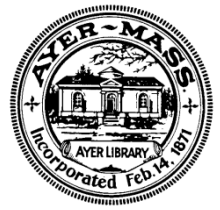


# Town of Ayer

## Office of the Town Planner



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### Monthly Staff Report

To: Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager

From: Mark Archambault, Ayer Town Planner

Re: Monthly report for April 2021

Date: May 20, 2021

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

The Planning Board met remotely on **Tuesdays, April 13 and 27**, at which it reviewed the following cases:

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

In April I continued to coordinate communication between the Planning Board, the owner of the subdivision his attorney and Town Counsel on setting up the surety arrangements for the Shaker Mill Pond subdivision. It was agreed in April that the surety would consist of both a covenant and a financial surety, the exact details of which are still being worked out as of this writing. Resolution of the surety for this subdivision is anticipated in May.

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

The Planning Board will resume review of this Site Plan on May 25, at which time the applicant will discuss the results of the traffic study that the PB requested to determine if traffic flow on-site and off-site will work as intended. The Planning Board decision on the Site Plan is likely at the first meeting in June.

##### Catania-Spagna Oils:

In April, the Planning Board continued its Site Plan review of a proposed major addition to Catania-Spagna Oils. 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. A decision on the Site Plan and Special Permit is anticipated for May.

##### ANR's:

The Planning Board requested that the applicant for an ANR (lot split) at 5 Mountain Avenue withdraw their application without prejudice since the status of Mountain Road at this location is uncertain.

## 2. Ongoing Projects continuing into April 2021:

OSRD Working Group: In April I continued research into developing **Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) Design Guidelines and Regulations** to better clarify ambiguities in the Ayer Zoning Bylaw and address design considerations which aim to result in better subdivision design. A special working group was formed that 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.

In April I also started research towards developing an Excel spreadsheet and timeline to better coordinate interdepartmental review of subdivision, special permit and site plan applications that come before the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, ZBA, and which often require input from our DPW. The draft spreadsheet and project tracking form will be shared with the Land-Use team at a May meeting of that group.

Form-Based Code Build-Out Study: You will recall that the Town of Ayer was awarded a DLTA Technical Assistance Grant to assist the Town a build-out study of the Downtown / Park Street FBC district. In April, the MRPC prepared a scope of work and agreement with the Town. Most of this work will take place over the summer and fall of this year. The build-out study will determine the likely number of apartments, the parking demand from such and other numerical factors that will enable the Town to better plan for and manage development under the Form-Based Code.

## 3. Land-Use Meetings in April 2021:

At the April, 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 of **Pratt Builders** concerning 11 Willow Road and a **potential mushroom growing operation** at 22 Fitchburg Road. The Land-Use team will also be working towards developing a central spreadsheet to tract key dates and milestones in the plan review process.

## 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** is planned to be developed over the course of this summer and 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.