

## **Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development**

### **Monthly Report: May 2022**

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

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

**Choice Capital Grant:** This important Downtown Ayer traditional/walkable street and new housing development design project - funded by a (2021) \$108,000 MA Housing Choice Capital Grant award is scheduled for contractual completion by June 2022. On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Dir. of AOCED made presentation before the Ayer Select Board to request \$15,000 of UDAG funding for the production and delivery of a detailed Park Street public utility infrastructure undergrounding design plan by National Grid. The \$15,000 request was approved by the Ayer Select Board. Municipal project consultants Green International Associates have notified National Grid officials to begin the production of the subject design plan for June. The Dir. of AOCED is now engaged in the administrative “close-out” (completion) of the contractual grant agreement between the Town of Ayer and Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development/Housing Choice Program due June 30, 2022. The next Phase of the “Park Street Transformation” will be the identification of the optimal federal/state public infrastructure improvement grant program. The Dir. of AOCED will identify the grant source and pursue award of multi-million dollar grant to deliver the transformation of Park Street as a livable, all-inclusive, high-quality, traditional New England downtown street.

#### **22 Fitchburg Rd. (Ayer Shop & Save Plaza) Prospective Additional New**

**Commercial Building Development:** The Dir. of AOCED and Ayer Town Planner met on May 9<sup>th</sup> with the owner of the 22 Fitchburg Rd parcel (location of the Ayer Shop & Save). The property-owner proposes the planning, development and construction of two additional smaller commercial buildings on the property to accommodate two additional business tenants to the site. (These will be in addition to the existing and successful Shop & Save Supermarket). The property-owner will be scheduling follow-up meetings with municipal planning/development/code compliance officials in the upcoming weeks.

#### **\$3.1 Million MassWorks Grant – West Main Street Corridor Public Infrastructure Improvement Project:**

The Dir. of AOCED completed and submitted the FY 22 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter West Main Street MassWorks Grant Project Report to the MassWorks administrator on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Project construction started on March 28<sup>th</sup> 2022. The original contractual date for proposed completion was June 2022. However, due to adverse impacts from COVID Pandemic/Construction Material Supply Chain Delays in 2021 the Project completion schedule was modified to June 2023. Therefore, the Town of Ayer requested and was approved for a 1-year project contract extension by the MassWorks Program administrator. The Project is making great progress/on-schedule. The Project is contractually required to be 100% completed by May 2023; 75% project completion is scheduled for October 2022.

**“Ayer Commons” Proposed Chapter 40B Project:** The Ayer Community Development Program Manager (*Co-Manager of proposed “Ayer Commons” Chapter 40B Housing Dev. Project*) and the Dir. of AOCED participated in a project status update ZOOM Meeting between NOAH officials (Neighborhood Of Affordable Housing, Inc. – non-profit organization developer) & Ayer municipal project team on Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. The meeting involved information exchange and, status updates on the advancement the proposed 100% Affordable 106-rental housing unit development at 65 Fitchburg Rd. The Ayer Community Development Program Manager/ Municipal Co-Manager “Ayer Commons” Project - provided PowerPoint presentation on Property Valuation Process Review and advanced new Recommended Approach to updated property appraisal valuation. It was agreed that municipal officials will request and provide letters of support from various municipal boards, commissions, local organizations, local businesses, regional agencies, and federal & state legislative officials to request the MA Dept. of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) to consider provision of an updated property appraisal, so as to assure the strength of the preliminary financial structuring (with state agencies) of the proposed 100% affordable housing development.

**\$4.8 Million Comprehensive Downtown Ayer Main Street/Sidewalk Re-Design/Re-Construction Project (Federal TIP Grant):** On Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup> the Dir. AOCED & Dir. Ayer DPW conducted a strategic ZOOM Meeting with transportation engineering/design consultants with WorldTech (municipal engineering/design consultants Downtown Ayer Main Street TIP Project). At this important meeting the Dir. of AOCED & Dir. DPW advanced the updated recommended design plan for Main Street in Downtown Ayer. As follows - Downtown Ayer’s Main Street will be designed as ADA compliant, “All-Inclusive”, and as a “Complete Street”, the sidewalks will remain at their current width, sidewalk trees will be introduced to provide shade and to cool-down unhealthy heat-island effect, dedicated bicycle lanes will be introduced on both the north & south side of the street, all on-street parking will remain with 7-ft. parking lanes, the east & west bound vehicular travel lanes will be narrowed to 11ft. wide which will effectively calm & slow down the heavy trucking vehicles passing through Downtown Ayer (*as well as transforming Main Street into a more pedestrian/customer safe and business-friendly destination*), crosswalks will be re-located to proper intersection locations, intersections crosswalks will be improved, intersections will be re-configured into proper right-angle forms to calm fast/reckless turning vehicles and enhance pedestrian safety – thus functionally transforming Downtown Ayer’s Main Street into a safe, healthy, enjoyable, attractive and high-performing business, social and cultural center of civic life. The design/engineering consultants of WorldTech agreed with The Dir. of AOCED & Dir. of DPW with the new design approach and have begun producing the updated design plans. These updated proposed plans will next be presented to officials of MassDOT for compliance review and next steps. The AOCED working in coordination with Ayer DPW, Ayer PD and Ayer FD must now work to accelerate (Federal TIP-Transportation Improvement Plan) funding through the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) in the upcoming year.

**Prospect New Light-Industrial Manufacturing Company:** On May 24<sup>th</sup>, the Dir. of AOCED, the Ayer Town Planner, and Ayer Building Commissioner/Code Enforcement Officer participated in a ZOOM Meeting set-up by the owner of a light-industrial manufacturing company that is prospecting for location/s in the Town of Ayer. The municipal team will provide requested information, detail, clarification on prospective issues involved with municipal site plans, regulatory requirements, code compliance, public infrastructure, operational performance-standards, and interdepartmental coordination through the prospecting phase.