

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

AUGUST 2021

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for August 2021.

Additional news specific to Groton Economic Development is found here:

<http://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/news>

Economic Development Activities:

- COVID Mask Mandate: The Town of Groton has imposed a local indoor mask mandate effective August 23rd impacting public spaces including private businesses. Distribution of this information is ongoing to best notify businesses of this situation. The City of Groton and the City of New London have also imposed the same mandate.
- American Recovery Plan Programming and Long Term Recovery Committee: Staff continues to strategize best approaches with the Long Term Recovery Committee. Staff and the Committee are focused on prioritizing funding categories and a community needs assessment including community engagement prior to the selection of individual projects. The Town of Groton has received \$4.6 million separate from other direct funding to the School Administration, City of Groton and Groton Long Point. Such funding can be used for the following national objectives:
 - To respond to the negative impacts of the COVID pandemic, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits as well as aid to affected industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality;
 - To respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers;
 - For the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the COVID-19 public health emergency relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency; and
 - To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.
- PPE Stockpile Project: Staff has ordered, received and stockpiled a significant quantity of PPE which is in a secure location. Approximately 60% of the materials are on hand in case PPE supply chains become strained due to demand. Staff will use distribution packages in the event materials are not readily available for purchase. At this moment, supplies to the community are easily and readily available. Staff spot checks local retailers for availability.
- Marketing/Initiatives: Staff has been researching online community engagement platforms with the objective of using software to solicit public input on various future initiatives. “Bang The Table” has been selected including their Engagement HQ platform. A soft launch is planned for later in September. The hope is that this tool will assist with vetting project ideas including those associated with American Recovery Plan funding.
- Shoreline Menus: Staff met with a representative from Shoreline Menus, a local delivery service company from Old Saybrook, seeking to expand into the Groton area. They currently serve various shoreline communities most recently adding New London and would like to offer services to Groton restaurants. The business model offers restaurants a solution to deliver at a more

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reasonable fee then the national delivery services. Shoreline Menus plans to hold a forum for businesses on September 13, 2021.

- Groton Housing Studies: Groton staff is managing two housing studies which will be available within weeks. The first is a “Market Rate Housing” study being completed by Camoin 310 focused on comparing needed new housing units in the supply pipeline to longer term demand. Preliminary results are illustrating the need for more supply even after existing pipeline housing projects are completed. The second is an “Affordable Housing Plan” being completed by RKG. Findings demonstrate strong demand for both lower income housing and also higher income housing. The inventory of middle-income housing is being targeted by both income brackets due to low inventory in both lower and higher income classifications.
- Naviretail: Staff continues coordinating with the national retail consultant to attracting businesses to Groton that are expanding and that match local consumer demands and preferences. Vacant storefronts and properties are being shared nationwide with expanding businesses that would serve Groton’s market.

Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): There has not been any project activity since the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZ&C) has signaled to staff there is no interest in the larger mixed-use vision. The Commission is focused on creating the appropriate zoning regulation for the 80+ acres of property with 160,000 square feet of existing building space and environmentally contaminated property. Half the total land area will be redeveloped and half will be protected as public open space. The state, as the property owner, has been closely following this project and inquiries about its progress. <https://resplrhomes.com/mystic-river-bluffs/> is the developer’s project website.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): Staff and ThayerMahan presented an update to the COW on August 24th. The final agreement is anticipated to the Town Council within two months. ThayerMahan has grown from three to over 60 employees in three years. They are committed to the project in making this their future world headquarters. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): PJ&A and Lennar plan to develop approximately 300 apartments on 17.75 acres encompassing four lots (two town-owned and two private-owned). Anticipated tax benefits will be in the order of \$1 million annually. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>
- Triton Square (former Seely School): A site plan is in hand for the construction of the new multi-family development. Construction will begin in 2021 for the 280-unit multi-family apartment development. Targeted future tenants are young professionals and “empty-nesters.” Anticipated future property tax revenue is in the magnitude of \$1 million annually. <https://www.seelyschool.com/>

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- Public Property Redevelopment (Colonel Ledyard School): Bellsite LLC has communicated with staff about finalizing pre-development inspections in order to advance the project. Phase I will consist of converting the existing school building into between 14-20 apartments. Phase II will include new buildings and apartments (less than 60 apartments) on the rear of the site.
<https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Pleasant Valley School): Staff has been advancing the multi-family housing development project involving the future sale of the property.
<https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>

Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 5 trade name certificates this month in the Town of Groton.

Social Media Metrics:

- 780 Facebook followers, negligible change
** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 81 LinkedIn page followers, negligible change from June.
** Please follow the LinkedIn page and share our posts to your network:
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/groton-economic-development/>
** Please like and SHARE posts on social media to expand the reach!
- Website Metrics: Website Metrics (July 28-Aug 26) www.exploremoregroton.com
 - Total Sessions: 1,133 (965 new/168 returning), 29 pct. below 12-month avg.
 - Pages per session: 1.65, 2 pct. below 12-month avg.
 - Total Page Views: 1,869, 30 pct. below 12-month avg.
 - Average Time Duration: 1 minute 11 sec, 10 pct. above 12-month avg.
- There are 530 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, a three-percent increase from July. Email addresses collected from meetings and events are being added to the mailing list.
(<http://www.exploremoregroton.com/groton/news-and-media/sign-up-for-our-newsletter>)

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Unemployment Data (Percent %)

Month	Groton	Norwich-New London- Westerly Labor Market Area	Connecticut
January 2020	3.7	4.5	4.4
February 2020	3.6	4.4	4.4
March 2020	3.0	3.8	3.6
April 2020	11.1	13.8	8.0
May 2020	12.6	15.0	9.4
June 2020	11.8	13.3	10.2
July 2020	10.9	12.4	10.3
August 2020	8.6	10.2	8.2
September 2020	8.0	9.1	7.5
October 2020	6.0	6.9	5.8
November 2020	8.0	8.7	7.7
December 2020	7.5	8.5	7.5
January 2021	9.1	9.5	8.5
February 2021	8.7	9.4	8.3
March 2021	8.8	9.4	8.3
April 2021	8.2	8.7	7.6
May 2021	6.6	6.8	6.0
June 2021	6.9	7.5	6.9
July 2021	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

Key Property Development Updates:

- 220 Route 12, Stop and Shop, interior renovations
- 985 A Poquonnock Road, Starbucks, interior renovations

Keep up to date on town meetings including agendas, minutes etc. by visiting the Calendar on the town's website here: <http://www.agendasuite.org/iip/groton>

Click here for events going on around Groton: <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/events/?v=list>

Keep up to date on news pertaining to Groton & Economic Development by going to the website here: <http://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/news>