

Ayer Office of Community & Economic Development

Monthly Report: March 2024

Respectfully submitted by Alan S. Manoian, Dir. AOCED

Town of Ayer Devens Resolution Committee (DRC):

The Town of Ayer Devens Resolution Committee Meeting did not schedule/conduct a meeting for the month of March. During the month of March, the Dir. of AOCED formulated, composed, and produced a DRAFT (2024) “DRC Meeting Schedule & Community Engagement Activities” Overview Sheet for review & comment by the DRC Committee at the April 2024 Meeting.

Town of Ayer Disabilities Commission (ADC):

The Dir. of AOCED, who also serves as the ADC Secretary, attended the March 18, 2024 meeting of the Ayer Disabilities Commission. The ADC was joined by Town Manager & Municipal ADA Coordinator, Robert Pontbriand for the entire meeting. Primary Agenda items included next steps with the formulation, development and launch of the proposed ADC “Disability Equipment Gifting Program”. The ADC voted to invite Dr. Katie Petrossi, Dir. Ayer Council on Aging to the April 29th ADC Meeting to discuss possibilities of locating a permanent program space for the “ADC Handicap Equipment Gifting Program” in the proposed new Ayer Senior Center Facility. Ongoing ADC work includes the continuous review and implementation of the (2020) Town of Ayer ADA Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan.

MRPC – Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting – Ayer Team Project Presentation Prep:

The Dir. AOCED in coordination with Office of the Town Manager, Ayer DPW Dir., and Tighe & Bond (project engineering consultants) participated and made the strategic Ayer Team Project Presentation at the MRPC Metropolitan Planning Organization Committee Meeting conducted on March 20, 2024. The team visual presentation proved most effective and demonstrably served to make a strong case to advance and accelerate the TIP funding schedule to hopefully 2026-27 – rather than the current 2029 proposed construction date. The proposed approx. \$4-5 million federally-funded MPO project would result in the comprehensive redesign and reconstruction of Main Street, Columbia Street (up to Central Ave.) and West Main Street to Overhead RR Bridge (past Ayer Fire Station) and including the intersection of Main Street & Park Street. The project includes roadway improvements, new sidewalks, new crosswalks, new lighting, new bicycle lanes, new roadway stormwater management, new directions & wayfinding signage and more! The last time Downtown Ayer’s Main Street was comprehensively re-designed and re-constructed was in 1984-85.

The 1st Birthday Mini-Festival of the Ayer East Main Street Neighborhood Pocket Forest:

The Dir. of AOCED in partnership with officials of the Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC) engaged in planning, sponsorship-fundraising, formulating, coordinating, promoting and administering in preparation for the 1st Birthday Mini-Festival of the East Main Street Neighborhood Pocket Forest scheduled for Saturday, April 27th.

Formulation/Composition/Production of (2024) Town of Ayer Community Development Strategy (CDS) for FY25 US HUD (CDBG) Community Development Block Grant:

In March the Dir. of AOCED formulated, composed and produced the required (updated) Town of Ayer "Community Development Strategy" to qualify for FY25 US HUD CDBG Block Grant to fund ongoing & critically-needed Ayer Housing Rehabilitation Program. The updated Community Development Strategy was presented to and voted favorably upon by the Ayer Select Board at their scheduled March 6th Meeting.

Ayer Affordable Housing Trust (AAHT):

The Ayer Affordable Housing Trust did not meet in the month of March. They plan to meet in the first week of April.

Ayer Affordable Housing Committee:

The Ayer Affordable Housing Committee met on March 15th. They reviewed the proposed changes to the Zoning Bylaws which will be presented at the Spring Town meeting.

Proposed Ayer Commons – 40B Comprehensive Permit Project:

No new update.

Ayer Fuel and Housing Assistance Emergency Fund:

The Ayer Fuel and Housing Assistance board received no application for assistance in February.

US Dept. HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):

The Office of Community & Economic Development submitted their FY24 CDBG grant application this month. This is an approx. \$280,000 application to fund the Ayer Housing Rehabilitation Program. Should we receive this grant the office plans to rehabilitate seven low-income housing units.

Ayer Housing Rehabilitation Program – Ayer Program Income

The current emergency housing rehabilitation project was completed this month. This project included a roof replacement for a roof that was leaking and a replacement of a failed hot water heater.