

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: June 2023

Respectfully submitted by Alan S. Manolian, Dir. AOCED

Formation of the “Ayer+Devens 2033 Study & Report Committee”: The Dir. of AOCED is pleased to report that Ayer+Devens 2033 Study & Report Committee “Request for Expressions of Interest” outreach communication issued in May has resulted in the submission of eight (8) completed Application Forms, by residents of Ayer, to the Office of the Town Manager and Ayer Select Board for consideration for appointment to the new committee. It is planned for the Ayer+Devens 2033 Study & Report Committee to be appointed in July, starting its work in August/September 2023. It is currently proposed to appoint (4) four Ayer residents to the Committee, which will also include a member of the Ayer Select Board, two (2) members of the Planning Board, and the Dir. AOCED.

Ayer Disabilities Commission: The Dir. of AOCED, who also serves as a member and Secretary of the Ayer Disabilities Commission (ADC), scheduled and participated in the June 15th meeting of the ADC. The ADC continues engaging in reviewing the Ayer municipal Personnel Manual – Reasonable Accommodation Policy, reviewing & commenting on the comprehensive re-design/re-construction of Main Street & Columbia Street in Downtown Ayer, and ADA-features of the new Playground at Pirone Park.

Ayer Center for Active Living/\$300,000 Schematic Design & Cost Estimation Grant Application: The Dir. of AOCED identified and recommended the application for a \$300,000 MA Executive Office of Housing & Livable Communities (EOHLC) grant to fund the schematic design, preliminary engineering & construction cost estimation of a proposed Ayer Center for Active Living (Senior Center) at a possible location at Pirone Park. The Dir. of AOCED prepared, packaged and submitted the grant application on Friday, June 2, 2023. The results of the competitive grant application will be announced in October 2023.

Ayer/Devens FY 23/24 Main Street Neighborhood Pocket Forest Project Grant

Administration: During the month of June, the Dir. of AOCED was fully-engaged in the administration of project grant close-out duties. The contractual close-out of the \$282,600 MA MVP Action Grant & Project is due for June 30, 2023. The Dir. of AOCED is pleased to report that the MVP Action Grant for the Ayer/Devens Pocket Forest Project was successfully closed-out by the June 30th contractual deadline.

Park Street Redesign/Reconstruction Project – Underground Overhead Utility

Poles & Lines: The Dir. of AOCED strongly outreached to officials at National Grid in order to get updated response and report on the status of the \$15,000 National Grid Design Plan to underground the utility poles & lines along Park Street. The Dir. of AOCED was successful in getting a response from National Grid and in scheduling &

conducting an project update Microsoft Teams meeting on Monday, June 26th between Ayer municipal officials, Ayer project consultants at Green International, Inc. & National Grid officials. National Grid provided update on plan production delivery – the design plan will be delivered to the Town of in mid-July.

Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/ Downtown Ayer Main Street Re-Design/Construction Project Funding: The Dir. of AOCED attended the June 28th (MPO) Meeting in order to again (as in May) strongly advocate for an escalation of the (TEC) Funding Score for the Downtown Ayer Project – and to accelerate the approval and award of project funding for 2026. The Dir. of AOCED is pleased to report that the “Downtown Ayer Main Street Project” has been re-scored and is now (the highest scoring project) in the region!

\$3.1 million MassWorks West Main Street Public Infrastructure Improvement Project Grant Close-out Administration: The Dir. of AOCED reports that during the month of June the landmark \$3.1 million MassWorks Grant for West Main Street (future West Ayer Village) was successfully closed-out.

Ayer Affordable Housing Trust (AAHT): The Ayer Affordable Housing Trust held their meeting on June 28th. The Trust discussed their bylaw and the required independent audit. Since the Trust account is audited with the Town’s Audit, it was recommended that the bylaw be amended to allow the Trustees to trigger an independent audit as needed. Also discussed was how much the Trust should request from CPC funds for the coming year. These funds would be used for the Rental Assistance program and affordable housing development.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee: The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee’s monthly meeting was canceled due to lack of quorum. There was not a meeting for the

Smaller Homes/Smaller Lot Working Group: This group has started the process of reviewing the Town’s zoning as it relates to housing within our community.

Proposed Ayer Commons – 40B Comprehensive Permit Project: There have been no new developments regarding the 40B project for 65 Fitchburg Road. The applicant, NOAH, is currently completing their application with the state’s Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, formally DHCD, which is their subsidizing agent.

Ayer Fuel and Housing Assistance Emergency Fund: The Ayer Fuel and Housing Assistance board received no applications in June. Since the Emergency Fund inception of January 2023, the fund has helped a total of five families in need.

CDBG: Ayer Emergency Housing Rehabilitation Program – Ayer Program Income: The Emergency Housing Rehabilitation program currently has \$5,000 of Program Income in its budget. The overall Program Income account’s current balance is \$48,778.91.