

Town of Ayer

Office of the Town Planner



Town of Ayer | Ayer Town Hall | 1 Main Street, 3rd Floor | Ayer, MA 01432 | 978-772-8218 | www.ayer.ma.us

Monthly Staff Report

To: Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager

From: Mark Archambault, Ayer Town Planner

Re: Monthly report for the period April 21 – May 20, 2020

Date: May 20, 2020

1. Project Review and Planning Board meetings:

The Planning Board met remotely on **Tuesday, May 12**, after nearly two months without meeting due to the Covid-19 State of Emergency. At that meeting they approved two bond / performance guarantee reductions for lots in Pingry Hill, followed by two Zoning-related Public Hearings; the first for recodification of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw and the second for an amendment to the parking standards of Section 9.1.2 of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw. The latter would reduce the parking requirement for studio and one and two-bedroom apartment units developed in the (core downtown) T6 transect, intended for occupancy by users of the Commuter Rail, to **one car per unit** regardless of the number of bedrooms. Most units to be developed in this core zone would be studio or one-bedroom apartments. Both were well-received, and the Planning Board forwarded positive recommendations on such to the Board of Selectmen in anticipation of the June 15, 2020 Annual Town Meeting.

Due to ongoing changes to several Site Plan applications, the Planning Board postponed taking up the following until its May 26 meeting: Site Plan and (parking-related) Special Permit Hearings for the Historic Fire Station at 14 Washington Street, 2. Open the Site Plan hearing for Ayer Solar II-B off (upper) Washington Street. Both projects are complex and involve multiple sections of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw and regulations.

I have been working with Mr. Robert ('Judge') Gardner and his son Tom Gardner on review of a forthcoming application for a mixed multi-family and commercial project under the Form-Based Code for 3-5 Park Street. The matter of parking on the site and off-site is an ongoing concern, and the Community and Economic Development Director and I have participated in several Zoom meetings with them to assist them in forwarding this project along. In addition to this project, the Planning Board also anticipates an application for a Site Plan / Subdivision project at 76 Groton School Road soon. Between these cases and 14 Washington Street and the Ayer Solar II-B project, the Planning Board will be very busy for the next few months, which is more challenging when meeting remotely.

2. Misc. Zoning Projects:

While working mostly from home I have continued research into how the Petapawag ACEC Overlay District may be approached, which is a major zoning initiative aimed at encouraging more environmentally sustainable development in the northern part of Ayer along the Groton border, Ayer's last densely forested area. I will have further updates on this project in the next month or two.

3. Municipal Vulnerability Assessment and Resiliency Plan:

During the past month I have also reviewed the draft report done by the consulting firm Arcadis as part of the Town's vulnerability and resiliency report, which was organized by the Ayer DPW. In a Zoom meeting we discussed a potential 'action grant' to revised the Planning Board's Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations to better address resiliency concerns and to revise the provisions of these regulatory documents based on the latest flood plan information and best management practices. I will be exploring these over the next several months as well.