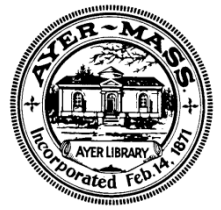


# Town of Ayer

## Office of the Town Planner



---

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 November 21 – December 20, 2019

Date: December 19, 2019

---

#### 1. Project Review:

Over the last month the Planning Board approved a lot-line adjustment for property owned by St. Mary's Church at 31 Shirley Street. That was the only ANR plan over the course of the last month.

The Planning Board also continued the public hearing for the **revised** Definitive Subdivision Plan at **Shaker Mill Pond, off Shaker Road**, near the Harvard Town line. The revised Plan now includes 16 lots, with 6 lots containing duplexes (for 12 units) and 10 single-family home lots for a total of 22 dwelling units, down from 23 in the earlier plan. Other positive changes from the earlier plan include greater protection to the wetland buffer zone of the Shaker Mill Pond, a somewhat shorter cul-de-sac, street trees, additional landscaping, and a straighter entrance into the subdivision from Shaker Road.

The Planning Board hired the engineering firm **Weston and Sampson (W&S)** to conduct a traffic impact and mitigation study for this subdivision, and the consulting engineer from W&S attended the December 10 Planning Board meeting to brief the Board and the general public on the scope of the study, which resulted in some minor amendments to what the traffic study will address, as well as identifying additional information that W&S will require to complete the study.

In the course of reviewing this subdivision a boundary line issue involving the town line between Harvard and Ayer in the vicinity of the subdivision has come to light. The issues are too complex to describe herein, though the Town Counsels of both Harvard and Ayer will be working on a resolution of this issue which will also involve the engineer for this project and the Ayer Planning Board. The likely source of the apparent discrepancy might be the ability to measure such lines today with much greater accuracy compared to that possible when the stone bounds between the towns were placed along the (apparent) line in the mid-1900s. As the applicant has granted an extension for which the Board to act until January 28, 2020, it is important that this issue be resolved in the next few weeks. Otherwise, the plan is nearly ready for Planning Board approval. Because the subdivision will now include six duplex lots, it also requires the granting of a Special Permit from the Planning Board. This hearing is scheduled for January 14, 2020.

## 2. Updating the Ayer Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map 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. The compilation document will require extensive reformatting to incorporate the Form-Based Code sections in particular.

## 3. Subdivision Regulations:

I am very close to completing a revised draft of the updated **Subdivision Regulations** addressing the comments of DPW Supt. Wetzel. Valuable assistance in of Town Engineer Dan Van Shalkwyk and Planning Board member Ken Diskin. This will be forwarded to the Planning Board for their review in January, with hopeful adoption as soon as possible following a public hearing to be held by the Planning Board. This document will also require professional formatting prior to the Public Hearing and potentially afterwards if there are any significant changes made as a result of the hearing.

## 4. Petapawag Overlay District and Other Zoning Bylaw amendments:

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 am still researching how best to approach this project.

Though this remains a high priority of the recently adopted Master Plan, the timing of when to bring it before Town Meeting needs to be discussed with the administration due to other urgent zoning matters that have arisen recently, such as the need to address the dimensional requirements in the General Residence (GR) district. It has become apparent that the dimensional requirements of this district, such as frontage and setbacks, which go back decades and were carried forward into the new Zoning Bylaw, may be a barrier to redevelopment. I will be working with the Director of Community and Economic Development to research this matter over the winter, which may result in Zoning Bylaw amendments before the Spring Town Meeting.

