

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 2023
Date: February 21, 2023

1. Project Review and Planning Board meetings:

The Planning Board met in person at the Ayer Town Hall on **January 10 and 24, 2023.**

Development Review:

ANRs: There were no ANR (*lot line adjustments, lot splits or lot consolidations*) in January, 2023.

Road Acceptances: There were no road acceptances in January, 2023.

Site Visits: The Planning Board conducted a site visit to the Nasoya Foods USA plant at 1 New England Way on January 5, 2023 and was joined by the DPW Superintendent and Conservation Agent. At that site visit several engineering and site design issues were identified that will require minor plan revisions and engineering consideration.

Site Plans: The Planning Board opened a public hearing for a major plant expansion at **Nasoya Foods USA** at 1 New England Way on December 27, 2022.

Nasoya Foods USA has site plan and special permit applications before the Planning Board for three approvals related to their proposed plant expansion: 1. Site Plan approval for a proposed increase in total building area from 138,902 sq.ft. to 241,960 sq.ft.; 2. A special permit pursuant to Section 8.1.4.C.3 of the Ayer Zoning Bylaws for work within the aquifer protection overlay district, and 3. A major Stormwater Management permit for work exceeding an area of work greater than 40,000 sq.ft.

The Planning Board continued the hearings to its January and later February 2023 meetings. During the course of the first hearing dates, the Planning Board noted the need for additional information to address both its concerns and those of the DPW. Revised plans will be reviewed at a forthcoming meeting.

Ayer Solar II-B: The Town Planner spent considerable time in January documenting the history of approvals and the conditions related thereto for the Ayer Solar II-B project, given recently identified site work deficiencies and deviations from the approved (2020) Site Plan. He was assisted in this effort by the DPW Superintendent and Conservation Agent.

The Planning Board has requested that the applicant submit a completely revised application for Site Plan Modification before the issuance of any certificates of completion.

Forthcoming Site Plan applications: The Town Planner spent time in January processing applications, public hearing notices, etc. for forthcoming site plan applications that will be before the Planning Board in February. These include building renovations and construction of five (5) apartment units at the **Historic Central Fire Station at 14 Washington Street** and a change of use from automotive detailing to light manufacturing at **1 Bishop Road**.

Subdivisions:

Stratton Hill, David Moulton, off of Wright Road:

After some further refinement, the Town Planner distributed five (5) **Requests for Proposals** (RFP) for **engineering review** of the forthcoming Definitive Plan application to engineering firms in the area.

As of the end of the month, three (3) firms have expressed initial interest in submitting a proposal. It is hoped that a firm / engineer can be retained by the end of February.

Land-Use Meetings in January 2023:

The interdepartmental Land-Use Group met on **January 19** to review ongoing and anticipated projects before the Land-Use Boards (Planning Board, ZBA, Conservation Commission).

MBTA Communities Act:

During January, the Town Planner, with assistance from the Community and Economic Development Director, participated in several ‘model runs’ of a GIS-based mathematical model prepared by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) with Planners from the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC).

He is glad to report that the results of the final model run indicate that Ayer **is in compliance** with the MBTA Communities Act in terms of providing the required potential number of future dwelling units at the necessary density of 15 units per acre within a half-mile radius of the Ayer Commuter Rail Station. The West Ayer Village Form-Based Code district helped push Ayer ‘over the top’ in terms of this compliance. Without that Form-Based Code district Ayer would have been just shy of meeting the requirements.

The Planner then submitted the necessary report to the Massachusetts DHCD by the deadline at the end of the month. Because it appears that few of the subject towns are claiming compliance, Ayer may need to submit additional documentation later in 2023 once the DHCD has prepared a more detailed reporting template for towns in compliance with the Act.