

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

July 2016

The following documents economic development activities in July 2016.

Economic Development Efforts:

- Market Analysis: Final formatting edits have been completed and the FINAL document is on the OPDS website. A presentation of highlights was made to the Town Council as a lead to other initiatives (e.g. Tax Increment Financing).
- Zoning Amendment Process: Working with planning staff and consultant on zoning regulation amendment process. Objectives are clarity, simplicity and ease of approval.
- Great Blue Research Survey: Received the two draft survey questionnaires (residential and business) for review. These will be used to gauge consumer and business sentiment. The results will complement the market analysis data. Met with EDC members and liaisons on June 29th gaining input on the drafts. The phone surveys will be conducted in August.
- Mystic Education Center (a.k.a. Mystic Oral School): Completed paperwork for grant funding from DECD specific to marketing/promotion for the property. Received notification that we are receiving the \$50,000 grant.
- Municipal Property Redevelopment: Began planning for the redevelopment of key vacant town properties. A priority listing is being developed to be shared with the Town Council including process for moving forward.
- Airport Development Zone: Continued coordinating with CERC to complete the ADZ application. Documentation, mapping, data, and development assumptions have been submitted to the consultant for use in the analysis and incorporation into the application. CERC is coordinating with DECD and initiating the required economic analysis (job and business growth). Anticipated submittal to DECD in August.
- Economic Development Website: Efforts are underway to explore various stand-alone economic development websites. Funding has been allocated for its future development. An RFP will be developed to solicit an economic development website designer with experience in this specific type of project.
- Northeast Real Estate Business: Groton worked with this publication to gain a promotional piece in the July magazine (see attached). The July issue was their effort to also spotlight Connecticut. The publication had a strong presence at the ICSC conference in Boston last month and freely distributed the magazine; staff also attended the conference.
- Franchise Presentation: Sponsored franchise event on June 23rd involving FranNet entitled "Road Map to Entrepreneurship." Event was held at the Groton Public Library and was open to the public. FranNet is a nationwide franchise consultant firm and has been the regional representative for Eastern Connecticut and Rhode Island for nearly 10 years. They discussed various approaches, strategies, and pros/cons to embarking on self-employment or starting a small business. Staff will plan to arrange another presentation before the end of the year.

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- Incentives: Staff continues to develop an easy-to-use document to help with business inquiries. Content has been in the works and a format has been finalized.
- Economic Assistance Fund: Staff and the EDC Subcommittee met on Tuesday, June 21st to further discuss amendments to the program. Staff gained unanimous approval from the Town Council for the Gabriele's grant.
- CDBG Funding: Received positive news of \$800,000 grant funding for redevelopment efforts at the Groton Housing Authority property. Staff coordinated this submittal and will work to implement with the Housing Authority.
- "Doing Business in Groton Guide": Staff met with the consultant as part of the continuing development of the document. The Guide will focus on helping walk business owners and operators through the process of starting and expanding their business in Groton.
- NEDA: Staff is participating in the planning for the Northeastern Developer Association (NEDA) conference being held in New Haven in September. NEDA represents public and private entities from Delaware to Maine. Connecticut hosts this year's conference.

Meetings/Outreach:

- Staff participated meetings/conversations with partner agencies including CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), CTDOT, seCTer, CERC, Eastern CT Chamber, Greater Mystic Chamber, and the Groton Business Association.
- Staff attended the International Council of Shopping Center (ICSC) Conference in Boston in July to learn and also promote Groton's retail redevelopment market.
- Staff interaction with businesses included positive communications with prospects and existing businesses. There were about 33 recorded inquiries and communications with businesses in June. As a couple highlights, Mystic Cheese has been coordinating with us to locate in Groton. Also, the owner of The Granite Group held their grand opening in the former Tees Plus location on Gold Star Highway. Seely School redevelopment plans are progressing. Branford Manor is being sold and redeveloped. Two shopping centers in Downtown Groton are poised for redevelopment with one being sold.