

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: February 2020

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

Historic (1934) Ayer Central Fire Station Redevelopment - CDBG Grant

Application Production & Scheduled Submission: During February, the Dir. of AOCED & Community Development Manager were engaged in “full-CDBG Grant-writing mode”. The AOCED is pursuing a highly-competitive \$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 competed & complex Grant Application submission deadline is March 6th. If successful, the Project would deliver six (6) new deed-restricted low-to-moderate income (LMI) one-bedroom dwelling units in the Historic Ayer Central Fire Station Building & Downtown Ayer. The AOCED is on-schedule to complete and submit a strong grant application for March 6th. Notification of successful grant awards will be announced by Mass DHCD & Gov. Baker in June/July 2020.

Ayer IDFA Commercial Loan Program:

The Dir. Of AOCED is currently engaged with a Downtown Ayer business-owner seeking a \$35,000 IDFA Commercial Loan for new equipment. The AOCED is in the process of underwriting the prospective commercial loan, and when prepared & packaged will present to the Ayer IDFA Board of Directors in March.

Ayer Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition/Action Plan Grant

Application & Production Process: The Dir. of AOCED, in coordination with the Office of the Town Manager, were pleased to be informed of the award of a \$20,000 District Local Technical Assistance Grant (DLTA) through the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission to the Town of Ayer to fund the formulation, production & delivery of the Town of Ayer's (2020) American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Action/Transition Plan; the \$20,000 grant is 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 project. AOCED has outreached to partners at MRPC to begin preparing “Scope of Services” contractual agreement, and has met with Office of Town Manager to begin organizing, scheduling, and structuring the production process framework – Mass MOD requires the grant funds to be spent and the project to be completed by June 30th 2020.

Proposed New Mixed-Use Building Development Park Street, Downtown Ayer:

Prospective Development New 3-4 Story Building 3-5 Park Street Downtown Ayer: The Dir. of AOCED in coordination with Office of the Town Planner conducted information exchange/Downtown FBC regulatory review meetings with prospective private-investor/developer (Robert Gardner & Tom Gardner) proposing the redevelopment of the site at 3-5 Park Street in Downtown Ayer. Developers proposed the demolition of the existing obsolete one-story wooden building and the subsequent construction of a new 3-4 story mixed-use building with commercial storefronts on ground-level & residential dwellings in the upper stories. The prospective project proponents were placed on the Feb 11th Meeting Agenda of the Ayer Planning Board – and engaged in an informational/conceptual design exchange session with the Planning Board. The AOCED will continue working with the project proponent to bring new high-quality mixed-use building construction/investment to Downtown Ayer, thus fulfilling the Downtown Ayer/Park Street Form-Based Code ongoing development vision and plan.

CDBG FY 18 Grant: In February the Community Development Program is engaged in completion of one (1) rehabilitation unit. Two additional units have been qualified and inspected; with intent to go out to bid in March 2020.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC): The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee met on February 21st to review and approve submittal of 2020 Annual Town Report. The Committee also reviewed and approved the preliminary write-up of the website platform. The Housing Production Plan work continues with the Committee; and the Committee approved and issued a Letter of Support to Mass DHCD for the \$800,000 CDBG Grant for new affordable housing units in the Historic Ayer Fire Station project.

Depot Square Park Design Services & Production: Following the two (2) successful Depot Sq. Park Public Open Design Sessions on Jan. 30th, The Dir. of AOCED was tasked with integrating the best ideas, concepts, design elements from the Public Sessions, and from AOCED professional urban space design expertise and to produce a Conceptual Design for the future Depot Square Park. On February 6th the Dir. of AOCED presented the Conceptual Plan at a meeting between MART & Town of Ayer officials. The Dir. of AOCED engaged in a follow-up MART/Town of Ayer New Commuter Parking Deck/Depot Square Park Meeting on February 19th to further refine and solidify the Conceptual

Design product. The Conceptual Plan is currently in the process of being prepared by a professional landscape architect/landscape company for further review & comment & finalization.

Proposed Ayer Senior Center Development:

The Dir. of AOCED & the Community Development Program Manager participated in the February 21st meeting of the proposed Ayer Senior Center Development Project Group; several prospective development sites in Ayer were reviewed and commented upon. The Dir. of AOCED provided information & understanding regarding the new “West Ayer Village” Form-Based (Zoning) Code on West Main Street Corridor, and the future vision for a traditional, compact, walkable, human-scale village development pattern that the Form-Based Code is designed to deliver on the West Main Street Corridor – which may properly accommodate a proposed new Ayer Senior Center Building.