

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

December 2021

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for December 2021.

Additional news specific to Groton Economic Development is found here:

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

Economic Development Activities:

- American Recovery Plan (ARPA) Programming: The ARPA Coordinator position hiring process was finalized involving several candidates and multiple interviews. A selected candidate will be introduced in January. Staff met with additional business representatives to understand how ARPA funding can best serve the broader small business environment as an investment to small business resiliency and growth. The public online community engagement platform “Greater Groton” (described below) continues to serve as a part of the ARPA effort and more.
- DECD Brownfield Grant Proposal: Staff followed up with DECD regarding the status of historic buildings on the project site. This pertains to a \$650,000 brownfield grant proposal for the town-owned 1208 Poquonnock Road adjacent to the former massage therapy school. Assuming funding, the town-owned property will be properly remediated and will be developed as a pocket park for the residents and visitors to the proposed mixed-use development, as well as the general public.
- GreaterGroton.com Public Engagement Tool: Staff continues to populate the Greatergroton.com site with new projects weekly. Staff is also working hard to promote the site having posters and postcards dropped off at all municipal buildings including City Hall, advertisements on the digital sign at the library and on GMTV. This tool assists with vetting project ideas including those associated with American Recovery Plan funding. A budget simulator named “Balancing Act” will be released in January asking the public for input on potential funding allocations. Please register today at www.gretergroton.com to help promote this important tool.
- Wayfinding Sign Program: Staff anticipates delivery of the new wayfinding signs by January. These will be for the Route 117 implementation phase of the project. Public Works will be installing the signage including a new Gateway Sign at the intersection of Routes 1 and 117. Staff met with BETA to initiate the next design phase from the Groton Wayfinding Plan to be focused around I-95, Route 12 and Route 184. Lastly, staff and BETA are working on the final pedestrian kiosk sign design to be installed in downtown Mystic.
- “The Barn” Ribbon Cutting: Staff attended the ribbon-cutting event at The Barn on December 18th. There was a large crowd at the successful event. This project activates a prominent structure in Poquonnock Bridge that has been vacant for a decade. Renovation and re-use of the commercial spaces in this neighborhood continues.

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Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): No change from last month. There is ongoing correspondence between town and developer legal teams focused on formal mediation. There has been minimal project activity since the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZ&C) has signaled to staff there is no interest in the larger mixed-use vision. The property today has 160,000 square feet of existing building space including a 40,000 indoor recreation facility plus the site holds environmentally contaminated land. Any future redevelopment will preserve half of the 80+ acres as public open space. The state, as the property owner, has been closely following this project and inquiries about its progress. Go to GrotonProjectUpdates.com for the project history, timeline, and process.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): Same status as last month. Staff and Town Attorney met with ThayerMahan in November to finalize the legal agreement. The final agreement is anticipated to the Town Council in January. ThayerMahan has grown from three to over 70 employees in three years. They are committed to the project in making this their future world headquarters. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): PJ&A has selected A.R. Builders as their regional housing development partner to build on the four parcels. A.R. is both a national builder with a strong regional focus in Connecticut and Rhode Island. A.R. has projects in Groton and New London. The project envisions less than 300 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://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>
- Triton Square (former Seely School): The proposed site plan for multi-family housing has been approved by the Groton Planning & Zoning Commission. Ground breaking is anticipated this winter for a 280-unit multi-family apartment development. 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): Bellsite LLC has been coordinating with the City of Groton’s Planning Department regarding its plans. The developer is slated to appear before the City of Groton Planning & Zoning Commission on January 19th for a project planning discussion. A site plan will be submitted to the City for consideration and approval prior to any work. Phase I will modify the existing school building into between 14-20 apartments. Phase II will include new buildings and apartments (less than 60 apartments) on the rear of the site. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Pleasant Valley School): Staff will be modifying the draft RFP prior to reissuance for solicitations. Meanwhile, interest in the property has been indicated by the development community.

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Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 1 trade name certificates this month in the Town of Groton.

Social Media Metrics:

- 817 Facebook followers, 2% increase from November.
** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 89 LinkedIn page followers, 3% increase from November.
** 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 (Nov. 22 – Dec. 21) www.exploremoregroton.com
 - Total Sessions: 860 (741 new/119 returning), 39 pct. below 12-month avg.
 - Pages per session: 1.82, 4 pct. above 12-month avg.
 - Total Page Views: 1,565, 36 pct. below 12-month avg.
 - Average Time Duration: 59 sec, 15 pct. below 12-month avg.
- There are 577 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, no change from November. Email addresses collected from meetings and events are being added to the mailing list.
(<https://www.exploremoregroton.com/groton/news-and-media/sign-up-for-our-newsletter>)
- GreaterGroton.com Activity (Dec. 4, 2021 – Jan. 2, 2022) www.greatergroton.com
 - Total Visits 642
 - Max. Visitors Per Day 326
 - New Registrations 15
 - Engaged Visitors 82
 - Informed Visitors 269
 - Aware Visitors 563
- Top Projects

Project	Aware Participants	Informed Participants	Engaged Participants
Parking in Mystic	479	231	67
How should Groton spend our Federal Recovery Dollars?	56	23	9
Small Business Forum	31	11	1
Suggestion Box	27	14	3
Housing in Groton	22	9	4

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Unemployment Data (Percent %)

	Groton	Norwich-New London- Westerly Labor Market Area	Connecticut
January 2021	9.1	9.5	8.5
February 2021	8.7	9.4	8.3
March 2021	8.8	9.4	8.3
April 2021	8.2	8.7	7.6
May 2021	6.6	6.8	6.0
June 2021	6.9	7.5	6.9
July 2021	6.8	7.3	6.9
August 2021	5.9	6.6	6.1
September 2021	5.4	6.0	5.4
October 2021	4.9	5.9	5.3
November 2021	4.2	5.3	4.8

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>