

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: November 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 AOCED has effectively outreached and brought together a fine group of local residents interested in serving on Ayer's new ADA Citizen's Advisory Committee; including ADA compliance professionals, a sight-disabled high school student representative, and Ayer residents living with disabilities. The AOCED is most encouraged about the composition and energy of the interested new committee members. The AOCED will organize, schedule and conduct the first informal/informational (ZOOM) meeting of the Town of Ayer ADA Citizen's Advisory Committee for the Week of January 4th 2021. The AOCED will proceed with process/recommendations for formal appointment by Ayer Select Board of Committee members. The Committee will review the Self-Evaluation Plan and play a guiding role in the production of the 2021 Ayer ADA Transition Plan.

Depot Square Park Design/Development:

Following the Dir. of AOCED organizing, scheduling, and conducting a Depot Square Park Municipal Team Design Meeting on 10/7/20 – the Dir. AOCED was contacted Nov. 12th by MART introducing Ryan Josti as the new Capital Projects & Facilities Manager, and new MART Project Manager for Ayer's Depot Square Park Project. Josti contacted Dir. of AOCED on Nov. 13th inquiring as to various Project specifications/design/etc. and expressing concern as to late construction season and recommending against constructing (the replacement) Historic Depot Sq. Fountain Base as the mortar will not set properly and may fail, as well as other various late season project construction concerns – recommending completing Park construction in the Spring 2021 season. Dir. of On Nov. 23rd Dir. of AOCED recommends/proposes conducting a follow-up Depot Square Park Municipal Team Meeting to introduce Ryan Josti as new MART Project Manager and to assure coordination and quality of outcome with Project completion in Spring 2021.

Park Street Municipal Team Site Walk Meeting & MA Housing Choice Capital Grant Pursuit:

The AOCED is actively working on the formulation and production of a strong (approx. \$105,000) 2020 Massachusetts Housing Choice Capital Grant to fund a the production of a professional and comprehensive Engineering Study and Project Cost Estimate to design and re-construct Downtown Ayer's Park Street Corridor into a functional "Complete Street" and in accordance with the recently adopted Downtown Ayer/Park Street Form-Based Zoning Code, with a new sidewalk and on-street parking on east-side of Park Street, new crosswalks, new lighting, pedestrian bump-outs, and the proposed re-location of unsightly and obstructive utility poles and over-head utility lines. The proposed grant (for engineering/cost) directly supports the planned construction of a new four (4) story mixed-use building at 3-5 Park Street; and additional prospective new mixed-use building development along Park Street. The grant application submission is due by December 11th.

New Rail Trail/Commuter Parking Deck & Depot Square Park Bike Rack Selection & Installation:

Following the Dir. of AOCED organizing, scheduling, and conducting the "New Bike Rack Installation Approach & Placement Design Finalization Municipal Team Meeting" on 10/30/20 – the new Rail Trail/Commuter Parking Deck & Depot Square Park Bike Racks arrived and were assembled by Ayer DPW staff on November 17th. The Dir. of AOCED worked with Dir. DPW/Foreman to make final location selection and the new Bike Racks were installed.

Town of Ayer 150th Sesquicentennial Design & Branding Creative Meeting: On November 12th the Dir. of AOCED conducted a Town for Ayer (150th) Sesquicentennial Planning (Municipal Team) Meeting to discuss designs, logos, branding, images & concepts for the upcoming celebration/s. Importantly, the Group discussed the approach of celebrating "Ayer 150 + 1" and/or "Ayer 151" – as the COVID19 State of Emergency has made it unfeasible to plan any large civic events for the upcoming year of 2021. Meetings & planning continues.

\$3.1 Million MassWorks Grant – West Main Street Corridor: On November 17th the Dir. of AOCED received notification that the Town of Ayer has been successfully awarded a \$3.1 million MassWorks Grant for the comprehensive West Main Street Corridor Public Infrastructure Improvement Project, along the outer West Main Street Corridor, and within the newly adopted West Ayer Village Form-

Based on Zoning Code District, supporting/delivering the development and incremental construction of a traditional and sustainable “West Ayer Village”. The Town of Ayer’s (grant /project partners) Devens Enterprise Commission & MassDevelopment at Devens are pleased to have formulated, submitted, and been awarded one of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts first and noteworthy “Regional” MassWorks Grants. The Town of Ayer 2020 MassWorks Grant team leader Alan S. Manoian, Dir. of AOCED, with Town Manager Robert Pontbriand & Assistant Town Manager Carly Antonellis attended (via ZOOM) Governor Baker’s 2020 MassWorks Grant Award Recipients Announcement Event on November 19th. The Ayer/Devens/MassDevelopment Team for the MassWorks “West Ayer Village” Public Infrastructure Improvement Project begins scheduled construction project meetings starting in early December. The Project is scheduled to begin in late Spring/early Summer 2021.

CDBG-COVID19 Microenterprise Grant: The AOCED has been actively outreaching with Ayer’s Microbusiness community (5 employees or less) to inform of the available \$180,000 in US HUD Community & Economic Development Block Grant (CDBG)-CV (COVID) local funding for business owners that qualify as Low-To-Moderate (LMI) Income Households and can evidence direct revenue losses from COVID State of Emergency. Currently, the AOCED has provided funding to three (3) local microbusinesses, with the prospect for additional business-owners to qualify and benefit from the available funding.

Assist/Support Public Flu Shot Clinic by Local Pharmacy: The Dir. of AOCED was contacted by representative of Ayer family Pharmacy inquiring if they could conduct an outdoor/drive-thru Public Flu Shot Clinic on another location than their Park Street location. The Dir. of AOCED contacted representatives of Ayer Shop & Save inquiring if they are interested in partnering with Ayer Family Pharmacy with this good local public health effort. The partnership was successfully formed, and the Ayer Family Pharmacy/Ayer Shop & Save Supermarket Public Drive-Thru Flu Shot Clinic was successfully conducted on Saturday, November 28th. Note: AOCED contacted & confirmed support of Public Drive-Thru Flu Shot Clinic at Shop & Save with Ayer PD & Nashoba Associated Boards of Health prior to clinic event.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC): The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC) warrant for Fall Town meeting creating an Ayer Affordable Housing Trust was approved at Town Meeting. The Community Preservation

Committee (CPC) approved an initial budget of \$30,000 for the new Affordable Housing Trust at the same Town Meeting. November's Affordable Housing Committee meeting the members reviewed and worked on the proposed By-Laws. The AAHC has started an outreach effort as we look for Ayer Affordable Housing Trustees.

FY19 CDBG-CV Grant Application: FY19-CDBG-CV social service grant programs are up and running. The Ayer Library Internet Access program now has internet hot spots available for loan. The Stone Soup Kitchen Food pantry have been using their funds to meet increased requests for assistance.