

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

MAY 2021

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for May 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 <https://bit.ly/GrotonBizRecovery> to distribute COVID business guidance and resources. CT further relaxed COVID restrictions on May 19th. Groton staff is preparing to receive American Rescue Plan funding. An application process will be used to review project requests.
- IEDC Economic Development Week: The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) designated May 9 -15, 2021 as Economic Development Week. During that week OPDS staff ran a social media campaign on the Groton Economic Development Facebook page. Each day staff scheduled three posts that included an initial post on the topic of the day (see list below of topics), a survey, and a clip from an economic development promotional video done in the early 90's.
 - Overview/What Is Economic Development
 - The Importance of Small Businesses
 - Quality of Life/Workforce Attraction & Retention
 - Business Support & Growth
 - BlueTech/Diversifying Industry Sectors

The campaign was successful bringing the total reach (how many users see the post) for the month to 13,952 (up 434 %) and engagement (likes, shares, comments) to 3,073 (up 1,949 %) and adding an additional 45 Facebook followers.

- Marketing/Initiatives: Staff continued to refine the Groton "BlueTech" web page <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/bluetech-company-thayermahan-experiences-meteoric-eisenbeiser-aicp/>. The BlueTech industry sector represents the combination of advanced technology industries that are related to marine uses, including Offshore Wind and Underwater Unmanned Vehicles. On May 4th, staff met with the new Executive Director of the Naval and Maritime Consortium (NMC) Walker Potts. Lastly, staff met with Naviretail staff on May 10th and 11th to target new retail for Groton including those preferences identified in a recent Groton consumer retail survey. Naviretail will assist at national trade shows in marketing to select retailers. Staff met with the Medtronics local Groton location Senior Operation's Manager on May 24th. He explained the company's growth plans including the hiring of 30+ new full-time staff and to address strong product demand.
- Groton Housing Studies: Groton staff initiated and managed two housing analyses. The first includes 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 housing projects are completed. The second is an "Affordable Housing Plan" being completed by RKG that is preliminarily finding that there is 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. Both studies will be available this summer.
- Mystic Parking Plan: Staff has been working with John Burke Consulting to analyze the

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Mystic Parking challenge and to find solutions. The plan takes an integrated approach and does not rely on simply one solution. There was a presentation on May 27th in which the existing peak and non-peak parking values were offered. One of the largest concerns is the lack of movement on street parked vehicles within the business zone. In essence, some of the vehicles park in the two-hour zone for a significantly longer period of time. One strategy is to enforce the maximum parking limit on street. Another option is to maximize the use of off-street parking for certain users. For example, many church and other private lots are underutilized during peak times. It may be possible to target Mystic employees for such lots. The study includes more recommendations and it can be found on the town's website.

- Data Center Development: Staff continues to communicate with the data center developer regarding plans for such development on large industrially-zoned parcels. The developer has options on the property and is working with interested data center users. Groton's location is attractive due to highway access, relatively affordable electricity rates, and fiber speed.

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://resplrhomes.com/mystic-river-bluffs/>. Groton's Planning & Zoning Commission will meet with OPDS staff shortly to discuss future zoning for this land area. Respler Homes will meet with the Commission shortly thereafter to have conversations regarding the project. 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. The state, as the property owner, has been closely following this project and inquires about its progress.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): Staff met with the RTM on May 12th and an approval was granted to dispose of the town property and allow future redevelopment. Staff and ThayerMahan are working on the final option agreement to be addressed by the Town Council by summer. 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 coordinated the completion of final legal agreements for such property. 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>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Seely School): Demolition of the former school building is complete. Construction on the "Triton Square" project will begin 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/>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Colonel Ledyard School): Staff coordinated approval of final agreements. The zoning amendment application was signed by the Town for the developer.

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Bellsite, LLC (Bill Bellock) met with the City of Groton's P&Z Commission on May 18th and the documentation was received. The developer 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 is coordinating the public disposition process with the RTM. Additionally, staff will begin discussions with the Council about next steps in the selection process. The Committee determined a recommended "preferred developer." Discussions are ongoing with this developer. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>

Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 6 trade name certificates this month in the Town of Groton.

Social Media Metrics:

- 773 Facebook followers, up 6%
** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 76 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: (April 27, 2021 – May 26, 2021) www.exploremoregroton.com

- Total Sessions: 1,616 (1,395 new/221 returning), down 26 percent
- Pages per session: 1.62, down 13 percent
- Total Page Views: 2,618, down 36 percent
- Average Time Duration: 57 sec, down 19 percent
- 504 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, negligible change from April.
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

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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

Key Property Development Updates:

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|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| • 0 Casino Road | Marina | Site Plan Submitted |
| • 15 Water Street | Restaurant | Site Plan Submitted |
| • Seely School Drive | Triton Square | Demolition continues |
| • 904 Poquonnock Road | Chelsea Groton
Headquarters | Site Plan Submitted |
| • 647 Long Hill Road | Popeye's | Construction has begun and has
included changes to the façade |

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>