

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: August 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 impact of the (COVID19 State of Emergency) continues to result in the delay of the regularly scheduled (annual July) announcement of US Dept. HUD CDBG Grant awards by the Massachusetts Dept. of Housing & Community Development & Gov. Baker. The AOCED remains hopeful for announcements of awardees in September/October 2020 – the AOCED submitted a \$850,000 CDBG Grant application in March 2020 for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Historic Ayer Central Fire Station (into six (6) new Affordable residential units).

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

Application & Production Process: The Town of Ayer has contracted with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission to conduct the Ayer Municipal Building & Facilities ADA (current conditions) Inspections for production of the “Self-Assessment Plan”. On August 6th MRPC staff inspected the Ayer Library Building & the Ayer Town Hall, and on August 13th the Ayer Transfer Station & New Parks & Recreation Buildings at Pirone Park, and the Sandy Pond Beach Building were inspected; Inspections have also included the Ayer Police & Fire Stations, the Ayer Council on Aging & the Ayer Public Works Building. The Ayer ADA Plan Team is now preparing to move from the “Self- Evaluation Plan” part of the process into the “Transition Plan” formulation part of the process into September/October.

FY19 CDBG-CV (COVID19 Impact) Grant Award Process Structuring &

Administration:

On July 10th the AOCED was notified that the Town of Ayer was successfully awarded a CDBG-CV grant in the amount of \$309,510 for Ayer’s Local Public Social Service Providers & Ayer’s Microbusinesses adversely impacted by the COVID19 Stated of Emergency. Award amounts as follows: \$45,000 for Nashoba Associated Boards of Health; \$32,400 for Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry; \$17,010 for Ayer Public Library; \$12,600 for Stone Soup Kitchen Ministries; and \$4,500 for Ayer Council on Aging. In addition, \$180,000 (of the \$309,510 total) will fund the Ayer Microbusiness Grant Program – providing grants up to \$10,000 for Ayer businesses incurring losses due to COVID19. On August 12th the AOCED staff

participated in the mandatory (remote 2.5 hr.-long) CDBG-CV Grant Administration Training Session conducted by Mass DHCD. The AOCED is actively in the process of (remotely) meeting with the directors of each local agency awarded to formulate and contract overall & individual grant award program guidelines and Federal monitoring/reporting requirements. The composed Ayer grant program contracts & program guidelines will then be submitted to Mass DHCD for review and approval. Public Social Service Agencies Grant distribution is proposed to begin in September. The Micro-Business Grant portion of the award will be administered following mandatory DHCD Training scheduled for mid-September, with microbusiness applications/grants going out hopefully in October 2020.

\$4 Million MassWorks Grant – West Main Street Corridor: Following 2+ years of project visioning/planning/development/formulation/production, the authoring & adoption of a progressive West Main Village Form-Based Zoning Code at Fall 2019 Town Meeting, and many “West Main Village” MassWorks Grant Team Meetings between the Town of Ayer, Devens Enterprise Commission, and Mass Development, and an important pre-application session with MassWorks Program Administrators, the Dir. of AOCED completed and submitted a \$3.1 million MassWorks Grant Application on August 27th; 2020 MassWorks Grant awards are regularly announced in late October, but may be delayed due to impact of COVID19 State of Emergency.

The New “Clean Ayer” Roadside Litter Removal Program: The AOCED working in partnership with Nasoya, inc. have completed the design and production of the new and beautiful 3ft.X3ft. “Clean Ayer” Roadway Signs that will be installed along the Westford Rd. Corridor and the Sandy Pond Rd. Corridor in September/October. Nasoya, Inc. will sponsor an annual roadside litter removal/clean-up along a 1-mile stretch of Westford Rd. & a 1-mile stretch of Sandy Pond Rd. by the professional roadway litter removal company known as Adopt-A-Highway Litter Removal Service of America, Inc. (AAHLRSA); 1st Kick-Off Clean-Up is proposed for October 2020.

Ayer MoRe Rides Public Transportation Project Launch: The AOCED working in partnership with staff of the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) conducted several (remote) planning sessions to structure the upcoming “Ayer MoRe (Montachusett Region) Rides Public Transportation Project process. The MRPC was awarded a \$60,000 grant to study a township with public

“transportation gaps” especially for senior citizens & those with disabilities – and the Town of Ayer was selected for the study. The Dir. of AOCED & Community Development Program Manager have composed a local Steering Committee with representation from the Ayer Planning Board, a large Corporate Employer, the Town Engineer, the Ayer Council on Aging, a member of the Ayer Train Station Advisory Committee, and an Ayer neighborhood representative. The 1st Steering Committee (remote) Session will be conducted in early September.

CDBG FY 18 Grant:

The CDBG FY 18 Grant is in its final quarter. The Town's Housing Rehabilitation Program under this grant is currently working on the final 2 housing units. We anticipate completion by September 30th and a close out of the Grant by that date as well.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC):

The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee has been working to create an Ayer Housing Trust. On August 3rd, the committee met to review the proposed warrant article and bylaws. In an effort to interface with the public regarding the creation of a Trust, the committee scheduled two public input sessions, August 24th, and September 21st. In addition, the committee voted to request \$30,000 from the Ayer CPC as initial funding for the Trust. The committee members took their request for funds to the CPC on August 19th. The CPC voted to approve the support the request and take it to a public hearing on September 2nd.

FY19 CDBG-CV Grant Application:

The Office of Community and Economic Development spent the month of August interfacing with their five Social Program Partners for the CDBG-CV grant, collecting information so guidelines could be design and written for these programs. This grant supports five different social service programs within our community, two food security programs supporting our two food pantries, Loaves and Fishes, Inc. and Stone Soup Kitchen Ministries, Inc. An expansion of the Council on Aging Meals on Wheels program, a grant to support the Nashoba Boards of Health for COVID-19 related programs and equipment. The final program supports the Library's technology and internet access program. We hope to have these guidelines submitted and approved in September.

Ayer Downtown Flower Program:

With the help of our dedicated senior work off employees the Town's downtown flower program is going strong. The office of Community and Economic Development coordinated with the office of Ayer Conservation and the DPW to add pots and flower accents to the Ayer Town Sign. It was a successful project with DPW purchasing the pots and supplying labor, Cataldo Nursery donating plants and OCED and Ayer Con Com designing, picking up and planting the flowers.