

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

August 2023

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for August 2023.

Additional news specific to Groton Economic Development is found here:

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

Economic Development Activities:

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Staff and the town attorney continue to finalize legal grant agreements and coordinate with projects. Funding is being made available to non-municipal recipients on a reimbursement basis. Some of the larger projects will be phased over time with reimbursements made upon attaining performance milestones.
- Small Business Pivot Grant: Funded by the ARPA grant, this local program will provide one-time reimbursable awards to help Groton's small businesses adapt in response to ever-changing and fragile economic conditions. Examples of eligible uses of the funds include adding a new revenue stream, increasing capacity to provide goods and services, adopting an updated business model or creating a contingency plan. A microgrant for façade improvements will also be available. An announcement about the opening of the application window is expected this fall.
- Community Challenge Grant: Staff continues to coordinate with the state regarding the awarded grant for various projects in the Poquonnock neighborhood. Such agreements included budget, scheduling, and implementation details. Final information requested from the state pertain to administrative program detail for each of the components within the overall project scope. Legal agreements will be drafted by DECD for review and approval by the project partners.
- CT Economic Development Association (CEDAS) "Best Practices" Award: Groton received notification that CEDAS reviewed the Town of Groton's application and has granted "Gold Certified Community" status. CEDAS' reviewers studied Groton's submission of municipal policies, plans, and partnerships to identify Groton's successful implementation of efficient and effective land use planning and economic development strategies. This certification is valid for three years. An awards ceremony will be held later in October 2023.
- CT Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA): Staff had previously coordinated the 2023 CT NAA application process. The Town Council provided the required approval. All five Groton project submittals were approved by the state. Each one was recently contacted by Groton advising of this status. They were also informed that corporations can electronically submit a pledge to the CT Department of Revenue Services between September 15 and October 2, 2023 to fund their eligible projects. Corporate sponsorships fund these projects through business tax credits. The following organizations received project eligibility awards:
 - Community of Hope, \$112,000
 - Malta, Inc, \$13,600
 - Sacred Heart School, \$126,500
 - St. Mark's Episcopal Church, \$150,000
 - Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc (TVCCA), \$150,000

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Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): The Town Council voted to approve an excess property process. Developers were notified that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Groton Heights will soon be issued. Additionally, they were advised that property tours are being scheduled. Several tours were completed in August and there will be more in September. Numerous investors and developers have expressed interest in developing this property. Staff anticipates the release of an RFP this fall.
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): There has been no official change in July, but there are many developers reviewing the property. PJ&A, holder of the option agreement, continues to seek quality developers. The Town Council granted an 18 month extension to the option agreement for the property. The project had envisioned about 324 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://ctexaminer.com/2022/05/11/groton-council-greenlights-324-unit-apartment-complex-on-former-town-land/>
- Triton Square (former Seely School): Don Mar Development has begun the development of a 305 unit residential development. Last month, they prevailed in court from a zoning appeal. Building plans have been approved and permits issued. Targeted future tenants are both 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): The town and Bellsite, LLC have been finalizing legal documentation in preparation of the property closing that will occur by September 15th. The developer previously received zoning approval on June 23rd from Groton City’s Planning & Zoning Commission. The project will include 64 residential units (multi-family) within close proximity to Electric Boat. Phase I will modify the existing school building for residential unit development. Phase II will include new buildings and apartments on the rear of the site. <https://www.theday.com/local-news/20230623/plans-for-apartments-at-former-groton-city-school-approved/>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Pleasant Valley School): The Town Council voted to approve an excess property process. Developers were notified that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Pleasant Valley will soon be issued. Additionally, they were advised that property tours are being scheduled. Several tours were completed in August and there will be more in September. Numerous investors and developers have expressed interest in developing this property. Staff anticipates the release of an RFP this fall.

An article with an update on all town owned properties ran in The Day on May 27, 2023.

<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20230527/a-look-at-grotons-unused-town-owned-properties/>

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Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 8 trade name certificates this month in the Town of Groton.

Social Media Metrics:

- 937 Facebook followers, no change from July.
** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 118 followers to our LinkedIn page, minimal change from July.
** 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 www.exploremoregroton.com – Not available this time period.
- GreaterGroton.com Activity (Aug. 6-Sep. 4) www.greatergroton.com
 - Total Visits 1,335
 - Max. Visitors Per Day 272
 - New Registrations 8
 - Engaged Visitors 27
 - Informed Visitors 657
 - Aware Visitors 1,226

Project	Engaged Participants	Informed Participants	Aware Participants
Bridge Street Gateway Complete Street Demonstration	5	441	689
Sutton Park Redevelopment	21	58	135
Short Term Rentals	0	53	92
Parking in Mystic	0	36	83
American Rescue Plan	0	30	38

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- Unemployment Data (Percent %)

	Groton	Norwich-New London- Westerly Labor Market	Connecticut
June 2022	4.0	4.4	4.1
July 2022	4.0	4.5	4.3
August 2022	3.6	4.5	4.3
September 2022	3.8	4.1	3.9
October 2022	4.2	4.2	4.0
November 2022	3.4	3.7	3.5
December 2022	3.0	3.2	3.1
January 2023	3.5	4.1	4.2
February 2023	3.8	4.5	4.6
March 2023	3.8	4.1	4.3
April 2023	2.8	2.9	3.0
May 2023	3.3	3.6	3.7
June 2023	3.3	3.7	4.0
July 2023	3.2	3.6	3.9

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>