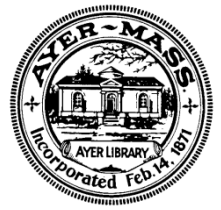


Town of Ayer

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 January 2021

Date: February 22, 2021

1. Project Review and Planning Board meetings:

The Planning Board met remotely on **Tuesdays, January 12 and 26**, at which it continued review of the following cases:

The Site Plan and Special Permits for the **14 Washington Street** project are still on hold for now, with the applicant granting the Planning Board an extension to the end of February.

“Panther Place” Preliminary (OSRD) Subdivision, Washington Street:

At its January 26 meeting, the Planning Board voted to ‘**Approve with Modifications**’, the **Preliminary Subdivision Plan on Washington Street**, across from the Ayer-Shirley Regional High School.

This plan currently shows 28 single family house lots on a combined tract of about 22 acres. The northern part of the tract is bisected by a Powerline Easement under the control of the New England Power Company that covers about 2.2. acres. The applicant requested several waivers from the Subdivision Regulations, which were voted on as follows:

1. The Planning Board **approved the following waivers as requested:**
Section VI; Plans for Definitive Subdivision; A. (1)(d) requesting topography of the area including and north of the Powerline Easement to not be required on the plans.
2. The Planning Board **approved the following waivers with amendments:**
Section VI; Plans for Definitive Subdivision; F. (2), H. (2) and J. (2)(h) to identify trees with a diameter at breast height of 12-inches and greater.

The Planning Board modified this to require that trees with a diameter at breast height of 24-inches and greater be delineated, with species identified, on the Definitive Plans.

3. The Planning Board **did not approve** the waiver requested to Section VII; Road and Stormwater Design Standards; B. (4)(a) to extend the road length to 710 feet where 650 feet is allowed. *The subdivision road must not extend beyond 650 feet.*

The applicant must now file a Definitive Subdivision Plan application with the Planning Board and Notice(s) of Intent with the Conservation Commission as next steps in the development review process.

Upcoming applications:

The **McDonalds** on the Carlton Rotary will be before the Planning Board for Site Plan and Special Permit applications starting on March 5. In addition to a complete rehabilitation of the building, site work is anticipated that will improve customer access and shorten lines to the drive-up windows. Foremost concerns will be traffic impacts and circulation both on and off-site, especially for the Carlton Rotary. The Town Planner is gearing up to prepare a request for proposals for a Peer-Review Traffic Impact and Mitigation Study to enable the Planning Board to make the most informed decisions possible.

The **Washington Street subdivision** will also be back before the Planning Board on March 5 for consideration of the **density bonuses** (extra lots) being requested by the applicant for 1. Provision of extra open space, 2. deeded public access to the open space and 3. solar-ready construction.

Zoning Bylaw amendments:

As part of my 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 and 14 Washington Street, it became apparent that this section of the Bylaw had confusing and ambiguous provisions, with some modifications requiring special permits, other variances and still others which are waivable from the Planning Board. 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. These amendments will be brought before the Fall 2021 Town Meeting.

The **Petapawag Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) bylaw** will be developed over the course of this 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 January 2021:

- During January I further refined the approach to a **Build-Out Study of the Form-Based Code districts**, which would determine the approximate number of new residential units and commercial square footage that could be developed in these districts. These numbers in turn could help determine the water and waste-water demand, the number of school-aged children and perhaps most importantly the number of parking spaces that must be provided to make such development viable. During January I began writing the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) grant application for this project, which is due on March 2.
- I have committed to completing the Open Space Residential Development (**OSRD**) '**Design Guidelines**' with the Conservation Administrator over the next few months.

