

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

*April 2019*

The following summarizes economic development division activities for April 2019.

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>

### **Economic Development Activities:**

- Marketing: Staff began working with a photographer to assist in taking photos at key economic development events. Updated photos are critical to keeping the website fresh and attractive to visitors. We are receiving increased requests to post key information on the [www.exploremoregroton.com](http://www.exploremoregroton.com) website. Such information relates to special events, listed property, and general information. Additionally, Groton is receiving a higher number of inquiries pertaining to properties, investment opportunities, and those seeking to relocate.
- Thames River Innovation Place (TRIP): Staff has engaged in reviewing the Year 3 requests for funding. There were several submittals for limited funding. Impactful short-list projects have been selected and will be forwarded to CT Next Innovations for funding consideration. Staff assisted with the TRIP Board nominating committee to select and expand the TRIP Board. An Executive Director has been chosen and will begin in that capacity within weeks.
- Groton Economic Development Strategy: City and Town economic development staff met on April 11<sup>th</sup> with Camoin to complete a half-day discussion regarding future implementation. Another half-day meeting is required in May to fully complete discussion topics.
- Enterprise Zone (EZ) Legislation and Fixed Assessment Program: Groton staff tracked proposed legislation that would enable municipalities to exit the Enterprise Zone (EZ) program. The state has not consistently reimbursed municipalities for their share of the property tax exemption subsidy. Groton submitted written testimony in favor of the bill. CEDAS also formally supported the legislation in favor of municipal decision. The proposed Fixed Assessment (Tax Abatement) Program is the intended substitute to the EZ program.
- Economic Assistance Fund (EAF) Awards: Staff advanced two Economic Assistance Fund grant requests to the Town Council after being supported by the EDC. The Town Council approved both requests in full. SIFT Bakery, 5 Water Street, received \$28,300 for three-phase electrical upgrades, storm water system improvements, and sidewalk/roadway improvements for a commercial kitchen and dining. Grand Wine & Spirits, 255 Route 12, received \$59,000 for utility connections, storm water system improvements, and perimeter sidewalk construction for a retail development.
- Connecticut Economic Development Association (CEDAS): Staff is working to assist CEDAS in preparation for the May 8<sup>th</sup> Best Management Practices (BMP) program launch in Hartford. This program has been in the planning stages for approximately one year and will recognize leading

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communities that bridge economic development and land use planning. Groton is expected to be specifically recognized as a statewide leader with BMP's.

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): Staff has been involved with the legal reviews and discussions between the State, preferred developer and Town regarding this state property. The project entails a "village concept" for the large, 80+-acre property. Future public information meetings are now being planned to present the preferred developer and the redevelopment concept.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): Staff and DECD (Tricia Paesani) met with ThayerMahan to discuss state programming to further assist the project. A Letter of Intent (LOI) is being finalized between the Town and ThayerMahan outlining implementation steps. A public meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> (Town Council) at which ThayerMahan will openly present the highlights of the project. A similar City of Groton Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): Staff is working with legal representatives to finalize a draft land purchase agreement. All parties agree on the terms and the written agreement is being finalized. The Town Council will discuss the agreement shortly. A public meeting will also be held to conduct a presentation.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Seeley School): Formal reviews are ongoing. Interviews have been scheduled with the short-listed developers.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Colonel Ledyard School): Staff has been showing the property weekly to prospective interests. An RFP release is anticipated by the end of June.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Pleasant Valley School): Cut sheet project information pages are now complete and will be uploaded on the web. We are beginning to receive inquiries from developers seeking opportunities in Groton.

### **Economic Development Metrics:**

#### Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 5 trade name certificates this month in the Town of Groton. 24 total for 2019.

#### Social Media Metrics:

- 260 Facebook followers, up 5% from last month
- 33 LinkedIn followers up 6%
- \*\* Please like and SHARE posts on social media to expand the reach!

#### Website Metrics: (March 25 – April 23) [www.exploremoregroton.com](http://www.exploremoregroton.com)

- Total Sessions: 1,026 (830 new/196 returning), down 33%
- Pages per session: 2.01, down 4%

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- Total Page Views: 2,062, down 17%
- Average Time Duration: 2 min 1 second, up 3%
- 318 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, up 1%
- 33 followers to Groton's LinkedIn page, up 6%

\*\*Email addresses collected from meetings and events are now being added to the mailing list.  
(<http://www.exploremoregroton.com/groton/news-and-media/sign-up-for-our-newsletter>)

\*\*Follow our LinkedIn page and every week, go to organization page and share each post to your network: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/groton-economic-development/>

### Development Project Activity:

- Signage upgrades are underway at Cardinal Honda located at 531 Route 12 and the Valero Gas Station at 530 New London Road
- Permits were issued to install photovoltaic solar panels at Girard Nissan, 425 Gold Star Highway and at Noank Baptist Church, 18 Cathedral Heights.
- A foundation permit has been issued for the Sift Bakery addition at 5 Water Street.
- Permits were issued for an interior renovation at Penske Truck Leasing located at 901 Route 12 and to create a work room in the office at 475 Bridge Street.
- Certificates of Occupancy were issued for the interior remodel of the TJ Maxx at 670 Long Hill Road and the new storage building at Noank Village Boatyard located at 38 Bayside Avenue.

Permits that were received but not issued

- 79 Gold Star Hwy – Herbology (medical marijuana)
- 11 Village Lane – rebuild of 2 apartment buildings with 8 units each
- 66 Toll Gate Road – church sanctuary (rec'd prior to April but not issued yet)
- 24 West Main Street – renovated 2nd floor for service bar
- 800 Flanders Road – distillery for rum and liquors
- 244 Route 12 – renovations to rent location
- 220 Route 12 – nail salon (you may already have this – submitted 3/29)

### Upcoming Meetings of Interest and Key Dates:

- 5/6 Beautification Committee 5:30 p.m. @ the Senior Center
- 5/2 Zoning Commission 6:30 p.m. @ Town Hall Annex
- 5/7 Town Council 6:30 p.m. @ Town Hall Annex (ThayerMahan will present their project to the public)
- 5/9 Help plan the future of Groton City's Thames and Bridge Streets! 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. @ City Municipal Building (295 Meridian Street)
- 5/20 Beautification Committee 5:30 p.m. @ Groton Public Library
- 5/31 Annual Groton Business Update 8:00 a.m. @ Mystic Marriott Hotel & Spa

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>

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