

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: November 2021

Respectfully submitted by Alan S. Manolian, Dir. AOCED

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

Choice Capital Grant: On Saturday, November 13th at 1:00PM the AOCED/Ayer DPW will scheduled & conducted a Public Information Forum/Concept Plan Review/Walking Tour of Park Street – the Forum was scheduled/conducted on a Saturday afternoon in order to provide best opportunity for Ayer residents & property-owners to actively participate. The Public Forum/Walking Tour was very successful & well-attended by approx. 20 Ayer residents/Park Street property-owners/Ayer municipal Board & Commission members & municipal staff. Project engineering/design consultants Green International Affiliates are now in communication with Public Utility companies (National Grid/Version/etc.) to schedule meetings & initiate cost/design estimates & schedules for proposed removal of street utility poles & “undergrounding” of overhead wires along the project boundaries on Park Street. The Dir. of AOCED prepare & submit the FY22 3rd Qtr. Housing Choice Capital Grant Quarterly Project Report to our DHCD grant administrator in January.

The Downtown Ayer “Winter Holiday Candlelight Stroll & Tree Lighting

Ceremony” Planning & Coordination: The AOCED proposes to conduct the Downtown Ayer “Winter Holiday Candlelight Stroll & Tree Lighting Ceremony” on Saturday Evening, December 4th. A “Stroll” municipal team planning & coordination meeting was scheduled & conducted on November 17th. A new introduction this year will be the Nashoba Valley Concert Band playing at the front of Historic Ayer Town Hall for the arrival of the Candlelight Strollers & Tree Lighting “Countdown” Ceremony. The Ayer Winter Holiday Ice Sculptures will once again return, on Saturday, December 18th, with special Ayer Sesquicentennial “150th” Birthday Cake Ice Sculpture.

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

Improvement Project: On November 23rd construction project contractor provided AOCED & Ayer DPW with their updated West Main Street Project Schedule. (Note: 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). Project Pre-Construction Team Meeting is scheduled for December 8th at Ayer DPW Office.

Devens Shopping Plaza Prospects & “West Ayer Village” New Development: On November 8th Dir. of AOCED scheduled & conducted an on-site meeting with property-owners of Devens Shopping Plaza & representatives of a prospective investment group from NYC. The adoption of the progressive “West Ayer Village” Form-Based Zoning Code in 2019 in combination with the scheduled (March 2022) \$4 million West Main Street Public Infrastructure Improvement Project have resulted in the successful

attraction of prospective investors/developers for the long-envisioned high-quality & mixed-use redevelopment of several properties along the West Main Street District close to the Verbeck Gate of Devens.

Town of Ayer Commission on Disabilities: The Ayer Disabilities Commission met on Thursday, November 4th. 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 “Ayer ADA Next Steps” for our municipal departments for January 2022.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC) & Ayer Affordable Housing Trust (AAHT) - Rental Assistance Program: The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC) and the Ayer Affordable Housing Trust met on November 8th. Both the Committee and Trust have been formulating, reviewing, and producing the proposed rental assistance program guidelines for Ayer during October into November. As per the November 8th Meeting Minutes of the Joint Session of AAHC & AAHT: *“There was a discussion on the changes Alicia Hersey had made to the guidelines, including the under 60% maximum. Other issues discussed were points given for children, the necessity for a signed lease, and the funding source. Colleen Krieser requested the funding language be more-clear. Geof Tillotson rewrote it to read: “The ARAP, initially funded with Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds, expects continued future funding through public and private sources.” There was also a discussion on an appeals committee..Alicia suggested that the AAHC act as the appeals board. AAHT Motion: A motion was made by Colleen Krieser and seconded by Geof Tillotson to approve the ARAP as written with the amendments to the funding language and appointing the AAHC as the appeals board. Motion passed by roll call vote 7-0-0.”* The Community Development Program Manager will be placed on the December 7th Ayer Select Board Agenda to present the Ayer Rental Assistance Program for discussion & vote.

Devenscrest Housing Evictions: The Ayer CDP Manager, with aid from members of the AAHT and AAHC, continued through November (as she has done since July), to demonstrate and offer the utmost concern, understanding, availability, support, assistance, patience, professionalism and decency in helping the tenants of Devenscrest from Ayer Town Hall with the location, access & application for State assistance regarding housing issues, legal aid, food security, and evictions.