

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

April 2016

The following documents economic development activities in April 2016.

Administration:

- Economic Development Specialist Position: Sam Eisenbeiser assumed the Economic Development Specialist position on April 11, 2016.

Economic Development Efforts:

- OPDS Budget: Staff presented the budget to Town Council on April 12th and the RTM Community and Economic Subcommittee on April 18th. To date, most items requested are still included in the budget with the exception of the Municipal Property Redevelopment funding project. Many individuals spoke in favor to the Town Council and RTM in April.
- Zoning Audit and Market Analysis: All comments from staff and the Focus Group have been received by Camoin. A final deliverable product is expected in early May. It will be posted on the web and also hard copies will be available to Board members. Another meeting with the Town Council to review next steps.
- Marketing and Promotions: The EDC brochure was finalized and printed for the EDC as a part of the "Business Outreach" effort. Guidance was provided to the EDC with recommendations on how to best approach businesses. Staff and Camoin are next focused on prepping for the web project, social media and hard copy materials. Funding for the dedicated economic development website is still within the FY 2017 budget for this initiative as well as for increased public relations and community signage.
- Great Blue Survey: Staff is finalizing an agreement with Great Blue Research, a Connecticut analytical company, to begin developing a survey instrument to assist in gauging consumer and business sentiment regarding the market area. This will drill down into individual preferences as a complement to the market analysis data. EDC members will be asked for input with the questions.
- Mystic Education Center (a.k.a. Mystic Oral School): Staff continues to field inquiries regarding the Mystic Education Center from prospects. Still awaiting funding and promotional collaborative agreement with the state.
- Airport Development Zone: Staff is completing the mapping, plan review, and build out assumptions for the ADZ application process. Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) has been assisting in coordinating with DECD and initiating the required economic analysis (job and business growth).
- Incentives: Staff continues to progress in developing an easy to use listing and explanation document. This will eventually be used to help with business inquiries.
- Economic Assistance Fund: Staff and EDC created a Task Force to address the modification for this fund. Meetings have yet to occur, but will be scheduled shortly. Two existing local businesses are still seeking funding assistance to expand.

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- Enterprise Zone: Staff is providing assistance to a local business in completing the business incentive application for state submittal.
- “Doing Business in Groton Guide”: The product is ongoing and has evolved from a simple welcome package. The Guide will focus on helping walk business through the process of starting and expanding business in Groton.
- Mystic Visitors Information Kiosk and “Pop Up Shop”: Staff continues discussing the idea of “pop up” shop within a vacant Mystic storefront on West Main. A visitor’s information center would be a part of that effort.
- Tax Incremental Financing (TIF): Staff attended another session on TIF and this information is being shared with others in Groton. The Market Analysis recommended use of this major redevelopment tool. Groton staff also met with a developer proposing to use TIF with a future development.
- Thames River Heritage Park: Staff is still active in bi-weekly meetings. An operator has been chosen and Memorial Day weekend is the targeted launch.
- I-95 Signage: CTDOT is replacing all signs on I-95 from New London to the RI border. Staff continues to meet with CTDOT and surrounding municipalities to address coordination and provide guidance. This is a multi-million dollar project. Exit 89, Mystic, and “Downtown Groton” are significant items of discussion.
- Community Signage: Staff has begun documenting photos for gateway and wayfinding signage. Project description narrative is developed in preparation for a future RFP.
- Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS): Staff participated in a SWOT analysis meeting with seCTer for the Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) on April 11th. The CEDS will be an ongoing multi-month effort.

Meetings/Outreach:

- Staff participated in meetings/conversations with partner agencies including CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), seCTer, CERC, Eastern CT Chamber, Greater Mystic Chamber, Groton Business Association, Mystic Merchants Association, Balfour Beatty, and the Governor’s Conference on Tourism. Staff also attended training on the use of the CTvisit.com website that was unveiled in April.
- Staff interaction with new and existing businesses is significant and growing. There were about 45 recorded inquiries and communications with business prospects in April. One involves a national hotel chain that will construct a new hotel due to market demand for modern accommodations.