

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 January 2022
Date: February 22, 2022

1. Project Review and Planning Board meetings:

The Planning Board met over Zoom on **Tuesdays, January 11 and 25, 2022.**

Stratton Hill Definitive Subdivision Plan

The applicant for the Stratton Hill Definitive Subdivision has requested that their current Definitive Subdivision Plan before the Planning Board be '*withdrawn without prejudice*' at this time. The Planning Board accepted the applicant's request at its January 11 meeting. It is anticipated that the applicant will begin a new subdivision review process for Stratton Hill early in 2022, possibly with a Preliminary Plan application as a first step. The Planning Board will update its page on the Town of Ayer website when new information becomes available.

Revised Zoning Map:

At its meeting on January 11, the Planning Board voted to endorse the most recent version of the Ayer Zoning Map, now showing the West Ayer Village Form-Based Code district, which was approved by the Attorney General's office recently.

2. Ongoing Projects continuing into January 2022:

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

The Town Planner is 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. A great deal of progress was made on the draft in January. Adoption of these Regulations is anticipated to occur in early 2022.

3. Land-Use Meetings in January 2022:

Land-Use meetings were held on January 6 and 20. Current and potential future projects under review by the Land-Use Boards and related concerns were discussed. The Assistant Town Manager arranged to have a representative of the new 'General Code' provide an introduction to the forthcoming re-organized and reformatted set of Ayer's General and Zoning bylaws and regulations which will be made available in the near future.

4. MBTA Communities:

The Ayer Planning Department, Planning Board and Town of Ayer are in the process of learning more about the requirements of a new law in Massachusetts that aims to provide much needed multi-family housing in communities served by or adjacent to MBTA Commuter Rail, Subway and other transit.

Enacted as part of the [economic development bill](#) in January 2021, new Section 3A of M.G.L. c. 40A (the Zoning Act) requires that an MBTA community shall have at least one zoning district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right and meets other criteria set forth in the statute:

- Minimum gross density of 15 units per acre
- Not more than ½ miles from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal or bus station, if applicable.
- No age restrictions
- Suitable for families with children.

At first glance, it appears that Ayer is likely very close to meeting these requirements under its current zoning, including the two Form-Based Code districts in combination with its General Residence district. However, a closer analysis will need to be performed in order to ascertain this with accuracy. Over the next few months the Town Planner will lead an effort to see what Ayer might need to do in order to meet the requirements of the 'MBTA Communities' law and whether such will require amendments to the Ayer Zoning Bylaw.

5. Zoning Bylaw amendments:

At its January meetings, the Ayer Planning Board discussed which amendments to the Ayer Zoning Bylaw should be heard at the April Annual Town Meeting (ATM) and which should be taken up at the Fall Special Town Meeting in 2022.

The Planning Board decided that correcting the minimum lot size in the Light Industrial District back to 20,000 sq.ft. from 120,000 sq.ft. which represents a 'typo' incorrectly carried over into the 2018 comprehensive Zoning Bylaw update; as well as a re-ordering of terms in the Definitions section of the Bylaw would be placed on the ATM warrant.