

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: December 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 will be scheduling & conducting the 1st meeting of the new Town of Ayer ADA Citizens Advisory Committee in the first week of February; we had hoped to bring the group together for early January but, other & additional projects/programs required the AOCED's attention. All our new members are in communication, past & current Town of Ayer ADA documents, studies, materials, data is being provided to new members for review & familiarization prior to the 1st February Meeting. Also, our partners/consultants at Montachusett Regional Planning Commission have hired additional planning/project staff and are prepared to re-engage with our local process. As was reported in the AOCED's November Monthly Report - 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.

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

The AOCED (in partnership with Ayer DPW Supt. Wetzel & Town Engineer Van Schalkwyk) formulated, produced and successfully submitted a 2020 Massachusetts Housing Choice Capital Grant Application to the MA Dept. of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) on December 11th. The Grant Application request is in the amount of \$108,000 – and if successfully awarded - 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 announcement of the

grant awardees will be made by DHCD (Housing Choice Program) in February/March 2021.

3-5 Park Street former Chapman Parcel Underground Storage Tank Mitigation

Meeting: On Dec 1st the Dir. of AOCED scheduled and conducted a ZOOM Meeting for interdepartmental staff regarding the recent purchase of 3-5 Park Street, the so-called Chapman Lot, by Ayer resident Morris Babcock. Mr. Babcock proposes to remove the underground storage tanks, mitigate the potential environmental contamination, and construct a new 2-story building in accordance with the recently adopted Downtown Ayer/Park Street Form-Based Zoning Code and our vision for Park Street transforming to a “Complete Street” and a more pedestrian-oriented and traditional “Downtown Street” with new commercial & residential opportunities. AOCED will re-engage the municipal group upon results of the Housing Choice Capital Grant & follow-up communications with Mr. Babcock.

\$3.1 Million MassWorks Grant – West Main Street Corridor: Since the announcement of our success in being awarded a \$3.1 million MassWorks Grant in November - the Dir. of AOCED received the Pre-Contract Documents for review & completion – to be submitted to the MassWorks Program Administrator. The Dir. of AOCED conducted a full-Team coordination/update ZOOM Meeting on December 22nd, in addition to several MassWorks Team coordination/project prep discussions; completed the Pre-Contract document and submitted to MassWorks Program Administrator. The Dir. of AOCED will begin to plan, schedule, and prepare for a series of public information sessions & meetings with all property-owners & business-owners within the West Main Street Public Infrastructure Improvement Project area for the month of February. The Project is scheduled to begin in late Spring/early Summer 2021.

CDBG-COVID19 Microenterprise Grant: The AOCED has been actively outreaching in December 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 six (6) local microbusinesses, with the prospect for additional business-owners to qualify and benefit from the available funding.

Town of Ayer MA Sesquicentennial (150th) Anniversary Activities: The Dir. of AOCED launched a series of activities to support & recognize the upcoming Town of Ayer MA (150th) Sesquicentennial Anniversary on February 14th, 2021. The Dir of AOCED composed Official Proclamation text & requested/submitted to Governor Baker; also composed & submitted to State District Legislative Delegation, as well as Congresswoman Lori Trahan. The AOCED also took the initiative to design an official “Town of Ayer Sesquicentennial Flag” – which are currently in production. The AOCED has also developed a concept and will proceed to the production of an Official Town of Ayer (150th) Sesquicentennial Video Message Event that will be broadcast & posted to municipal social media platforms on February 14th, 2021...more to come.