

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: November 2023

Respectfully submitted by Alan S. Manoian, Dir. AOCED

MBTA Communities Land-Use Zoning Project:

The Dir. of AOCED assisted in coordinating and scheduling an information-exchange and professional guidance meeting on Nov. 1st at Ayer Town Hall between Karen Chapman, Senior Planner, Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC), Danny Ruiz, Ayer Town Planner, and Dir., of AOCED. The meeting focused on reviewing and confirming the status of the Town of Ayer's required application/submission/plan to the MA Executive Office of Housing & Livable Communities (EOHLC) to meet the new housing zoning requirements of the state for communities along the MBTA commuter passenger service.

Devens Jurisdictional Framework Committee (DJFC):

The Dir. of AOCED, who serves as a member of the DJFC, attended the November 8th meeting of the DJFC at Ayer Town Hall.

Ayer/Shirley Regional Middle (ASRMS) School Pocket Forest Project:

The Dir. of AOCED attended the Nov. 9th Project Team Site Meeting of the (next) innovative & healthful Ayer/Devens Pocket Forest Project at the Ayer/Shirley Regional Middle School. Dir. of AOCED, Devens Enterprise Commission officials, ASRMS Science Teachers/Faculty, project consultants BSC Group, and students surveyed the school property to select the best site for the 2nd Pocket Forest to be planted in Central Massachusetts – the 1st being Ayer's East Main Street Neighborhood Pocket Forest. The ASRMS Pocket Forest will be adopted by the students of the school and will become a focal point of scientific/environmental/social learning, knowledge, discovery & pride for generations of young Ayer/Shirley scholars and their devoted teachers.

Planning the 8th Annual Downtown Ayer Winter Holiday Candlelight Stroll & Tree Lighting Ceremony:

The Dir. of AOCED began planning, coordination, promotion and activities for the 8th Annual Candlelight Stroll & Tree Lighting Ceremony scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 2nd at 5:15PM. Ayer's wonderful Candlelight Stroll & Tree Lighting Ceremony always takes place on the 1st Saturday in December. A Municipal Team Event Coordination Meeting was conducted on Nov. 16th to prepare for the upcoming festivities. The Town will have 500+ stroller candles made at Ymitto's Candle Factory in Lowell ready for our Main Street Candlelight Strollers! Thanks to our Assistant Town Manager, Carly Antonellis, for once again working with our generous local business/corporate sponsors for their greatly valued financial contributions that bring the beautiful Holiday Lights to Downtown Ayer, Historic Ayer Town Hall & the Carlton Circle (Rotary).

Town of Ayer Disabilities Commission (ADC):

In response to a vote of the ADC, the Dir. of AOCED, who serves as a member of the Ayer Disabilities Commission, drafted and submitted to the Ayer Town Planner inquiry/comments with regard to the proposed on-site handicapped parking spaces depicted in the submitted site plan (to the Ayer Planning Board) for the proposed redevelopment of the commercial/residential property located at 42 Park Street, known as the historic 1824 James Stuart Park House. The ADC is also advancing the creation of a local handicap equipment/devices lending program for the benefit of Ayer residents living with disabilities.

MONTHLY REPORT – November 2023**AYER OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT****Ayer Affordable Housing Trust (AAHT)**

The Ayer Affordable Housing Trust did not have a meeting in November. Final review of the FY24 Ayer Rental Assistance program will be completed in December and the Rental Assistance Program application period will open January 2, 2024.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee

The Affordable Housing Committee had their monthly meeting on Friday the 17th. The Committee reviewed material from its “Future of Housing in Ayer” Public Input Session held in October, particularly the responses to the Visual Preference activity and Breakout groups.

Proposed Ayer Commons – 40B Comprehensive Permit Project

NOAH (Neighborhood of Affordable Housing) continues to work through the State approval process. No current news.

Ayer Fuel and Housing Assistance Emergency Fund

The Ayer Fuel and Housing Assistance board received no applications for assistance in November.

CDBG**Ayer Housing Rehabilitation Program – Ayer Program Income**

In November the office of Community & Economic development received a request for emergency rehabilitation. We are processing the homeowner’s application for assistance.