

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

May 2022

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for May 2022.

Additional news specific to Groton Economic Development is found here:

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

Economic Development Activities:

- American Recovery Plan (ARPA) Programming: Staff released the ARPA applications for funding on May 13th. Requests for funding are due by June 30th. https://www.groton-ct.gov/alert_detail.php
The webpage provides details to prospective applicants. Staff is addressing any questions from the public regarding this process.
<https://ctexaminer.com/2022/05/16/groton-seeks-applications-for-a-slice-of-2-9-million-of-federal-covid-aid/>
- GreaterGroton.com Public Engagement Tool: Staff has added two new important projects up on GreaterGroton.com. A project on Short Term Rentals (STR) seeking public sentiment on that topic can be found here <https://www.greatergroton.com/short-term-rentals-in-groton>. A second project seeking input on the reuse of the former Claude Chester School site can be found here <https://www.greatergroton.com/visioning-claude-chester>. Please register today at www.greatergroton.com to help promote this important tool.
- Exploremoregroton.com Economic Development Website: Golden Shovel Agency, our web contractor, has completed our website refresh. The visual design has been updated and features have been added to make decision-support data readily accessible for site selectors and new businesses.
 - Interactive mapping tools have been added or updated, including
 - [Talent Pool](#)
 - [Key Industries](#)
 - Properties for [Sale/Lease](#)
 - [Retail Outlook](#)
 - Looping video was added to the [landing page](#) to give visitors a quick visual overview of the community.
 - The microsite focused on the BlueTech industry has been updated as well, located at www.bluetechgroton.com.
 - The array of [Small Business Success Stories](#) has also grown significantly since the site launched in 2017.
 - Direct links with intuitive icons were added to the landing page and the overall design is visually streamlined to improve user experience on mobile devices.
- Community Challenge Grant: Staff has been planning for a future Community Challenge Grant proposal for state review. Downtown and Poquonnock are part of the focus. Key property owners are being contacted focusing on this economic development grant targeting jobs, businesses, infrastructure, and transportation. presented the CT Community Challenge Grant opportunity to the COW on April 12th. The next grant round is due October 2022.
https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Business-Development/05_Funding_Opportunities/CT-Communities-Challenge-Grant

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- Groton Business Roundtable: A second Business Roundtable event was held on Thursday, May 26th. There were new faces and a healthy discussion surrounding Short Term Rentals (STR). The next Groton Business Roundtable will be held on June 23rd.
- Visioning the Former Claude Chester Site: Staff is working with Chad Frost from Kent and Frost on holding a public input session regarding the visioning of the site. The event will be held on Monday, June 6th from 5:30pm – 7:00pm at Thrive 55+ (Formerly Groton Senior Center). Refreshments and childcare will be available. If residents want to make suggestions in advance they can do so on the GreaterGroton project page: <https://www.greatergroton.com/visioning-claude-chester>
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): After the Town Council public hearing in May, staff submitted a \$2 million CDBG grant proposal on May 20th to the CT Department of Housing. The project targets housing rehabilitation at Grasso Gardens in partnership with the Groton Housing Authority. If approved, the CDBG grant will be leveraged to gain additional state funding from the CT Housing Finance Authority (CHFA). This project will be a multi-million dollar project upon completion.
- Wayfinding Sign Implementation: The new primary gateway sign as a part of the initial implementation will be installed by late May or early June. This sign is located at the intersection of Routes 1 and 117. Landscaping will be planted by the Beautification Committee after the town's installation of the gateway sign.

Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): Staff provided an update to the COW on May 24th regarding the project including mediation status. Blue Lotus Group advised of its pending purchase of Respler Homes. They launched a project website including their plans (<https://www.bluelotusmystic.com/>). The current property today has over 160,000 square feet of existing building space including a 40,000 indoor recreation facility plus the site holds environmentally contaminated land. Any future redevelopment will preserve half of the 80+ acres as public open space. The state, as the property owner, has been closely following this project and inquiries about its progress.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): No change in May. ThayerMahan has been completing final internal review. ThayerMahan has grown from three to over 70 employees in three years. They are committed to the project in making this their future world headquarters. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): A presentation from A.R. Builders to the COW occurred on May 10th. The meeting objective was to demonstrate that the revised plans are in accordance with the initial concept plans. This step is a requirement in the legal agreement for the property sale. The COW found the revised plans to be consistent with the original concept. A.R. is both a national builder with a strong regional focus in Connecticut and Rhode Island. A.R. has projects in Groton and New London. The project envisions about 324 apartments on 17.75 acres encompassing four lots (two town-owned and two private-owned). Anticipated tax benefits will be

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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): No change in May. The project awaits final resolution on the zoning approval appeal. The proposed site plan for multi-family housing has been approved by the Groton Planning & Zoning Commission. Ground breaking is anticipated for a 305-unit multi-family apartment development. 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 (Colonel Ledyard School): Staff presented the short-term fixed assessment to the COW on May 24th. The COW was supportive. This agreement is to fix the property assessment until construction of Phase I and certificate of occupancy is issued or one year after building permit issuance (the agreement ends once either of these thresholds are met). The detailed plans include a total of 64 residential units (multi-family). The next step is to submit the final site plans for City of Groton PZC review. Phase I will modify the existing school building for residential unit development. Phase II will include new buildings and apartments on the rear of the site. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Pleasant Valley School): No change in May. Staff is anticipating future discussion with the Town Council. Staff will be modifying the draft RFP prior to reissuance for solicitations. Meanwhile, interest in the property has been indicated by the development community.

Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

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

Social Media Metrics:

- 846 Facebook followers, a negligible change from April.
** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 91 LinkedIn page followers, negligible change from April.
** 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 26-May25) www.exploremoregroton.com
 - Total Sessions: 1,936 (1,631 new/305 returning), 48 pct. above 12-month avg.
 - Pages per session: 2.18, 24 pct. above 12-month avg.
 - Total Page Views: 4,220, 86 pct. above 12-month avg.
 - Average Time Duration: 1 min 2 sec, 7 pct. below 12-month avg.

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- There are 608 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, minimal change from April. Email addresses collected from meetings and events are being added to the mailing list.
(<http://www.exploremoregroton.com/groton/news-and-media/sign-up-for-our-newsletter>)
- GreaterGroton.com Activity (Apr. 26-May 25, 2022) www.greatergroton.com
 - Total Visits 498
 - Max. Visitors Per Day 128
 - New Registrations 5
 - Engaged Visitors 25
 - Informed Visitors 134
 - Aware Visitors 324
- Top Projects

Project	Engaged Participants	Informed Participants	Aware Participants
Visioning Claude Chester School	5	35	118
ARPA Application	12	24	63
Parking in Mystic	2	27	43
Small Business Forum	4	7	18
Housing in Groton	3	6	16

Unemployment Data (Percent %)

	Groton	Norwich-New London-Westerly Labor Market Area	Connecticut
April 2021	8.2	8.7	7.6
May 2021	6.6	6.8	6.0
June 2021	6.9	7.5	6.9
July 2021	6.8	7.3	6.9
August 2021	5.9	6.6	6.1
September 2021	5.4	6.0	5.4
October 2021	4.9	5.9	5.3
November 2021	4.2	5.3	4.8
December 2021	3.8	5.1	4.4
January 2022	3.8	4.9	4.4
February 2022	4.6	5.7	5.0
March 2022	4.2	4.7	4.3
April 2022	3.7	4.0	3.8

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>

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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>