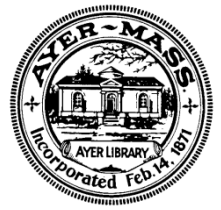


# Town of Ayer

## Office of the Town Planner



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Town of Ayer | Ayer Town Hall | 1 Main Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor | Ayer, MA 01432 | 978-772-8218 | [www.ayer.ma.us](http://www.ayer.ma.us)

### Monthly Staff Report

To: Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager

From: Mark Archambault, Ayer Town Planner

Re: Monthly report for March 2021

Date: April 20, 2021

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#### 1. Project Review and Planning Board meetings:

The Planning Board met remotely on **Tuesdays, March 9 and 23**, at which it reviewed the following cases:

##### Shaker Mill Pond Subdivision – Covenant and Surety:

In March I worked with the DPW Superintendent, the owner of the subdivision and his attorney on setting up the surety arrangements for the Shaker Mill Pond subdivision. The owner and his attorney met with the Planning Board at its April 13 meeting to work out the framework, which will be formalized over the next few weeks.

##### “Panther Place” OSRD Subdivision, Special Permit for Density Bonuses, Washington Street:

At its March 23 meeting, the Planning Board voted to approve the Special Permit for Density Bonuses for the **Washington Street “Panther Place” subdivision**, which is located across from the Ayer-Shirley Regional High School. The applicant requested seven (7) lots in addition to the base number of nineteen (19) approved in the Preliminary Subdivision Plan earlier this year. To get these, they are proposing deeded public access to the open space, 5% additional open space over the minimum required and lots that are ‘solar energy oriented’ with ‘solar-ready construction’. The next step in the process is for the applicant to submit a Definitive Subdivision Plan, which is anticipated in May.

##### McDonalds at 2 Sandy Pond Road off the Carlton Rotary:

On March 9, the Planning Board began Site Plan review of the proposed renovations to the **McDonalds at 2 Sandy Pond road**, off the Carlton Rotary. 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 by adding and additional drive-thru aisle. Foremost concerns will be traffic impacts and circulation both on and off-site, especially for the Carlton Rotary. At its March 23 meeting, the Planning Board directed the applicant to conduct a Traffic Impact and Mitigation Study based on the Scope of Work originally prepared by the Town

Planner and as refined at the March 23 meeting. Review of the Plan is on hold until the traffic study is completed, which is anticipated for May.

#### Catania Spagna Oils:

The Planning Board began its Site Plan review of a proposed major addition to Catania Oils at its March 23 meeting. This project also requires a Special Permit since the site is in the Aquifer Protection Overlay District. The Planning Board conducted a site visit to Catania Oils on April 12, and the Site Plan and Special Permit hearings were continued to the April 27 meeting.

### **2. Ongoing Projects continuing into March 2021:**

In March I continued research and logistics into setting up a working group to complete the Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) Design Guidelines and Regulations. This group will be meeting via Zoom on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the month. The group consists of two Planning Board members, the Conservation Administrator, the Fire Inspector and Town Planner. The goal is to develop a set of Design Guidelines and Regulations that the Planning Board can adopt after public hearing, which will be included as an addendum to the Ayer Subdivision Regulations.

### **3. Land-Use Meetings in March 2021:**

At the March, 2021 Land-Use meetings (*department head and staff meetings to review prospective applications before the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and ZBA*) the Land-Use team met with representatives from McDonald and Catania Spagna Oils regarding interdepartmental review of their applications before the Planning Board.

### **4. 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 summer and early fall and is anticipated to be voted on at the October, 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.