their November 12 meeting. That case will be taken up at their November 26 meeting.

The Planning Board also continued the public hearing for the second Definitive Subdivision Plan submitted under the 'new Zoning Bylaw', **at Shaker Mill Pond off of Shaker Road** near the Harvard Town line. Residents of Shaker Road in Harvard have been attending the hearings to inform the Board of their concerns about delivery truck traffic in the area and traffic generated from the subdivision in general. The Planning Board hired the engineering firm **Weston and Sampson** to conduct a traffic impact and mitigation study for this subdivision which will be commence prior to the continuation of this public hearing on November 26.

Review of this subdivision will continue through December and likely extend into January given that the applicant is redesigning the subdivision to include a mix of duplexes along with the single-family homes. This will enable the area of disturbance to be further pulled back from the Shaker Mill Pond and will also provide more open space than the design including only single-family homes.

2. October 28, 2019 Special Town Meeting

All three of the Zoning Bylaw-related warrant articles were approved by voters at the Special Town Meeting. These included **1.** replacing the formula to calculate the number of units in open space subdivisions with provisions for a Yield Plan to do the same, **2.** Allowing Accessory Apartments by Special Permit from the ZBA in the town's residential districts, and, **3.** Clarifying the provisions for multi-family housing. I would like to thank Town Meeting for their continued support in tweaking the provisions of the 'new' Ayer Zoning Bylaw approved in the spring of 2018.

3. Updating the Ayer Zoning Bylaw with recent Zoning Amendments

I am in the process of developing a revised version of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw to incorporate the amendments passed at the 2019 Annual Town Meeting which we just learned were approved by the Attorney General's office. These include the Marijuana Enterprises Zoning Bylaw and the Main Street and Park Street Form-Based Code district. I will be working with the Community and Economic Development Director to make this revised Bylaw available in the near future.

4. Subdivision Regulations:

Due to the intensity of the issues involved in the above-mentioned subdivisions and the work involved with the Zoning Bylaw amendments, work on the Subdivision Regulations has temporarily slowed down, though the Planning Board is aware of the need to hold a hearing on these in the very near future. On November 14 the DPW Superintendent met with the small group I convened to develop the new Subdivision Regulations to share his comments and suggestions. I will be spending the next several weeks developing a revised draft of the Subdivision Regulations which will be reviewed by the Planning Board and possibly one or more engineering firms for their input.

5. Petapawag Overlay District:

After a bit of a hiatus on this project I have returned to researching how this highest priority natural resource protection goal of the new Ayer Master Plan is to be structured and implemented. The Petapawag is an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that includes much of southern Groton and the northern part of Ayer north of Sandy Pond, Flannagan's Pond, etc. Due to extensive ledge outcroppings and wetlands, this part of Ayer has so far been spared from most of the subdivision activity that the town started to experience in the 1980s. We now have an opportunity to ensure that any development in this area be undertaken in the most environmentally sensitive manner possible. I will provide further updates on this effort in the months ahead.