

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

May 2020

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for May 2020.

Additional news specific to Groton Economic Development is found here:

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

Economic Development Activities:

- COVID-19 (General Response): Staff focused on the COVID-19 business response with emphasis on the CT May 20th reopening guidance specific to restaurants, retail, offices, museums/zoos. Initially, guidance was also provided for salons/barbershops in preparing for their Phase I reopening, but the state changed direction and prohibited them from opening about two days prior to the reopening. Staff continued to use the Business Assistance web page <https://bit.ly/GrotonBizRecovery> Social media sources were also used to most quickly disseminate key information.
- COVID-19 Outdoor Dining and Retail: OPDS staff responded quickly to the Governor's order enabling restaurants and retail to use outdoor spaces dining and sales during the Phase I reopening. An application for temporary outdoor dining and sales can be found here <https://bit.ly/GrotonBizRecovery> plus guidance information. Several restaurants have successfully applied and received approval. Most applications are approved within a 1-2 day timeframe. Groton is being as flexible as possible to assist businesses to accommodate outdoor spatial needs including use of parking areas and public spaces.
- COVID-19 Groton Business Reopening Zoom Meetings: OPDS staff, Members of the Town Council, Town Manager, Police Chief, Ledge Light Health District, and others participated on the Groton Business Reopening Zoom meeting on May 12th. There were over 50 attendees who heard from Groton specific to reopening guidance, assistance and direction. The event included a Q&A portion that lasted over 30 minutes. The event was well received and staff promised another meeting. The second meeting is now scheduled for June 8th at 10:00 a.m. in preparation for the anticipated June 20th Phase II reopening.
- COVID-19 Restaurant and Retail Promotions: Staff continued promoting restaurants that were open. Restaurants were listed on our website including name, hours of operation, phone, website, social media, and any other special information. <https://bit.ly/GrotonEats> Also, Retail and Service related businesses have now been added and can be found at this link. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/retail-and-service-businesses> Additional businesses can be added by contacting Lauren Post at lpost@groton-ct.gov.
- COVID-19 Miranda Creative Marketing: Staff has coordinate with Miranda Creative to assist existing Groton businesses with simple marketing tips. Staff and Miranda Creative will hold a June 15th Zoom meeting at 10:00 a.m. on which Maria Miranda will offer social media and marketing guidance to Groton businesses.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

May 2020

- Naviretail Local Business Analysis: Groton has partnered with Naviretail, a retail analytical firm, who will be directly contacting existing Groton businesses. They are communicating with businesses to pose relevant questions. The first phase is beginning immediately to coincide with business reopening, but there will be three more phases throughout 2020 ending just after the holidays. The goal is to track retail impact trends from COVID-19 and compare with pre-COVID baseline consumer information.
- CDBG – CV Grant Funding: Staff participated on a May 28th CT DECD call addressing an initial \$7 million in grant funds for small communities in CT. This funding is specific to addressing “Preparedness, Prevention, and Response.” Staff and our CDBG partner agency, ECHO, will be applying for funding in some capacity in order to meet a July deadline.
- Wayfinding Sign Master Plan Implementation: Staff presented highlights of the Wayfinding Sign Master Plan and also provided general economic development updates to the Mystic Rotary on May 4th and the Groton Rotary on May 19th. Groton has allocated \$50,000 towards initial wayfinding sign implementation, but is seeking additional funding. Both Rotary Clubs appeared interested in considering potential funding assistance. Total community wide project implementation is projected at \$300,000.
- Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Programming: Staff has been coordinating the local process in accepting and processing NAA applications including Town Council public hearing and endorsements. These include: Bill Memorial Library - \$58,402; Sacred Heart School - \$130,827; Groton Housing Authority - \$150,000; Odd Fellows Home of CT - \$93,749; Avery-Copp Museum - \$62,400; and Eastern CT Housing Opportunities (ECHO) - \$149,500.

Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): Staff continues coordinating with the Respler Homes team regarding the “Mystic River Bluffs” project. See the link for more project information <https://resplerhomes.com/mystic-river-bluffs/>. Recent staff emphasis has been on crafting the proposed zoning language for future P&Z Commission review. Also, staff has been discussing financing options with Respler. Greenplay and town staff have been working on the engineering study for the Pratt Building plus the focus on the community wide recreation needs assessment. Coursey & Company, serves as the Respler’s project outreach coordinator. The public is encouraged to reach out to Coursey with questions. 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. 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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

May 2020

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.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Seely School): The "Trinity Square" redevelopment project is advancing. Don Mar Development Corporation will construct a 280-unit multi-family apartment development with amenities. Targeted future tenants are young professionals and "empty-nesters." Pre-development work on site is anticipated this spring. See related story: <https://ctexaminer.com/2020/04/16/groton-council-approves-purchase-agreement-for-former-seely-school-as-town-moves-to-redevelop-public-properties/>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Colonel Ledyard School): Staff presented a status update to the Town Council on May 26th regarding the "preferred developer's" concept. Discussions with the 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 including new photos of the exterior and interior. The RFP will be issued this summer.

Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 3 trade name certificates this month in the Town of Groton.

Social Media Metrics:

- 590 Facebook followers, increase 3% from last month
** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 60 LinkedIn page followers, negligible change
** 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: (April 29 – May 28) www.exploremoregroton.com

- Total Sessions: 2,717 (2,094 new/623 returning), decrease 15% from last month

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

May 2020

- Pages per session: 1.66, increase 9%
 - Total Page Views: 4,510, decrease 7%
 - Average Time Duration: 1 min 10 seconds, decrease 9%
- ** Note, overall activity remains high largely due to the promotion of the COVID-19 Disaster Assistance and Restaurant Update pages.****

- 447 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, 2% increase
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:

- Chipotle Restaurant on Route 12 is finalizing and will be opening later in July
- Jersey Mike's on Route 12 is also finalizing and will open early July
- Construction work continues at the Oyster Club
- Christopher's Café submitted an application for a patio extension
- Mystic Pizza submitted an application for an outdoor cooler
- Demolition was done at 3 Water Street

Temporary Outdoor Dining Applications

- The Spot Café
- The Mariner
- Mystic Pizza
- Manana Café
- 99 Restaurant
- Barley Head Brewery (in the process of being reviewed)

Upcoming Meetings of Interest and Key Dates:

- Monday, June 8th - Town of Groton Offices will reopen to the public
- Monday, June 8th @ 10:00 a.m. – Groton Business Reopening Zoom Meeting (#2)
- Monday, June 15th @ 10:00 a.m. – Miranda Creative Zoom Marketing for Businesses
- Saturday, June 20th – Business Reopening (Phase II)

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>