

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

*Respectfully submitted by Alan S. Manolian, Dir. AOCED*

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

**Choice Capital Grant:** On October 13<sup>th</sup> the AOCED, Ayer DPW & Project Design/Engineering Team of Green International Affiliates scheduled and conducted a Municipal/Consultant Team Mobile Workshop/Conceptual Design Field Review on Park Street. The AOCED/Ayer DPW will schedule & conduct a Public Information Forum/Concept Plan Review/Walking Tour of Park Street in early November – on a Saturday morning or afternoon in order to provide best opportunity for Ayer residents & property-owners to actively participate. The Dir. of AOCED prepared & submitted the FY22 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. Housing Choice Capital Grant Quarterly Project Report to our DHCD grant administrator on October 14<sup>th</sup>.

**The Downtown Ayer “Heart of Hometown” Festival:** The Downtown Ayer “Heart of Hometown” Festival was successfully conducted on Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> on Newton Street from 11:00AM-4:00PM.

**\$3.1 Million MassWorks Grant – West Main Street Corridor Public Infrastructure**

**Improvement Project:** On October 19<sup>th</sup> the Ayer Select Board voted in favor of executing the construction contract in the amount of \$2,582,522.50 to Onyx Corporation for the West Main Street MassWorks Public Infrastructure Improvement Project. On October 15<sup>th</sup> the Dir. of AOCED prepared & submitted the FY22 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. Project Grant Quarterly Report to the MassWorks Grant administrator. The project was scheduled to being preliminary work this lateFall/early Winter however, Ayer DPW was contacted & notified by representatives of selected construction contractor Onyx Corporation that due to national/international material supply chain delays, including granite curbing, cast iron piping, etc., will be delayed until Spring 2022.

**Launch of the Re-Established Town of Ayer Commission on Disabilities:** The Ayer Disabilities Commission is scheduled to meet next on Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. Agenda items include a review/discussion/development of an updated Commission (Mission Statement) and a review of the current Commission (Goals). 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/December 2021.

**“West Ayer Village” Development/Devens Plaza Prospects:** The Dir. of AOCED is working with the owners of the Devens Plaza located on West Main Street, as

they have listed the property for sale, and in accordance with the recently adopted West Ayer Village Form-Based Zoning Code and soon-to-be constructed West Main Street "Smart Growth" public infrastructure project, are working with the AOCED to attract a new owner/investor to redevelop the property with a high-quality multi-story mixed-use building.

**Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant – Urban Pocket Forest:** In October, the Dir. of AOCED was contacted by Planning Director of the Devens Enterprise Commission to discuss potential for a Ayer/Devens partnership in the pursuit of a Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant for 2022 that, if awarded, would result in the establishment of one or more "Urban Pocket Forests" in the more compact neighborhoods of Ayer & in locations at Devens that may be interested in the planting of more trees and thereby mitigating "heat island" effects in Ayer/Devens, and to lessen the impacts of increasing building development, and air pollution resulting from heavy trucking & railroad engines in older established "Environmental Justice" designated neighborhoods. The Dir. of AOCED will participate in the preliminary meeting with Devens Planning Director & interested consulting firms to further review and make recommendation.

**Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC) & Ayer Affordable Housing Trust (AAHT):** The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC) and the Ayer Affordable Housing Trust met on October 13th. Both the Committee and Trust reviewed the proposed rental assistances program guidelines for Ayer, changes were proposed with a goal to have a final draft ready for review at the November meeting.

Members of the Ayer Affordable Housing Trust and Committee continue to reach out to the Town's State Delegation with regards to possible aid for the Devenscrest Community.

**Devenscrest Apartments Evictions:** Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development with aid from members of the AAHT and AAHC coordinated volunteers to help local families apply for State assistance regarding housing issues and evictions.

**FY19 CDBG-CV Grant:** AOCED continues to support their FY19 CDBG-CV grant program, currently three of our social service programs are being funded through this grant program. A one-year extension has been agreed to with DHCD and paperwork will be signed in November.

Ayer Library Internet Access program continues to offer Hotspots and Laptops for loan to residents that do not have access to an internet connection in their

homes. Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry continues to serve Ayer and adjoining communities with their food assistance program, supplemented through funds from the CDBG-CV grant. Ayer's new COA director Ms. Petrossi will be using CDBG-CV grant funds to support their new in-house meal program which will begin the first of November.