

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 September 2022

Date: October 20, 2022

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

The Planning Board met in person at the Ayer Town Hall on **Thursday, September 8 and Tuesday, September 27, 2022.**

Development Review:

ANRs: There were no ANR (*lot line adjustments, lot splits or lot consolidations*) in September, 2022.

Road Acceptances: At its September 27 meeting, the Planning Board voted to accept the layout of the remainder of the Riley Jane subdivision, namely the Pleasant Street extension, as a Town Way and communicated such to the Ayer Select Board.

Site Visits: ---

Site Plans: There were no current Site Plan applications before the Planning Board in September, though several are being lined up for future meetings later in the fall, see list below.

Working with applicants on pending applications:

During September, the Town Planner spend considerable time working with potential applicants for Site Plan review that will likely be filed later this fall. These include:

- Platt Builders, 109 Central Avenue (former 'Ayer Moving and Storage' site) – Public Hearing scheduled for October 11
- Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Scully Road
- 22 Fitchburg Road, Site Plan modifications to Hannaford site
- Historic Fire Station at 14 Washington Street
- Nasoya Foods plant expansion, New England Way

Subdivisions:

Stratton Hill, David Moulton, off of Wright Road, continued:

The Planning Board continued its review of the proposed 35-lot OSRD subdivision into September, at which peer review of the traffic study was in the forefront of discussion. The Town Planner continued research into legal and planning related concerns that have come up during the course of the Public Hearings, especially environmental concerns and waivers. The Planning Board continued the Public Hearings for this project into October with approval from the applicant.

Ongoing Projects continuing into September 2022:

Zoning Bylaw amendments: The Town Planner and Director of Economic and Community Development met with the Planning Board to see if the Board would be willing to sponsor two amendments to the Ayer Zoning Bylaw to **1.** Reduce the parking requirement in the West Ayer Village Form-Based Code District to one parking space per dwelling unit, regardless of the number of bedrooms and **2.** Increase the allowable number of stories in the district to four (4) from the three (3) presently allowed. The Planning Board chose to take these under advisement and not bring them before the October Special Town Meeting, though they may in the coming year.

The Town Planner also continued to work on the reorganization of the Parking section of the Ayer Zoning Bylaw, which is a large project likely to be ready for presentation at a Town Meeting in 2023.

Land-Use Meetings in September 2022:

The September Land-Use meetings were held on September 1 and 15. Current and potential future projects under review by the Land-Use Boards and related concerns were discussed, including Ayer Commons 40B project at 65 Fitchburg Road, Platt Builders anticipated move to 109 Central Avenue, and Nasoya Foods plant addition on New England Way in the Industrial district.

MBTA Communities Act:

The Ayer Planning Department is gearing up to meet 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.

In September, the Town Planner reviewed the revised rules from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and discussed these with staff from the MRPC. A meeting was set up for early October to go over these rules and determine how they might impact Ayer's compliance with the MBTA Communities Act. DHCD has moved the date by which each affected municipality must submit a Compliance Plan to the end of January, 2023.