

**Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development
Monthly Report: September 2021**

Respectfully submitted by Alan S. Manolian, Dir. AOCED

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

Choice Capital Grant: On 9/30/21 Green International Affiliates submitted two (2) Conceptual Plans to AOCED & Ayer DPW for the redesign of Park Street between Main Street and Groton Street as a traditional and livable downtown “Complete Street” that will accommodate new mixed-use development in accordance with the Downtown Ayer/Park Street Form-Based Zoning Code. Conceptual Plan “Alternative 2” was selected by AOCED & Ayer DPW as the most favorable design, which includes necessary on-street parking spaces on the east side of Park Street. The Park Street Project Design/Engineering Team of Green International Affiliates will schedule and conduct a Mobile Workshop/Design Walk on Park Street on or about 10/13/21 with the Dir. of AOCED, Ayer Community Development Program Manager & Ayer DPW Supt. The Dir. of AOCED will proceed in coordination with Ayer DPW and Green International to schedule and conduct a Public Informational/Input Design Walking Tour of Park Street for late October/early November.

The Downtown Ayer “Heart of Hometown” Festival: The Downtown Ayer “Heart of Hometown” Festival scheduled for Saturday, October 2nd on Newton Street from 11:00AM-4:00PM is ready for “prime-time”. The Festival Committee has done commendable work with Committee members fully engaged in planning/management of Stage Logistics, Sound System Logistics, Communications & Advertising, Artist & Craftsperson Management, Restaurant & Eateries Coordination, Event-Day Management, etc.

\$3.1 Million MassWorks Grant – West Main Street Corridor: On September 23rd the Town of Ayer received nine (9) bid proposals for the construction of the West Main Street Public Infrastructure Improvement Project. The bids ranged from a low of \$2,380,282 to a high of \$3,197,595. The AOCED & Ayer DPW will review bid submissions and make formal recommendation for selection to Office of Town Manager and Ayer Select Board. Propose to place recommended bidder selection on the 10/5/2021 Ayer Select Board Agenda. The next Project Quarterly Report is due for submission to MassWorks Administrator by October 15, 2021.

Launch of the Re-Established Town of Ayer Commission on Disabilities: On Wednesday, September 22nd the newly re-established Ayer Disabilities Commission conducted its first official meeting. Ayer Town Manager Robert Pontbriand, who also serves as Ayer’s Municipal ADA Coordinator provided

overall guidance and expert support at this important inaugural meeting. The Agenda items included the nomination and election of Commission officers, a review and discussion of current Operating Bylaws, a review and discussion of the (10) ten current Goals, a review and discussion on the development of a new Mission Statement/Statement of Purpose, and a discussion on next steps in working with all municipal departments, boards, commissions and prospective new developments. The AOCED working with the Town of Ayer ADA Coordinator/Office of the Ayer Town Manager will prepare and present an Executive Summary & Overview of "ADA Next Steps" for our municipal departments for the month of November 2021.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC) & Ayer Affordable Housing Trust (AAHT)

The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC) met on September 24th and the Ayer Affordable Housing Trust met on September 15th. Both the Committee and Trust reviewed rental assistances programs in other communities, identifying components that will serve Ayer's rental assistance program. Alicia Hersey agreed to put together a first draft of guidelines for an Ayer Rental Assistance Program to be reviewed at the October meeting.

Lisa Gabree attended Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC) meeting, she reviewed with the Committee funding sources and procedures. This was done as an educational opportunity for the Committee to better understand resources and processes.

The Ayer Affordable Housing Trust met on September 15th, and elected officers, Jake Driscoll as Chair, James Stephen as Vice-Chair and Cyndi Lavin as Clerk. The Trust discussed the Devenscrest evictions, agreeing to reach out to the Town's State delegation regarding aid funds.

Devenscrest Apartments Evictions

The need for a social worker has become apparent as people try to sort through all the issues of eviction and the search for housing. The Town is discussing the need for a Social Worker and in the meantime, volunteers are helping where they can.

FY19 CDBG-CV Grant

After review usage of the Ayer Library Internet Access program the library has decided to scale back on the number of Hotspots and Laptops available for loan. They currently have 4 Hotspots and 4 Laptops available; this reflects the usage to date. By lowering the number of devices, they have lowered the program cost, making the program more viable long-term. Stone Soup Kitchen Food Pantry has used the balance of their grant funds. Loaves and Fishes was

had some administrative challenges, which has culminated in delayed grant reporting, fortunately this has not affected services. The COA new director contacted our office in September regarding the Meals Delivery Program. We outlined the program for Ms. Petrossi and we look forward to a great final quarter. Nashoba Associated Boards of Health have not yet started using their grant funds. The Micro Enterprise Business Grant program has been closed out. A total of seven local small businesses received grants through this program. For these owners, this program was essential in helping them through the difficult period of pandemic shut down.

Downtown Flower Program

Ayer's Downtown Flower program finished on September 23rd. Many thanks to our Senior Work Off team which needs to be credited with the success of this program.