

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

March 2020

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for March 2020.

Additional news specific to Groton Economic Development is found here:

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

### Economic Development Activities:

- COVID-19: Impacts from COVID-19 Staff, the EDC and the business community began mid-March. Many meetings and projects were disrupted. Staff began tracking the COVID-19 progression including the evolving disruptions to businesses primarily due to state and federal restrictions. Staff participated in regular updates with the Governor, DECD, SBA and IEDC as the situation intensified. Staff also began relaying important federal and state resource information to the public through its marketing channels including social media and web page: <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/doing-business/disaster-assistance>
- Marketing: Staff was interviewed by “Business in Focus” to develop a Groton promotional article. The article has been finalized, but it has been delayed until summer due to COVID-19. The planned April 1<sup>st</sup> ICSC conference in Hartford was postponed also due to COVID-19.
- EDC Plastic Reduction Forum for Business: Staff and EDC leadership coordinating the planned March 30<sup>th</sup> Forum, but it was postponed due to COVID- 19. Staff had provided listings of businesses for each EDC member to contact with a developed flyer. Approximately 10 days prior to the event, staff advised that no contact should be made given the public safety situation. Focus was on business adaptation to the newly enacted plastics reduction ordinance with presentations from local business leaders. The plan was for at least one supplier to attend.
- Economic Development Strategies Plan: Staff prepared to present the Economic Development Strategies Plan to the Town Council, but held off due to COVID-19. This document outlines how numerous strategies are to be integrated and implemented in the future. Previously, on February 27<sup>th</sup>, the strategies were presented at four well-attended public meetings. See related story: <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/news/p/item/24116/groton-officials-to-present-road-map-of-economic-development-initiatives>
- Opportunity Zone (OZ) Programming: The OZ Forum event scheduled for March 27<sup>th</sup> was postponed due to COVID-19 by both Groton Inn and Suites and Groton staff. There were approximately 50 attendees who had RSVP’ed including developers, investors, OZ fund managers, and property owners interested in Groton’s OZ. The objective is further promote the OZ and also to match investors with opportunities.
- Connecticut Building Congress (CBC) : Staff served on a speaking panel at a CBC event on March 10<sup>th</sup> in Hartford entitled, “Moving Forward Together: Transportation as the Origin with Economic Development as the Destination.” <https://www.cbc-ct.org/event-3461044>

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- Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA): Staff coordinated the submittals for the CT NAA program on behalf of Groton. NAA is a tax credit program designed to provide funding for municipal and tax-exempt organizations by providing corporate business tax credits for businesses that make direct monetary contributions to organizations. Businesses receive credits of between 60-100% with a maximum cap of \$150,000. Groton coordinated six requests for funding including Bill Memorial Library (\$58,402), Sacred Heart School (\$130,827), Groton Housing Authority (\$150,000), Odd Fellows Home of CT (\$93,748), Avery-Copp Museum (\$62,400), Eastern CT Housing Opportunities (\$149,500). The COW supported the requests and next step is the public hearing process.

### Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): Staff and Respler Homes continue to coordinate weekly. The project name is officially “Mystic River Bluffs” and a website has been launched <https://resplerhomes.com/mystic-river-bluffs/>. Coursey & Company, serves as the Respler’s project outreach coordinator. The public is encouraged to reach out to Coursey with questions. Greenplay, the town’s recreation consultant, has been advancing their review of the Pratt Building for a public indoor recreation facility and also in conducting community-wide recreation assessments. Staff and the P&Z Commission have been meeting to discuss the conceptual framework for future zoning at the MEC property. Draft zoning language will be developed in April for P&Z Commission consideration. Fuss & O’Neil, Respler’s engineering contractor, has begun refining design and engineering concepts for the site including reviews for building location, utility upgrades and roads/infrastructure. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) discussions have also advanced with focus on a future needed TIF Master Plan. Environmental testing on the property has been ongoing to determine actual contaminants on site beyond the initial phase environmental analyses. 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 is envisioned in 2021 entailing the adaptive reuse of all existing buildings plus installation of needed infrastructure. Subsequent development, primarily residential construction, is planned for Phase II.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): Staff still awaiting ThayerMahan’s final comments on the town’s Purchase and Sales (P&S) agreement and the DECD Brownfields grant agreement.
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): Staff has been advised by the development team holding the town’s land option that project plans and designs are being advanced. The project will entail the development of approximately 300 apartments on 17.75 acres.

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- Public Property Redevelopment (Seely School): OPDS staff forwarded the P&S agreement to the Town Council for consideration to advance the “Trinity Square” redevelopment project. Don Mar Development Corporation proposes a 280-unit multi-family apartment development rich in amenities. Targeted future tenants are young professionals and “empty-nesters.” Pre-development work on site is anticipated this spring. 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 completed second round interviews. The Review Panel agreed on recommending a “preferred developer.” Discussions with such developer are ongoing.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Pleasant Valley School): Staff continued showing the property to developer interests and fielding questions about the property. Marketing efforts are ongoing. The RFP issuance has been delayed due to COVID-19 and will likely be summer.

### Economic Development Metrics:

#### Trade Name Metrics:

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

#### Social Media Metrics:

- 521 Facebook page followers, up 4% from last month  
\*\* Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:  
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 61 LinkedIn page followers, up 1%  
\*\* 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: (March 1 – 30) [www.exploremoregroton.com](http://www.exploremoregroton.com)

- Total Sessions: 1,701 (1,370 new/331 returning), up 14%
- Pages per session: 1.65, down 14%
- Total Page Views: 2,807, down 2%
- Average Time Duration: 1 min 28 seconds, 0% change  
**Note: Increases in website visits are largely due to the promotion of the newly-created COVID-19 Disaster Assistance and Restaurant Update pages.**
- 439 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, up 1%  
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>)

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE**

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### **Key Property Development Updates:**

### **Upcoming Meetings of Interest and Key Dates:**

- T.B.D.

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>