

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

February 2024

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for February 2024.

Additional news specific to Groton Economic Development is found here: <http://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/news>

Economic Development Activities:

- Small Business Pivot Grant: Staff has been in contact with Groton Business Pivot grant applicants requesting supplemental information as needed. The agreement that will need to be signed by each awardee is being finalized. Awards are anticipated in March. Maximum awards up to \$5,000 may be awarded to existing businesses. This program is funding through the allocation of \$100,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.
- Community Challenge Grant: Staff continues to coordinate with Connecticut DECD for the "Poquonnock Bridge Village Revitalization" project. This involves a state grant of \$6.4 million for the Poquonnock neighborhood to add housing (51 units at Grasso Gardens) and public infrastructure upgrades (sidewalks, boardwalk, and walkways). Next steps include drafting and executing a supplemental legal agreement with the Groton Housing Authority. The state will allow three years to initiate program expenses and up to five years for final expenditure.
- Electric Boat Legislative Breakfast: Staff attended the annual breakfast on Thursday, February 22nd. EB President Kevin Graney stated that they look to hire 5,000 positions between Connecticut and Rhode Island for the foreseeable future. EB has programs at all levels in the Groton Public Schools and has also started a signing day program at the high school level to pique interest in our youth in hopes they have interest in some aspect of ship building in the future.
- Groton Community Conversations: The Office of Planning and Development Services staff kicked off a new initiative aimed at fostering community engagement and shaping the future of Groton: the "Groton Community Conversations" Workshop Series. The first workshop titled Growth, Change, & Quality of Life was held on February 22nd at the Nautilus Museum. This event was well attended with about 60 attendees and it received positive feedback. The next workshop is scheduled for March 28th from 5:45p-7:15p at the Marine Science Magnet High School. More information can be found at bit.ly/GrotonCommunityConvo
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Staff has finalized most of the ARPA legal agreements. Payments to projects are being made as they meet specified thresholds. Funding is being made available to non-municipal recipients on a reimbursement basis.
- Economic Development Specialist Position: Initial interviews were completed in late February. Final interviews have been scheduled for early March.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

February 2024

- Wayfinding Sign Program: Staff and BETA provided an overview presentation to the COW on February 27th. There was discussion regarding the plan's scope and objective. Additionally, there was significant conversation regarding the installation of a replacement gateway sign at the intersection of Routes 1 and 117.
- Chelsea Groton Bank: Staff and EDC members attended the Chelsea Groton Bank ribbon-cutting event on February 15th. There were over 100 people in attendance at this 904 Poquonnock Road location. This downtown facility is modern with high tech amenities and community rooms available for public use.

Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (former Groton Heights School): Staff attended a February 13th COW meeting to discuss the redevelopment process. This meeting led to a scheduled March 5th public hearing for the property. Staff coordinated the completion of an updated appraisal. Groton staff have maintained discussions with the Bill Memorial Library regarding a potential land swap as a part of the overall project. The previously held TOPE meeting recommended support for this project including advancing a future RFP to the Town Council. Developers were notified that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Groton Heights will soon be issued. As a result, several property tours are being conducted with various groups. Numerous investors and developers have expressed interest in this property.
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): PJ&A, holder of the land option agreement, has progressed in finalizing terms with a multi-family use developer (Orr Partners). Plans will be forthcoming shortly that are similar to past plans. The Town Council granted an 18 month extension to the option agreement. The project had envisioned a multi-family housing development 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): Staff completed a site visit on February 12th to view the ongoing construction. Significant progress is being made on site. Don Mar Development continues with the construction of a 305 unit residential development. The owner stated that they have a large waiting list for these future units. 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 (former Colonel Ledyard School): Bellsite, LLC requested and was provided a permit for interior demolition and partial building renovation. The town and Bellsite, LLC completed the sale for the property on September 14, 2023. 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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

February 2024

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 (former Pleasant Valley School):)): Staff attended a February 13th COW meeting to discuss the redevelopment process. This meeting led to a scheduled March 5th public hearing for the property. Staff coordinated the completion of an updated appraisal. The previously held TOPE meeting recommended support for this project including advancing a future RFP to the Town Council. Developers were notified that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Pleasant Valley will soon be issued. As a result, several property tours are being conducted with various groups. Numerous investors and developers have expressed interest in developing this property.
- Public Property Redevelopment (former S.B. Butler School): Staff participated in the Town Owned Excess Property Committee (TOPE) meeting on November 15, 2023. The TOPE opened a discussion regarding the future excessing of the former S.B. Butler School. Public comments were taken during the meeting. Several developers have approached the town indicating interest in the property.

Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 2 trade name certificates received this month in the Town of Groton.

Social Media Metrics:

- 1,017 Facebook followers, 2% increase from January.
** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network: <https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 142 followers to our LinkedIn page, 19% increase from January.
** 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 (Dec. 4-Jan. 2) www.greatergroton.com

○ Total Visits	948
○ Max. Visitors Per Day	86
○ New Registrations	7
○ Engaged Visitors	28
○ Informed Visitors	315

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

February 2024

- Aware Visitors 680

- Unemployment Data (Percent %)

	Groton	Norwich-New London- Westerly Labor Market	Connecticut
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
August 2023	2.9	3.2	3.5
September 2023	2.6	2.7	3.0
October 2023	2.9	3.2	3.4
November 2023	3.1	3.2	3.5
December 2023	3.4	3.7	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>