

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

*February 2016*

The following documents economic development activities in February 2016.

### Administration:

- Economic Development Specialist Position: First and second round interviews were conducted for the position. A finalist will be selected shortly with the goal of a new hire soon.

### Economic Development Efforts:

- Zoning Audit and Market Analysis: Staff has been focused on working with the consulting team on the action steps and in finalizing products within the scope of work. A key presentation occurred on Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> to the COW at which an overview of the findings, recommendations and action steps were candidly discussed. Both the Market Analysis and Zoning Audit drafts can be found at the following link:  
<http://www.groton-ct.gov/depts/plandev/MarketAnalysis.asp>
- Marketing and Promotions: Staff continues to improve the EDC brochure as per requested EDC changes. The brochure would be used as a part of the larger business outreach effort. Staff has continued discussions with Camoin regarding next steps in marketing/promotions. Priority is the creation of a dedicated Town Economic Development Website. Funding is being sought in the FY 2017 budget for this initiative as well as for increased public relations and community signage. Other initiatives include email marketing, social media, and hard copy materials.
- Mystic Education Center: There has been ongoing communication between staff and the DECD regarding the state/local partnership for this property including funding. Rep. Jon Scott has been working with the Town specific to securing state property adjacent to the Mystic Education Center. Securing the additional land would better position the property for marketing and use.
- EV Project: A second EV plug in charging station grant proposal is being prepared. The first round funding allocation provides Groton with a vehicle and charging stations at the Annex and the Public Library/Senior Center. The second funding request targets installation of a charging station at Town Hall.
- Airport Development Zone: Staff has partnered with the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) to assist in completing this application. The application is the first step involving significant research and analysis involving data projections of job and business growth. After receiving the future state (DECD) approval, a subsequent step will involve a legislative effort to adjusting the ADZ boundary.
- Incentives: Staff has been reviewing existing and state incentives in preparation for the development of an easy to use listing and explanation document. Staff attended a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and incentive workshop with the thought of using TIF for Groton's downtown redevelopment effort.
- EDC Funding: Staff worked with the EDC Chair to investigate existing approved funding for the EDC. The Town of Groton had allocated \$900 within the FY 2016 OPDS budget for EDC training.

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- “Business Welcome Package”: The product has evolved from a simple welcome package to a “Doing Business in Groton Guide.” The Guide will focus on helping walk business through the process of starting and expanding business in Groton.
- Mystic Visitors Information Kiosk: Staff has been discussing the idea of “pop up” shops within some of the five vacant storefronts on West Main in Mystic. In conjunction, a visitor’s information center may be a possibility.
- Seely School: Staff has coordinated with the future developer of the Seely School and some adjacent property owners. Planning staff are also preparing for future zoning amendments.
- Thames River Heritage Park: Staff has been active with the effort specific to meetings and participation in the selection of a water taxi operator. Review of the proposals has led to short listed candidates that are being interviewed.
- Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS): Staff continues to participate with seCTer regarding the development of the Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This will be an ongoing multi-month effort. A public input meeting for this effort involving Groton, Stonington and Ledyard is planned for Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup> (time/location TBD).
- CDBG: Staff requested approval from the Town to submit its annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application to the state for approval. This year’s request was for \$800,000 for housing improvements at Groton Housing Authority property.

### **Meetings/Outreach:**

- Staff participated in meetings/conversations with partner agencies including CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), seCTer, CERC, Eastern CT Chamber, Greater Mystic Chamber, Groton Business Association, Mystic Merchants Association, Mystic Museum of Art, and Electric Boat. Staff also attended the Governor’s Economic Summit held in East Hartford.
- Volume of direct staff interaction with new and existing businesses has increased. There were 41 recorded inquiries and communication with business prospects in February. Of particular note are existing businesses seeking to expand or relocate as well as increased business activity in Mystic.