

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

Respectfully submitted by Alan S. Manolian, Dir. AOCED

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

Application & Production Process: The AOCED is pleased to report that at the March 2nd Ayer Select Board Meeting (4) four new members of the Town of Ayer Commission on Disabilities were appointed. The four new members are as follows: Laura Warner, David Cibor, Ava Sheriff & Caitlin Gamache. During the months of March & April the AOCED has continued to work closely with our project consultants, Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, on the production and delivery of the (2021) Town of Ayer ADA Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan. The updated municipal ADA Plan is due for final submission to the Massachusetts Office on Disabilities (MOD) by June 30th 2021. The AOCED will schedule and conduct ZOOM Public Review & Comment Sessions for the new municipal DRAFT ADA Plan in the month of May and early June.

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

Choice Capital Grant: 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 is pleased to report that the Town of Ayer was awarded the \$108,000 grant on March 8th. During the months March & April the AOCED and Ayer DPW worked together to prepare the State Grant Contractual Agreement and RFP Document which will be issued in May 2021. The project/grant will deliver a comprehensive engineering & design study and plan for the transformation of Park Street (between Main Street & Groton Street) into a traditional, walkable, livable downtown street. The AOCED proposes to start the engineering/design process in the month of July.

\$3.1 Million MassWorks Grant – West Main Street Corridor: The AOCED working in partnership with the Ayer DPW have engaged the civil engineering firm of GPR, Inc. of Ayer to produce and deliver a 75% design & engineering plans for (outer) the West Main Street corridor – known as the future “West Ayer Village”. The engineering/design plan shall be in accordance with the recently adopted “West Ayer Village” Form-Based Zoning Code. The engineering/design plan will be packaged and issued for the Project RFP document. The Project RFP is proposed for issuance in late June/July 2021. The transformative and comprehensive public infrastructure improvement & Smart Growth project will serve as the foundation for the incremental emergence of “West Ayer Village”.

Ayer IDFA Loan Program/Nashoba Club Restaurant: The AOCED working with the Ayer Industrial Development Finance Authority (IDFA) Board administered the final payoff of the Ayer IDFA Commercial Loan for the Nashoba Club Restaurant (former owners). The AOCED is working with the new owners of the Nashoba Club Restaurant to support a smooth ownership/operational transition for this iconic local gathering place. The AOCED commends the former owners (Rakip Family) and the new owners (Julian/Lenzi Family) for working together and with town officials to make sure that the Nashoba Club Restaurant will be a part of Ayer's future for many years to come.

Downtown Ayer Restaurant Outdoor Cafés: The AOCED in coordination with municipal departments including Office of TM, APD, DPW, AFD, Building Commissioner, and Nashoba Associated Boards of Health worked with our local downtown restaurants who requested to set-up Outdoor Seating/Cafes for the Spring/Summer seasons due to COVID19 State of Emergency. The AOCED & municipal team engaged in numerous meetings (both internally & with restaurant owners) to find a design/permitting approach that addressed and satisfied various complex issues and requirements - including public safety, public health, business needs, operational functionality, customer accessibility, etc.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC): The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC) held their monthly meeting on April 21st at which they reviewed the Ayer Housing Trust Bylaw presentation for Town Meeting. The Ayer Housing Trust Bylaw was approved at Ayer's annual spring Town Meeting, April 26th. AAHC held two additional meetings on April 21st and 28th to interview candidates for the newly formed Trust. After interviewing all the candidates, the Committee sent their recommended candidates to be reviewed and appointed by the Select Board at their May 4th meeting. The Ayer Housing Production Plan was submitted to DHCD for state review and approval.

FY19 CDBG-CV Grant: FY19-CDBG-CV social service grant programs are in the third quarter; the grant runs through December 2021. The Ayer Library Internet Access program currently has internet hot spots and laptops available for loan. The Stone Soup Kitchen Food Pantry has used the balance of their funds. The other three social service programs, Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry, COA Meals Delivery Program and Nashoba Associated Boards of Health have not yet started using their grant funds.

Micro Enterprise Business Grant program responded to two requests for applications packets for in the month of April, however, has not received any new applications.