

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

MARCH 2021

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for March 2021.

Additional news specific to Groton Economic Development is found here:

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

### **Economic Development Activities:**

- COVID-19 (General Response): Staff continues to use the ExploreMoreGroton Business Assistance web page <https://bit.ly/GrotonBizRecovery> to distribute key government and industry guidance specific to COVID. More business reopening with increased occupancy on March 19<sup>th</sup> as per the Governor's order <https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Coronavirus-Business-Recovery/Sector-Rules-for-Reopen>. The Long Term Recovery Committee met on March 24<sup>th</sup>. There was discussion regarding the future American Rescue Plan funding Groton will receive.
- Marketing/Initiatives: Staff finalized coordination with Site Selection Magazine to promote Groton in the March 2021 edition. <https://siteselection.com/digitaledition/2021/mar/> The Connecticut coverage begins on page 167 and Groton's advertisement is on page 177. This edition spotlights Connecticut including statewide efforts to attract business and investment. The social media marketing campaign launched on Facebook. Please like and share the posts to your networks for a wider reach. The BlueTech Marketing Campaign was developed during the Strategic Action Plan process as a method of supporting a key emerging industry in our area, BlueTech. The BlueTech industry sector represents the combination of advanced technology industries that are related to marine uses, including Offshore Wind and Underwater Unmanned Vehicles. Working with our website developer Golden Shovel Agency, we developed a series of web pages providing information specific to companies in this industry sector. The pages can be found by going to [www.bluetechgroton.com](http://www.bluetechgroton.com).
- Business Forum: Staff coordinated with EDC Chair Bill Groves to plan an EDC business forum to be held on April 12<sup>th</sup> involving the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTER). The event has been scheduled and added to <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/events/?v=list> and also Facebook. Registration is required. Such news is also in this month's Economic Development Newsletter.
- Chelsea Groton Headquarters Expansion: Staff has been in discussions with Chelsea Groton for a while regarding their plans to expand their headquarters in downtown Groton. This facility will be entirely rehabilitated and also expanded. OPDS staff (planning and economic development) is working with Chelsea Groton on approvals, variance, and business assistance. Initial construction is anticipated by mid-2021 with a one year construction schedule.
- Wayfinding Sign Program: Staff has been coordinating with BETA to finalize the wayfinding sign packing for future bid and implementation. First phase implementation will include a portion of downtown Mystic and also the intersection of Poquonnock/North Road including the North Road corridor.
- Mystic Parking Study: Staff participated in the March 15<sup>th</sup> Mystic Parking Committee meeting.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

MARCH 2021

The final study will be presented to the public shortly. The consultant targeted challenges and opportunities with focus on both on-street and off-street parking. Committee members gained a better understanding for the need to better manage parking. The study includes specific recommendations addressing managing existing parking and also expanding parking options.

- Industrial Property Interest: Staff is involved with significant interest regarding Groton's industrially-zoned properties. Part of this discussion is specific to data centers growth in Groton. Connecticut recently passed legislation allowing data centers to locate in communities if host community agreements were locally approved. The Town Council will soon be addressing this matter. <https://www.hartfordbusiness.com/article/lamont-signs-data-center-incentives-bill-into-law>

### Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): The "Mystic River Bluffs" project continues to advance. See the link for more project information where more information has been uploaded <https://resplerhomes.com/mystic-river-bluffs/>. Coursey and Company is actively conducting public outreach on behalf of the Respler Homes development team including a new project Facebook page. Groton's Planning & Zoning Commission continues to address the draft zoning district creation. The Commission is focused on creating the appropriate zoning regulation to match appropriate future development on the 80+ acres of property. Half the total land area will be developed and half will be protected as public open space. Additional private property has been acquired by the developer for roadway access and additional residential use. Great Blue, a public survey company, has been hired to evaluate community sentiment towards the use of the Pratt Building and to gauge public understanding for this project. The survey process is being conducted in March into April to focus heavily on the performing arts theater option for the Pratt Building. The state, the property owner, has been closely following this project and inquires about its progress.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): Staff and ThayerMahan are working on the final option agreement to be addressed by the Town Council by summer. The building has experienced increased vandalism over the past weeks. 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): Staff presented to the Council and RTM in March the option/sales agreement. Final agreements have been completed. PJ&A and Lennar will 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>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Seely School): Demolition has begun for the existing single-story school building. Construction for the "Triton Square" project will begin early in 2021 for the 308-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/>

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

MARCH 2021

- Public Property Redevelopment (Colonel Ledyard School): Final Groton option/sales approval to occurred in March. Bellsite, LLC (Bill Bellock) is eager to move this multi-family residential project forward. 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 and the Review Committee completed the review process including final responses and site visits. The Committee determined a recommended “preferred developer.” Discussions are ongoing with this developer. The recommendation will be forwarded to the Town Council. <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:

- 721 Facebook followers, negligible change  
\*\* Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:  
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 73 LinkedIn page followers, negligible change  
\*\* 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: (January 20, 2021 – February 18, 2021) [www.exploremoregroton.com](http://www.exploremoregroton.com)

- Total Sessions: 1407 (1216 new/191 returning), up 47 percent
- Pages per session: 1.92, down 5 percent
- Total Page Views: 2,701, up 39 percent
- Average Time Duration: 1 min 1 sec, down 34 percent
- 488 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, minimal change  
Email addresses collected from meetings and events are added to the mailing list.  
(<http://www.exploremoregroton.com/groton/news-and-media/sign-up-for-our-newsletter>)

### 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

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

MARCH 2021

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
<b>January 2021</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>

\*increase between December 2020 and January 2021

### Key Property Development Updates:

- |                       |                       |  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| • 54 West Main Street | Brewery               | Construction ongoing                                       |
| • 3 Water Street      | The Standard          | Construction ongoing                                       |
| • Seely School Drive  | Triton Square         | Demolition has begun on the building                       |
| • 13 Fort Hill Road   | New England Hemp Farm | Construction ongoing                                       |
| • 647 Long Hill Road  | Former Tim Hortons    | Recently sold and plans have been submitted for a Popeye's |

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>