

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: April 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: The AOCED completed and submitted a strong grant application on March 6th for 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 in the long-vacant historic (1934) Ayer Central Fire Station Building in Downtown Ayer. The project applicant went before the Ayer Zoning Bd. Of Appeals (Remote ZOOM Meeting) on April 22nd seeking Special Permit to allow conversion of non-residential property to a multi-family residential property; the request was approved by ZBA. The project will next go before the Planning in May to request relief from on-site parking requirements. Notification of successful grant awards will be announced by Mass DHCD & Gov. Baker in July 2020.

Ayer IDFA Commercial Loan Program/COVID Response & Relief:

The Dir. Of AOCED in coordination with Ayer IDFA Chairman scheduled and conducted an Ayer IDFA Board Meeting on April 22nd in order to propose and vote on recommended Monthly Payment Relief for all Ayer IDFA commercial borrowers for a period of 120 days, beginning with March 2020 monthly payments. The Ayer IDFA Board voted unanimously to grant relief/loan payment deferment for a period of 120 days. The Dir. of AOCED is in communication with all Ayer IDFA commercial borrowers – and will continue to work together through the State of Emergency.

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

Application & Production Process: The Office of the Town Manager in coordination with the AOCED has reviewed, and TM has executed contractual agreement between the Town of Ayer & MRPC for professional services in the formulation, production & delivery of Ayer's new municipal ADA Action/Transition Plan with a total cost of \$50,000 – which is funded by the successful pursuit & receipt of two (2) grants - \$20,000 & \$30,000; the contract has been countersigned by Ex. Dir. of MRPC. Due to State of Emergency in April the project has been placed (on-hold); and we await notification from the

Massachusetts Office of Disabilities with regard to an extension of the required project/grant completion date of June 30th. The Dir. of AOCED outreached to MOD Director and was informed that (a deadline extension) will most likely be announced in early May.

AOCED & COVID19 Impact Local Business Listening & Re-Opening Coordination Sessions and Local Business Impact/Re-Opening Plan Survey:

In April, the Dir. of AOCED formulated, presented, and is prepared to launch in May, a series of ZOOM Meeting Sessions with our local small & large business community; as well as a series of Sessions focusing on Local Food Security. The first ZOOM Meeting is scheduled for May 6th.

Town of Ayer COVID19 Impact

“Community/Business Listening & Re-Opening Coordination”

The (Safe) Re-opening of Ayer: “Clearing Our Track Ahead”

The Business Surveys

- Ayer Small-Business Community “Current Conditions/Local Needs/Re-Opening Plan” Survey
- Ayer Large-Business Community “Current Conditions/Local Needs/Re-Opening Plan” Survey

(Survey document will be issued by both conventional email/slow mail & also by on-line Monkey Poll Survey)

The Business ZOOM Forums

- Ayer Small-Business Community “Listening, Learning & Local Re-opening Coordination” ZOOM Forums
- Ayer Large-Business Community “Listening, Learning & Local Re-opening Coordination” ZOOM Forums
- Ayer Personal & Commercial Banking/Lending “Current Conditions & Local Needs” ZOOM Forum

Local Food Security Coordination

- Town & Ayer/Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry Partnership & Resource Coordination Strategy Remote Session

(Preliminary AOCED outreach/coordination – Thursday, April 30, 2020; Remote Session to be scheduled for week of May 18, 2020)

Preparing for Business Re-Opening

- Ayer Restaurant/Eateries/Bars Business Reopening “Social-Distancing Best Practices/New Practices” ZOOM Forums
- Ayer Personal Service Business (Hair Salons/Nail Salons/Barber Shops/etc.) Reopening “Social-Distancing Best Practices/New Practices” ZOOM Forums

Production of the “Guide to Locating & Doing Business in Ayer”:

In April, the Dir. of AOCED continues formulation, design & production work on the Comprehensive Guide to “Locating & Doing Business in the Town of Ayer, MA”. This is a program goal for the 2020-21 year – and it will be completed for review & comment by late-May 2020.

Community Development Program Report:**CDBG FY 18 Grant:**

Due to the shutdown of all non-essential services the final housing rehabilitation projects of this grant have been stalled and we will need an additional time extension for the completion of the work. The department is in the process of completing Housing Rehabilitation on three housing units under the CDBG FY18 grant.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC):

The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee did not meet in April due to the State shutdown of all non-essential services. On April 22 Janet Providakes, (Ayer Affordable Housing & Ayer CPC Chairman), and Alicia Hersey participated in a virtual Emergency Rental Assistance Training program hosted by MHP & CHAPA. After completing the training, the we started the process of evaluating the need within the Ayer community for Emergency Rental Assistance.

Ayer Housing Production Plan Project:

The Community Development Program Manager in coordination with the Ayer Affordable Housing Committee, and production consultants from Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) have completed and submitted the 1st draft of the new Ayer Housing Production Plan. The Plan is currently under the “review & comment period” by Dir. of AOCED and stakeholders to complete 2nd draft, and to finalize for submission to State agencies for approval.