

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

Monthly Report: January 2020

*Respectfully submitted by Alan S. Manoian, Director of Community & Economic Development*

## **Administration/Close-Out of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

**Prospect & Oak St. Infrastructure Improvement Project:** On January 13<sup>th</sup> & January 29<sup>th</sup> Official Reviewers (Team of 3) of the Mass Dept. of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) conducted on-site (at Ayer Town Hall & Ayer DPW Offices) a US Dept. of HUD CDBG Grant Project Documentation/File Review & Audit. Preparation for this Project close-out Review/Audit required several weeks of intense preparation by AOCED staff (as described in previous monthly report/s). The Dir. of AOCED is pleased to report that the Town of Ayer (AOCED & DPW) passed this official Review/Audit with flying-colors; meaning with "no documented findings". The AOCED believes this is exceptionally notable since this was the first local CDBG Grant/Project that was formulated, prepared, designed, packaged, submitted, administered, and managed (*without the high-cost of outside professional grant-writing/management consultants*) and entirely by municipal staff. Those saved funds (totaling in excess of \$70,000) went directly into the material project improvements in the Prospect & Oak Street Neighborhoods (rather than to hired consultants).

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

The Dir. Of AOCED originated, underwrote, packaged and, on January 7<sup>th</sup>, presented the \$35,000 "Furmanick/Applewood Controls Inc. Loan" to the Ayer IDFA Board of Directors. On 1/7/2020 the Ayer IDFA approved the \$35,000 for Randy Furmanick for exterior building improvements to the property located at 13 Groton-Harvard Rd. (*former Murphy Knives Building*), the new home of Applewood Controls, Inc.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Grant Application:** The Dir. of AOCED, in coordination with the Office of the Town Manager, is in the process of preparing a \$20,000 District Local Technical Assistance Grant (DLTA) application submission, through the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission. If successfully awarded to the Town of Ayer, this would be in addition to the \$30,000 Mass Office on Disability (MOD) Grant recently awarded to the municipality. Combined - both will provide the \$50,000 required to fund the

formulation, production & delivery of the Town of Ayer's (2020) American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Action/Transition Plan.

**Historic (1934) Ayer Central Fire Station Redevelopment:** During January, as in December, the Dir. of AOCED & Community Development Manager conducted critical coordination meetings with the Historic Fire Station owner & his architect to advance, formulate, produce & submit a \$800,000 US Dept. of HUD CDBG Grant which would provide partial (public-sector) funding - for an estimated \$1.5 million affordable-housing redevelopment project. The property-owner is scheduled to present a preliminary Site Plan to the Ayer Planning Board on February 25<sup>th</sup>, and on the Agenda of the Ayer Zoning Board of Appeals on March 18<sup>th</sup>. The AOCED staff remain in full grant-writing mode – with the goal of formulating & submitting a flawless & “winning-application” in an exceedingly & highly-competitive annual grant program; (with many Massachusetts communities competing for limited annual funds). Completed grant application is due for submission to Mass Dept. of Housing & Community Development the 1<sup>st</sup> week of March.

**Devens Jurisdictional Framework Committee (DJFC):** The Dir. Of AOCED continues to serve and actively attend the Devens Jurisdictional Framework Committee (DJFC) meetings. The Dir. of AOCED participated in “:6<sup>th</sup> Stakeholder/Community Outreach” Sub-Committee Meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup> at the MassDevelopment Offices in Devens.

**CDBG FY 18 Grant:** In January, the Community Development Program completed two active Housing Rehabilitation Projects.

**Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC):** The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee met on January 17<sup>th</sup>. The upcoming Massachusetts Housing Partnership Conference, “Affordable Housing Trust & Community Preservation Act Conference”, scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup> was discussed, with several members of the Committee registered to attend along with AOCED municipal staff. The Committee is actively discussing, contributing and reviewing the ongoing Ayer Housing Production Plan process. The Committee also is fully engaged in investigating and discussing the potential for the creation of an Ayer Housing Trust organization.

**Depot Square Park Open Public Design Sessions:** In coordination with the Office of the Town Manager, the AOCED formulated, scheduled, organized, promoted, and conducted the “Future Depot Square Park – Open Public Design Sessions” on Thursday Afternoon (Session #1) & Thursday Evening (Session #2), January 30<sup>th</sup> at Ayer Town Hall. Both Depot Square Park Design Sessions attracted significant numbers of Ayer residents, regional partners, municipal staff and the local media – who all were most actively engaged in the “Open Design Process” – and who contributed outstanding and valued perspectives, insights, ideas, experiences and vision for the Future Depot Square Park at the Downtown Ayer MBTA Commuter Rail Station. The AOCED will review, compile, compose and present “The Best” of the ideas that resulted from the Open Design Sessions – to the Ayer Municipal Team & partners at MRTA for ongoing design decisions.