

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

AUGUST 2020

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for August 2020.

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 secured 1,000 masks for businesses as well as the printed 11" x 17" business posters for storefronts. These were distributed to businesses by EDC members to Groton businesses as a part of Business Outreach. General feedback was that both the masks for customers and the posters were well received. The Business Assistance web page <https://bit.ly/GrotonBizRecovery> is updated weekly. This webpage provides the latest relevant resource information. Social media sources are also used. Staff submitted a COVID-19 CDBG grant to the state totaling \$300,000. If awarded, this grant would procure PPE for Groton as a whole including businesses if a second wave of COVID-19 were to occur.
- Naviretail Local Business Analysis: Phase 2 business surveying began the week of August 10th. Naviretail advised that preliminary results from this phase show PPE needs are now being met contrary to findings in Phase 1 (early June). Naviretail advised businesses need to update the Google My Business page or Bing listings so that current operating hours are accurately displayed. Groton partnered with Naviretail, a retail analytical firm to directly contact existing Groton businesses in four phases (early summer, late summer, fall and post-holiday). Goal is to track retail impact trends from COVID-19 and compare with pre-COVID baseline consumer information.
- Marketing: Staff released the latest newsletter that was well received in light of COVID-19 impacts. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/doing-business/market-research/p/item/4853/latest-newsletter>
- Wayfinding Sign Master Plan Implementation: On August 19th, staff met with partners and Groton's consultant, BETA to launch the beginnings of the implementation phase. The goal is to have some beginning signage in the ground by spring 2021 at the intersection of Route 1/117 and also downtown Mystic.
- Affordable Housing Grant: Staff received notification that the state approved our grant proposal for \$15,000 to complete an Affordable Housing Plan. The completion of this plan is also a state mandate.

Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): The "Mystic River Bluffs" project is advancing. See the link for more project information <https://resplrhomes.com/mystic-river-bluffs/> The largest focus recently has been on the zoning draft. Legal review of this draft is

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occurring. This draft will be presented to the P&Z Commission in September. Additionally, there has been significant focus on Groton's recreation needs and how the Pratt Building on the property can address interior recreation programming. Groton's recreation consultant, Greenplay, provided preliminary recreation needs and findings. Also, financing options are a focus including taxation and Tax Increment Financing. Fuss & O'Neil, Respler's engineering contractor, is refining design and engineering concepts. Most of 2020 will be used to complete the planning, design, engineering, permitting, and programming for the Mystic Education Center property. Groundbreaking for Phase I is envisioned in 2021 starting with the adaptive reuse of all existing buildings plus installation of needed infrastructure. Subsequent development, primarily residential construction, is planned for Phase II.

- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): The Purchase and Sales (P&S) agreement and the DECD Brownfields grant agreement are still pending. Post-COVID, there should be movement on this effort in the fall 2020. ThayerMahan has grown from three to over 50 employees in three years. They are committed to the project in making this their future world headquarters.
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): The project envisions the development of approximately 300 apartments on 17.75 acres. Staff and development team are discussing next steps.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Seely School): The "Triton Square" redevelopment project is advancing. Plans will be formally submitted to Groton for review/approval shortly. Don Mar Development Corporation will construct a 280-unit multi-family apartment development with amenities. Targeted future tenants are young professionals and "empty-nesters." Pre-development work ongoing. See this project page. <https://www.seelyschool.com/>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Colonel Ledyard School): The preferred developer was introduced to the Town Council on July 7th in Executive Session. Next steps are for a future public meeting at which next steps and direction will be addressed.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Pleasant Valley School): The RFP was issued on Wednesday, August 26th. Proposals are due October 28, 2020. <http://www.groton-ct.gov/depts/finance/bid.asp>

Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 4 trade name certificates this month in the Town of Groton.

Social Media Metrics:

- 598 Facebook followers, negligible change from last month

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** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:

<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>

- 65 LinkedIn page followers, 0% increase

** 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: (July 29 – August 27) www.exploremoregroton.com

- Total Sessions: 2,227 (1,934 new/293 returning), increase 68 percent
 - Pages per session: 1.47, decrease 15 percent
 - Total Page Views: 3,274, increase 43 percent
 - Average Time Duration: 0 min 53 seconds, decrease 27 percent
 - 471 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, increase 2 percent
- 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 (PCT.)

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

Key Property Development Updates:

- Herbology at 79 Gold Star Highway opened. Staff attended the ribbon cutting. They have just hired about 25 workers.
- Jersey Mike's at 258 Route 12 opened. Chipotle is due to open within the next week or so.
- Construction has begun on a new mixed use building at 3 Water Street in Mystic.

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>