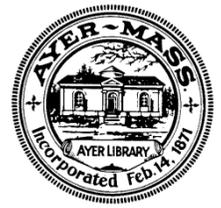


Town of Ayer

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 August 21 – September 20, 2020

Date: September 21, 2020

1. Project Review and Planning Board meetings:

The Planning Board met remotely on **Tuesday, August 25**. The Board cancelled their September 8 meeting due to postponement of public hearings. At its August 25 meeting, the Planning Board continued review of the following cases:

The Planning Board continued the Public Hearings for the Site Plan and parking-related Special Permits for the 6 apartments proposed in the Historic Fire Station at **14 Washington Street**, as well as the **Ayer Solar II-B** large-scale solar energy project. Revised plans for the Ayer Solar II-B project were submitted to the Planning Board on September 15, with PB review continuing at their September 22 and October 13 meetings. GPR, Inc., has informed me that revised plans for 14 Washington Street will be submitted in time for the Planning Board to recommence review of that project at their October meetings.

In addition to the above, I am aware of several projects that are in the works and which will come before the Planning Board soon, including a subdivision off of Washington Street, the Site Plan for a Form-Based Code (FBC) apartment building at 3-5 Park Street and other FBC projects on West Main Street. At some point a revised subdivision plan for the Stratton Hill subdivision off Wright Road will be submitted. This project is currently undergoing review of wetland boundaries with the Conservation Commission, a first step in developing a Definitive Subdivision Plan.

Stormwater Regulations: The Planning Board adopted a new set of Stormwater Management Regulations at its August 25 meeting.

The Planning Board has been asked to review and approve Stormwater Management Regulations developed by the Department of Public Works. Completing these is one component of the Town's obligations under the MS4 Stormwater Management Law. While the DPW is responsible for most technical and engineering stormwater considerations, the Planning Board will be the stormwater permit granting authority for projects

over the threshold of impact. In most cases, the Planning Board will regulate stormwater permits through the Site Plan review process for larger scale development projects.

Zoning Bylaw amendments:

As part of my 2020 – 2021 work plan, I will work to **simplify and reorganize the parking section** of the Ayer Zoning Bylaws. During review for 3-5 Park Street, it became apparent that this section of the Bylaw had confusing and ambiguous provisions.

As parking is an integral part of any project proposed under the recently adopted Form-Based Codes, revising the parking section will simplify and expedite Planning Board review of applications. I now anticipate that these amendments will be brought before either the Spring or Fall 2021 Town Meetings.

I will also be developing a **Short-Term Rental bylaw**, that will address standards for Air BnBs and similar operations. I participated in a MassPlanners Webinar on ‘**Tiny Houses**’ in early July that focused on the trend towards smaller living and guidance on developing regulations for this emerging land-use. I have and will continue to research all these topics for eventual warrant articles at a 2021 Town Meeting.

The **Petapawag Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) bylaw** will be developed over the course of this fiscal year and is anticipated to be voted on at the Fall, 2021 Special Town Meeting. This project is one of the high priorities of the Master Plan and is aimed at providing greater protection to Ayer’s last remaining large forest blocks, which are also of high ecological value.

2. Ongoing Projects continuing into September 2020:

- I assisted the Conservation Administrator and Town Manager with review and completion of the **Conservation Restriction** for the John Carroll Reserve subdivision off Littleton Road.
- I am also in the process of researching the legal and procedural issues related to a **marijuana delivery business** that a prospective owner / operator of a yet to be reviewed cultivation facility would like to engage in. This is a new area of State Law overseen by the Cannabis Control Commission, on which our current Bylaw is silent because such businesses were not included in the original legislation. I will work with the Town Manager and Asst. Town Manager in determining whether this type of business can be operated in Ayer.