

# Town of Ayer

## Office of the Town Planner



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Town of Ayer | Ayer Town Hall | 1 Main Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor | Ayer, MA 01432 | 978-772-8218 | [www.ayer.ma.us](http://www.ayer.ma.us)

### Monthly Staff Report

To: Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager

From: Mark Archambault, Ayer Town Planner

Re: Monthly report for February 2022

Date: March 21, 2022

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#### 1. Project Review and Planning Board meetings:

The Planning Board met over Zoom on **Tuesdays, February 8 and 22, 2022.**

At its February meetings, the Planning Board did not have any development proposals to review but spent time reviewing and finalizing proposed amendments to the Ayer Zoning Bylaw to be considered at the April 25, 2022 Annual Town Meeting, as well as long-term projects. These include:

- a. Correcting the minimum lot size in the Light Industrial zoning district from 120,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet. The 120,000 sq.ft. minimum lot size was incorrectly carried over from the pre-2018 Ayer Zoning Bylaw. The proposed amendment would correct the minimum required lot size in the district to 20,000 sq.ft. as was originally intended.
- b. Re-order the definitions in the Definition section of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw to re-order the list of definitions in correct alphabetic order and add new definitions of multi-family housing and dwellings in order to clarify that section.

The Planning Board also discussed revisiting prior approved Site Plan and Subdivision projects that were approved in the last few years by reviewing approval documents as well as scheduling site visits to completed projects over the next several months.

The Planning Board also discussed potential blasting and rock removal regulations and a process for prioritizing potential land acquisition opportunities when they arise.

## **2. Ongoing Projects continuing into February 2022:**

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

The Town Planner is preparing new regulations and design guidelines to assist in review of open space residential subdivisions (OSRDs). The Town Planner reconvened the “OSRD Regulations and Design Guidelines Working Group” in January, which also met several times in February. Adoption of these Regulations is anticipated to occur in early 2022. The Working Group consists of two members of the Ayer Planning Board, two members of the Ayer Conservation Commission and the DPW Director.

## **3. Land-Use Meetings in February 2022:**

The February Land-Use meeting was held on February 17. Current and potential future projects under review by the Land-Use Boards and related concerns were discussed.

## **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 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.