

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: September 2020

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

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”. 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. The AOCED is currently engaged in outreaching to the residents of Ayer to re-establish the Ayer ADA Citizens Advisory Committee. The Committee will review the Self-Evaluation Plan and play a guiding role in the production of the Ayer ADA Transition Plan.

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. In September, the AOCED formulated, produced, submitted and gained Mass DHCD approval of the local Public Social Service Grants program guidelines, regulations, process structure and organizational contracts. 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, the AOCED \$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. The Dir. of AOCED formulated, composed, submitted and gained DHCD approval of the Ayer CDBG-CV Microenterprise Grant Application Form, Program Guidelines & Contractual Agreements. The Dir. of AOCED has initiated promotion of the Microenterprise Grant Program among qualifying Ayer microbusinesses.

\$4 Million MassWorks Grant – West Main Street Corridor: The AOCED patiently awaits the delayed announcement of the 2020 MassWorks Grant awardees; proposed for November 2020. Project background: 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.

Ayer MoRe Rides Public Transportation Project Launch: The AOCED launched the program with the 1st Meeting of the Ayer MoRe Rides Local Steering Committee on Sept. 10th. Background: 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.

CDBG FY 18 Grant

The CDBG FY 18 Grant ended September 30th. The final quarterly report and drawn down have been filed and closeout paperwork will be filed in October. The Town had a very successful FY18 CDBG grant cycle, which included the Prospect and Oak Street Infrastructure Project and the Housing Rehabilitation Program. This grant had a total budget of \$803,000, this included \$750,000 of CDBG grant monies and \$53,000 of program income. With this money we were able to update the water and sewer lines, and the drainage, paving and sidewalks on both Prospect and Oak Streets. The Grant spent a total of \$143,150.50 rehabilitating six housing units, four single family homes and one two family. Four of the units were low income households while the other two were moderate income, of the six housing units five were elderly households. High Risk De-Leading was carried out on four of these units. Two of the properties received new roofs, four properties had high efficacy furnaces installed and three properties received either some or all new windows. One property was made handicap accessible. The property which was made handicap accessible had four adults three of which were handicapped and two were elderly. Ayer’s Housing Rehabilitation program has been in existence for over 20 years, we value the opportunity to support our low to moderate income (LMI) housing and elderly community through this program, helping them to remain in their homes.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC)

The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC) has been working to create an Ayer Housing Trust. The proposal to form this Trust will be warrant #6 on the Fall Town meeting. The AAHC held a Public information session on the proposed Housing Trust on September 21st. The committee has requested funding of \$30,000 from the CPC.

FY19 CDBG-CV Grant Application

The Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) spent the month of September writing the program guidelines for the FY19-CDBG-CV grant programs. These programs include five social service programs and a micro enterprise (small business) grant program. In addition to the program guidelines we drafted contracts for these partners. DHCD approved all the guidelines and contracts for these programs.

Ayer Downtown Flower Program

The Ayer Downtown Flower Program finished the third week of September. Another successful year of flowers in the Downtown with great Senior Work off employees.