

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: August 2022

Respectfully submitted by Alan S. Manolian, Dir. AOCED

Newton Street Folk & Arts Festival in Downtown Ayer: The 2nd Annual Newton Street Folk & Arts Festival is scheduled for Saturday, October 1st. The Dir. of AOCED was in full event management/production-mode during the month of August.

\$282,640 MA Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant Awarded to Town of Ayer & Devens Enterprise Commission:

The AOCED was notified in early August that the Town of Ayer & Devens Enterprise Commission were awarded a \$282,640 MVP Action Grant to fund a most innovative “Pocket Forest” aka “Miyawaki Forest” Planting Pilot Project for Ayer’s neighborhoods that are most vulnerable to adverse climate-change impacts, including heat-island expansion, lack of trees & greenspace, bad air quality resulting from constant locomotive/freight railroad exhaust & heavy trucking routes, storm-water street flooding, and neighborhood disinvestment and property neglect. This national landmark “climate-change” pilot project will engage the families of Ayer’s most disadvantaged neighborhoods in training, selecting, designing, planting and maintaining innovative Pocket Forests in the selected neighborhoods. All municipal departments, boards, commissions, local organizations & groups, Ayer’s students & educators, and local companies will work together to introduce Ayer’s “Pocket Forests” to the region. The Pilot Project kicks-off in October 2022.

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

During the month of August, new water line construction on both West Main Street & Sculley Rd., storm-water drainage infrastructure, and sewer line improvements along the entire West Main Street were substantially completed. Weekly Construction Project Status Meetings are conducted via ZOOM by the Dir. of Public Works. With the substantial completion of water/sewer lines on West Main, construction activity shifted to the proximity of the intersection at the Historic Devens Verbeck Gate and the brook large culvert at McPherson Ave. Due to ongoing material supply chain challenges, the curbing scheduled to be installed in late August & September has been delayed until March of 2023. The Project is contractually required to be 100% completed by May 2023; 75% project completion is scheduled for October 2022.

Restoration/Preservation of the Historic (1943) Ayer Howitzer Cannon: The Dir. of AOCED was tasked with providing a full historic report on the significance and origins of the (1943) 105MM M3 Howitzer that was placed at Ayer Town Hall in 1985 being gifted to the town by the Cote Family of Ayer in memory of Staff Sargent Leon A. Cote (1919-1944). The Dir. of AOCED outreached to five (5) local companies requesting a Cost Estimate for the proposed restoration/preservation. Certified Welding & Fabrication of Shirley MA provided a Cost Estimate of \$7,700. The Town manager & Dir. AOCED are scheduled to attend the 9/7/22 Ayer Community Preservation Commission to request

\$15,000 in Community Preservation Act funding to complete the restoration/preservation of the (1943) Howitzer and to construct a new high-quality concrete & granite block base pad to protect & preserve the Historic Howitzer for future generations.

Ayer New “All-Inclusive” Playground/Kiddie Junction Design – “Kids With Disabilities” Public Design Input Events: The Dir. of AOCED in coordination with the Ayer Disabilities Commission conducted the Ayer New “All-Inclusive” Playground “Kids With Disabilities” Public Design Input Happenings on Thursday Night, August 11th 6:00PM & Saturday Morning, August 13th 11:00AM. The Dir. of AOCED/Ayer Disabilities Commission proposed the “All-Inclusive” Public Design events in order to assure that families of children with disabilities (including physical disabilities, levels of autism, and more) have direct input on how the new playground could be better designed to provide for the needs of all Ayer children of current and future generations. Thanks to members of the Ayer Disabilities Commission for attending/facilitating the Public Design Input Events at Pirone Park.