

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

February 2020

The following summarizes economic development division activities for February 2020.

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>

Economic Development Activities:

- Marketing: Staff attended the Eastern Chamber of CT breakfast with state officials on February 20th including staffing a Groton marketing table. Over 75 people attended. Pfizer has provided new marketing materials and videos to Groton that will be added to www.exploremoregroton.com. Staff continues to prepare for the upcoming "Business in Focus" spring article including coordinating with key Groton businesses. The last article ran in 2018. Staff attended the Electric Boat Legislative Breakfast on February 3rd. Staff also is preparing for the upcoming April 1st ICSC conference in Hartford at which we will market Groton.
- EDC Plastic Reduction Forum for Business: Staff and EDC leadership have been coordinating for the upcoming March 30th event planned for March 30th at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex. Focus is on business adaptation to the newly enacted plastics reduction ordinance with presentations from local business leaders. Also, there should be at least one supplier that can attend. Flyers are designed and will be printed and hand delivered to over 200 businesses identified as potentially impacted. Staff will also work other channels including digital notifications, social media and website. The EDC Chair is coordinating with the media to further publicize the event.
- Mystic Parking: Groton and Stonington continue to meet monthly to discuss preparations to develop an integrated Mystic Parking Management Plan. Groton met also with the Mystic Museum of Art who also supports such effort. OPDS is budgeting for such a future planning initiative and data is now being collected and categorized.
- Economic Strategies Plan: Staff and Camoin presented the Economic Development Strategies document. This document outlines how numerous strategies are to be integrated and implemented in the future. Four meetings were all held on February 27th at Chelsea Groton Bank (Center Groton branch) at 7:45 a.m., Town Hall Annex for town employees at 10:00 a.m., Par 4 Restaurant at 2:00 p.m. and also at the Groton Public Library at 6:00 p.m. The meetings were well attended by the public and town officials. See related story: <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/news/p/item/24116/groton-officials-to-present-road-map-of-economic-development-initiatives>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

February 2020



- Opportunity Zone (OZ) Programming: Staff continues to work with partners regarding the promotion of the OZ program. Advanced CT (formerly CERC) is assisting Groton in preparation for a March 27th event with developers, investors, OZ fund managers, and property owners interested in Groton's OZ. This morning event will be held at the Groton Inn and Suites. The goal is further promote the OZ and also to match investors with opportunities.
- Thames River Innovation Place (TRIP): Staff participated in the review of proposals responding to TRIP's RFP involving over \$350,000 in grant funding for regional projects targeting "Blue-Tech." Applicants seeking funding made over 12 creative presentations to the TRIP Board.

Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): Meetings between Respler Homes, Coursey & Company, and interested parties have continued. Coursey & Company advised that the Respler Homes team will soon has a Facebook project page followed by an official website. They encourage any and all interested individuals to contact them regarding questions and concerns. Economic Development staff participated in a small meeting at the request of a few Boulder Court residents. The project's "Development Agreement" was approved by the Town Council on February 4th. Approval of this agreement formalizes the partnership between the Town and Respler Homes and it details major steps and assumptions moving forward. Respler has a signed Purchase and Sales (P&S) agreement from the state, but the official property closing will not occur for months and not until the "due diligence" process has been completed. Economic Development and Parks & Recreation staff met with the town's consultant (Greenplay) on February 5th addressing the community-wide recreation analysis, engineering

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

February 2020

feasibility review for the Pratt Building, and to discuss future recreation programming for that building. Additionally, staff has been reviewing possible zoning options for the property as well as infrastructure upgrades. The Respler Homes team continues their environmental remediation analysis and review. 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 will occur in 2021 and will entail preserving the adaptive reuse of the existing buildings plus needed infrastructure. Subsequent development, primarily residential construction, is planned for after Phase I.

- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): ThayerMahan's attorney is finalizing comments on the town's Purchase and Sales (P&S) agreement and the DECD Brownfields grant agreement. Both agreements will be finalized shortly.
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): Staff has been advised that project plans and designs are being advanced. The project will entail the development of approximately 300 apartments on 17.75 acres.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Seely School): Staff presented the Don Mar Development Corporation as the recommended "preferred developer" for the property on February 19th. This was completed through a formal public presentation at the Town Hall Annex attended by about 60 people. Most indicated general support for the project that proposes a 280-unit multi-family apartment development rich in amenities. Targeted future tenants are young professionals and "empty-nesters." The Town Council will address legal agreements for the project in March. See related story: <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/news/p/item/24099/former-groton-school-site-envisioned-as-280unit-housing-development>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Colonel Ledyard School): Town and City staff have completed second round interviews. Progress is being made in narrowing the effort and in finding the "preferred developer", but further discussions with short listed teams are required.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Pleasant Valley School): Staff has been showing the property to developer interests and fielding questions about the property. Staff visited other examples of quality multi-family housing in CT to understand new project offerings. Marketing for the redevelopment of the property will continue through the spring until RFP issuance.

Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 9 trade name certificates this month in the Town of Groton.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

February 2020

Social Media Metrics:

- 500 Facebook page followers, up 18%
** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 60 LinkedIn page followers, up 2%
** 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: (January 29 –February 27) www.exploremoregroton.com

- Total Sessions: 1,491 (1,229 new/211 returning), up 50%
 - Pages per session: 1.92, up 4%
 - Total Page Views: 2,863, up 51%
 - Average Time Duration: 1 min 28 seconds, up 11%
 - 434 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, up 5%
- 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>)

Key Property Development Updates:

- Grand Wine and Spirits on Route 12 has completed their construction, received their certificate of occupancy, and are operational. Economic Development staff visited on February 28th and were impressed with the facility that holds retail, wholesale, office, and other tenant space within the building.
- The permit for the building that will house Chipotle was submitted and approved
- Chipotle submitted a building permit for tenant fit out
- 425 Gold Star Hwy – Girard Nissan submitted a building permit for phase 1 renovations. This is some interior renovations but mostly exterior façade improvements
- Danforth Pewter is coming to 27 West Main Street – They are a Vermont based company
- Big Y has submitted a permit for self-check out stations
- A CO was been issued for the second Pleasant Valley Apartment

Upcoming Meetings of Interest and Key Dates:

- 3/24 EDC Annual Report Presentation to COW – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Annex
- 3/24 OPDS Economic Strategies Presentation to COW – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Annex
- 3/27 Opportunity Zone Conference – 8:00 a.m. – Groton Inn and Suites
- 3/30 EDC Plastics Reduction Forum for Business – 6:00 p.m. – Groton Town Hall Annex

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>

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