

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: November 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 AOCED are now in full project “documentation & Project Close-Out 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 January 13th with AOCED staff. The closeout reporting will require several weeks of demanding staff activity.

West Ayer Village Form-Based Code: With the adoption of the West Ayer Village Form-Based Zoning Code at the Oct. 28th Special Town Meeting – the Dir. Of AOCED has been contacted by (2) two developer/development prospects for two parcels on the West Main Street Corridor. The Dir. Of AOCED also was contacted by West Main Street property-owner and scheduled/met with property-owner to review new Code and to discuss/encourage proposed new mixed-use building development. In partnership, the Town of Ayer/MassDevelopment/Devens Enterprise Comm. will proceed to formulate, produce and re-submit application for a highly-competitive \$4 million MassWorks Grant for the West Main Street Corridor in August 2020; a successful grant award is completely dependent upon the delivery of a private-sector multi-unit residential development project on the West Main Street Corridor

Ayer IDFA New Commercial Building Façade & Signage Loan Program:

The Dir. Of AOCED is currently engaged in compiling prospective borrower financial information/verification and underwriting a \$35,000 commercial loan for a multi-unit income-producing property in Downtown Ayer. Ayer IDFA Loan Committee is scheduled to meet in early December to review & vote upon prospective loan/s.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Grant Application: The Dir. Of AOCED & the Manager of the Community Development Program are awaiting the results of the new Town of Ayer ADA Plan \$30,000 grant application; the completed grant application package was submitted to TM Office on 10/2 for submission to Massachusetts Office on Disabilities. AOCED hopes to get results of award in mid-December.

Meetings with Prospective Downtown Ayer Developers:

In November, the Dir. Of AOCED continued engaging in various meetings with several developers & local property-owners that continue to express significant interest in identifying favorable locations in Downtown Ayer for new mixed-use multi-story development. 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. With each prospective developer meeting – it becomes more apparent that the Town of Ayer must work to expand new residential development parking opportunities within the Downtown District – and most importantly the AOCED & Office of the Town Planner shall advocate the amendment of the current Ayer Parking Requirements contained in the Ayer Zoning Bylaw – in order to lessen the required number of spaces/bedroom and/or unit.

Historic (1934) Ayer Central Fire Station Redevelopment: During November, the Dir. of AOCED & Community Development Manager continued meeting with Historic Fire Station owner & his architect to advance, formulate, produce & submit a \$800,000 US Dept. of HUD CDBG Grant; which will be due for submission to Mass DHCD in February 2020. It is critical to the grant application success that private-sector partner provides all required documentation, plans, budgets, site plan approval process, permitting etc. prior to grant application submission. AOCED Dir. & CDP Manager are scheduled to attend DHCD 2020 CDBG Grant training session in Boston in mid-December. 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.

Devens Jurisdictional Framework Committee (DJFC): The Dir. Of AOCED has been appointed to serve as one of three members of the recently established DJFC. The Dir. Of AOCED has been tasked with formulating structural & process concepts for a local Devens Disposition Committee to possibly work in coordination with DJFC. The Dir. Of AOCED attends monthly DJFC meetings and provides various task services to the Committee of behalf of the Town of Ayer.

Downtown Ayer Winter Holiday Candlelight Stroll & Tree Lighting Ceremony: The Dir. Of AOCED working in partnership with Asst. Town Manager, Ayer PD, Ayer FD, Ayer DPW & Ayer Building Facilities Manager has been working through November to compose, organize, promote, and conduct the 4th Annual Winter Holiday Event scheduled for the evening of Saturday, Dec. 7th.

CDBG FY 18 Grant: In November, 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. The Community Development Program Manager requested & received a 6-month extension for Housing Rehabilitation with the FY18 grant proceeds.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC): The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee met on November 8th. 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/Public Input Session: On the evening of November 14th the Community Development Program Manager in partnership with the Ayer Affordable Housing Committee & the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission scheduled & conducted a highly-successful Housing Production Plan Public Hearing & Ayer Neighborhood Gathering at Ayer Town Hall. The evening featured a great inter-active Neighborhood & Housing Type Visual Preference Survey Session, Break-out Dialogue Group Discussions, and Group Presentations. The evening produced outstanding understanding, content & visioning for future Housing Development patterns, regulations, standards & production.