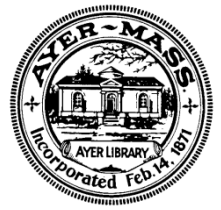


Town of Ayer

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 August 2021

Date: September 17, 2021

1. Project Review and Planning Board meetings:

The Planning Board met live, in person, on **Tuesdays August 10 and 24**, at which it reviewed the following cases:

“Panther Place” Definitive Subdivision Plan, Post-Approval matters:

At its August meetings, the Planning Board considered minor amendments to the proposed Covenant, as well as minor changes to the plan itself as recommended by the Ayer DPW and agreed to by the applicant. These minor changes have to do with stormwater management, sewer connection, the location of the crosswalk and a few other minor matters that do not change the number of lots or layout of the subdivision.

The applicant also approached the Board regarding endorsement of two sets of ‘Approval Not Required’ (ANR) lots adjacent to the subdivision on Washington Street. Each ANR plan consists of two (2) lots, one of which features a common driveway which the PB decided to postpone action on until its September 14 meeting pending review by the Town Planner and Town Counsel.

Stratton Hill Definitive Subdivision Plan

The applicant for the Stratton Hill Definitive Subdivision has requested that the Planning Board resume the public hearing on this case at its Tuesday, October 26 meeting. This will give the applicant and engineer time to revise the Plan Set in accordance with initial comments from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission, as discussed at their respective meetings in July and early August, as well as engineering related comments from the Ayer DPW. The applicant has granted the Planning Board an extension on which to act on the Plan until December 31, 2021, which can be extended further if needed.

During August the Town Planner also refined the Scope of Work for the Traffic Impact and Mitigation Study which will be a significant factor in review of this large subdivision.

60 Central Avenue, Site Plan for multi-family structure:

The Planning Board continued the public meeting on review of this Site Plan application at its August meetings. This project is proposing to raze an existing multi-family structure at 60 Central Avenue and replace it with a new **four-unit Condominium, Townhouse-style multi-family structure**. Based on review at the August Planning Board meetings and preliminary DPW review, the applicant prepared a revised Site Plan which was received by the Planning Department in late August. The Planning Board anticipates being able to act on this application at its September 28 meeting after the engineering and stormwater issues have been reviewed by the Ayer DPW.

Citizen Petition for Rezoning Parcel at 29 Harvard Road:

Mr. Theodore Maxant has approached the Town Planner several times inquiring about rezoning his property at 29 Harvard Road from General Residence to General Business.

This small .76-acre property is surrounded by a larger, irregular property at 27 Harvard Road, which is the site of a former gas station. This lot is zoned General Business, which is more in keeping with the character of this part of Ayer on the Ayer / Harvard boundary line. Mr. Maxant also controls this lot through an LLC, which is now deed restricted after his sale of the property across Route 110 / Harvard Road to the Global Montello corporation, which has opened the Alltown gas station and convenience store on that site.

Because the most recent Master Plan does not show the future land-use of this parcel as being commercial, Town Counsel advised the Planning Board that any rezoning should be done through the Citizen Petition process. The Planning Board indicated its informal support for such rezoning at its August 24 meeting. The Planning Board will need to hold a Public Hearing on this proposal before the October 25 Special Town Meeting.

2. Ongoing Projects continuing into July 2021:

Form-Based Code Build-Out Study: Earlier this year, 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. The MRPC prepared a scope of work and agreement with the Town. 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.

Work on this project continued into August, and in September the Town Planner and Director of Community and Economic Development will meet with the GIS manager at the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) to accelerate completion of this project.

Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) Working Group and Regulations:

The Town Planner is now preparing a complete draft of new regulations to assist in review of open space residential subdivisions, based on work with the OSRD Working Group earlier in the Spring and Summer. Once completed, he will reconvene the Working Group to review and then present them to the Planning Board, which can adopt Regulations after holding a Public Hearing. Adoption of these Regulations is anticipated to occur this Fall.

3. Land-Use Meetings in August 2021:

At its September 2, 2021 Land-Use meeting (*department head and staff meetings to review prospective applications before the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and ZBA*) the Land-Use team discussed the forthcoming application for a '40B' Comprehensive Permit to construct a complex of multi-family buildings and related improvements at 65 Fitchburg Road. The applicant, NOAH, walked the group through the revised Plan Set and answered preliminary questions and comments related to the project and the timing of its review by pertinent departments and the Zoning Board of Appeals, which has the formal authority to review and approve 40B projects.

4. Zoning Bylaw amendments:

After discussion at its August meetings, the Ayer Planning Board decided that several zoning amendments, including redoing the parking section of the Bylaw, should be taken up at the Spring or Fall Town Meetings in 2022 rather than at the Fall 2021 Special Town Meeting.

The Town Planner will continue to work on these zoning amendments as time allows over the next several months so that at least some of these amendments can be considered at the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting.