

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

December 2015

The following documents economic development activities in December 2015.

Administration:

- **Economic Development Specialist Position:** The Town of Groton prepared to post the job vacancy by January 4, 2016. The posting is anticipated for approximately 30 days.
- **Budget:** Discussions regarding the budget are ongoing within the Department. The Office of Planning and Development Services (OPDS) budget contains the Economic Development budget.

Economic Development Efforts:

- **"Business in Focus":** The final article was provided to Groton in early December and distributed to the EDC on December 16th. The article will be printed and distributed to over 350,000 subscribers in the U.S. and Canada. This article will benefit Groton's exposure outside of the Connecticut market. The article can be found on page 30 at the following link:
http://www.businessinfocusmagazine.com/e_mag/BIFNADec2015/#?page=0
- **Zoning Audit and Market Analysis:** The Market Analysis draft was provided to staff in early December and distributed to both the Focus Group and EDC on December 9th. Comments are requested from both groups in anticipation of the upcoming Focus Group meeting on January 11th. Both the Market Analysis and Zoning Audit drafts can be found at the following link:
<http://www.groton-ct.gov/depts/plandev/MarketAnalysis.asp>
- **Mystic Education Center:** Staff met with DECD on December 2nd to discuss having Groton assume responsibility for marketing the property. This follows a development of a feasibility study completed by VHB and Camoin including consideration of multiple redevelopment scenarios. DECD is interested in providing a substantial grant to Groton to complete this task since we can locally assist with the overall development process.
- **Plan of Conservation and Development:** Staff reviewed the latest draft for consistency with ongoing Economic Development efforts. Particular emphasis was focused on recent findings and recommendation from the Market Analysis draft. There was overall consistency, but minor comments regarding suggested improvements were provided to the Assistant Director of Planning.
- **Brownfields Program Grant Application:** Staff was successful in being selected for the next round of consideration for a \$200,000 Brownfields grant. Reiner and Bronk were interviewed by DECE and DEEP staff on December 17th for this competitive process. The grant proposal focused on an "Area-wide Revitalization Planning Grant" from the CT Office of Brownfields targeting the Poquonnock Bridge Village area. If the \$200,000 grant request is awarded, funds can be used for marketing, planning, transportation, and design.
- **Airport Development Zone:** This development and submittal of this application will be a major undertaking involving significant research and analysis involving data projections of job and business growth. The application is still being developed.

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- Electric Plug-in Vehicles: Staff received notice in December that we were successful in gaining state funding for our project request. Groton will receive funding to install a dual-head charging station at the Town Hall Annex as well as a dual-head station at the Groton Library. In addition, the state will pay for a significant portion of the cost for one plug-in electric vehicle. The real benefit to Groton is in a new “branding” for the communities image.
- Property Listings on Town Website: Staff has updated the Town of Groton Economic Development webpage specific to “Featured Properties.” This will be updated on a regular ongoing basis in the future.
<http://www.groton-ct.gov/depts/plandev/properties.asp>
- “Business Welcome Package”: Staff identified an ideal template for a welcome packet for new businesses. Focus on this initiative will be ongoing.
- Mystic Visitors Information Kiosk: Staff is evaluating two options for the use of the Mystic Community Policing Station. One option involves using the interior of the space for visitor benefit. The second option is less intrusive and involves exterior fliers, an awning, and a locational fixed mount map for viewing.
- Thames River Heritage Park: Staff reviewed and provided comments to a draft RFP for the operation of the proposed Water Taxi service in 2016. In addition, staff participated in a meeting with the City of Groton regarding this effort to help improve the project.
- Community Economic Development Strategy: Staff participated with seCTer on December 10th focusing on the development of the Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This will be an ongoing multi-month effort.
- Northeast Rail Corridor: Staff attended a public meeting in New Haven on December 14th and offered verbal comments on behalf of the Town of Groton in favor of Option #1. Option #1 best invests limited funding in existing rail line locations and also includes a potential new stop in a location somewhere between New London and Mystic.

Meetings/Outreach:

- Staff participated in meetings/conversations with partner agencies including CT Department of Economic and Community Development, seCTer, and Greater Mystic Chamber.
- A presentation was made to the Groton Rotary on December 15th regarding economic development priorities and initiatives.
- Staff has increased its outreach towards attracting new business and expanding existing business to/in Groton. There were 23 recorded inquiries and communication with business prospects in December. Of particular interest was a gourmet donut shop in Groton which is expected to open by summer. Also, a major real estate investor is looking at the Route 1 corridor for redevelopment. In addition, staff has been courting Tractor Supply Company to locate in the Route 1 area. Staff serves as the “Point of Contact” for businesses seeking to locate in Groton.