

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development
Monthly Report: January 2021

Respectfully submitted by Alan S. Manoian, Dir. AOCED

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

Grant Application & Production Process: The AOCED has advanced the Town of Ayer new ADA Self-Evaluation & Transition/Action Plan process, in January, with new enhanced staff members of the project contract consultants, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC). The MRPC has brought on additional professional project staff to accelerate a variety of regional projects that have been delayed by the COVID19 State of Emergency throughout 2020; the Town of Ayer ADA Plan Process/Project will greatly benefit from this increased consultant staffing. The outreach effort in attracting prospective members of a new Town of Ayer ADA Citizen's Advisory Committee has been most successful – with four (4) Ayer residents with noteworthy personal and professional experience, expertise, perspective and understanding with regard to ADA lifestyles, issues, challenges and opportunities for progressive improvement – stepping forward to submit their names for civic service on the new Committee. The Dir. of AOCED will schedule and conduct an exploratory/informational exchange discussion session (via ZOOM) with the four (4) prospective new members of the Ayer ADA Citizen's Advisory Committee – with next proposed step being submission of resident names/qualifications to Ayer Select Board for appointment to the new ADA Committee in late February/early March.

Park Street (FBC/Traditional Downtown Street) Transformation Project:

The AOCED in partnership with Ayer Dept. of Public Works prepared and submitted a Housing Choice Capital Grant application in the amount of \$108,000 on December 11th. The AOCED awaits the announcement of the Grant awardees with cautious optimism – announcement s scheduled for late February. AOCED has been meeting with several new owners of Park Street properties (within the

Downtown Ayer/Park Street FBC Zoning District) with regard to the progress of their prospective development/re-development plans and concepts – and the regulatory integration of the new (traditional downtown street) Form-Based Code with their proposed new building developments. The Dir. of AOCED is coordinating with Office of Ayer Town Planner in formulating and producing a Downtown Ayer/Park Street Form-Based Zoning Code District “Full Build-Out Analysis Study” – perhaps through a regional District Local Technical Assistance Grant (DLTA).

\$3.1 Million MassWorks Grant – West Main Street Corridor: The Dir. of AOCED is actively managing and maintaining West Main Street MassWorks Grant Public Infrastructure Project inter-Team communications and co-ordination active. A number of Project regulatory permitting processes are proceeding – and meeting timelines/milestones. The Dir. of AOCED requested and was placed on the January 28th Agenda of the Ayer Conservation Commission to present a preliminary Project overview and schedule with Dept. of Public Works Town Engineer – Project presentation was provided on Jan. 28th meeting. Into the month of February Project Bid Documents will be prepared. The Dir. of AOCED will initiate Project Public Engagement Process – and will conduct several Project coordination meetings with West Main Street Corridor property-owners and business-operators (within the Project boundary) into March/April 2021.

Town of Ayer Sesquicentennial (150th) Anniversary Recognition: The AOCED was requested to develop a concept to publicly (and safely) recognize the Town of Ayer's Sesquicentennial Anniversary (February 14, 2021) – in consideration of the still present COVID19 State of Emergency & Social Distancing requirements. A traditional large public assembly/event/celebration would not be possible. The AOCED produced the concept of a “Town of Ayer Sesquicentennial Special Video Message Event” – a Video product that would be broadcast on Sunday, February 14th 2021 on APAC, municipal social

media platforms, and the municipal Website. The “Special Video Message Event” will feature a number of “Ayer Notables” giving their personal Sesquicentennial message to current and future generations of Ayer residents. The first round of Video Message filming took place between Wed. Jan. 20th – Fri. Jan. 22nd. The new Town of Ayer Sesquicentennial Flags will be delivered by the 1st week of February. Additional filming and video editing will take place into early February and will be ready for “primetime” on Sunday, February 14th 2021!

Town of Ayer Housing Production Plan: The Community Development Program Manager, as administrator for and working in partnership with, the Ayer Affordable Housing Committee, have advanced the final draft of the new Town of Ayer Housing Production Plan (HPP) in the month of January. The HPP is a unified document providing a clear profile of the current state of housing in Ayer and a “blueprint or road-map” to assuring that there will be a diversity of housing choices for all Ayer residents into the future. Managing the process with project consultants Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC), the Community Development Program Manager proposes the final version of the Housing Production Plan for late February – in preparation for presentation to Ayer Select Board in March 2021.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC)

The Ayer Affordable Housing committee completed the first draft of the Ayer Affordable Housing Trust Bylaws and have submitted them to the Town Managers office to be forwarded to Town Council. The AAHC has scheduled a Public Information session for the February 24th at which they will present this first draft of the Ayer Housing Trust Bylaws and look for public comment.

FY19 CDBG-CV Grant

FY19-CDBG-CV social service grant programs are moving forward. The Ayer Library Internet Access program now has internet hot spots

and laptops available for loan. The Stone Soup Kitchen Food pantry have used the balance of their funds to meet increased requests for assistance and will now be relying on community and outside donations.

Micro Enterprise Business Loans grant program has continued, and the Office of Community and Economic Development have received three new applications for aid in the month of January.