

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

### NOVEMBER 2020

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for November 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 received notice from CT Department of Housing that Groton was successful in receiving \$150,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for COVID Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) stockpiling. OPDS is coordinating with the Parks and Recreation Department to store the supplies in the future. Funds have yet to be released by the state. Staff continues to use the Business Assistance web page <https://bit.ly/GrotonBizRecovery> to distribute key government and industry guidance specific to COVID.
- Naviretail Local Business Analysis: Naviretail and staff have been preparing for the next business survey round to begin in early December. The first and second phases were completed in the spring and summer. Results to date are found at this link. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/news/p/item/30633/covid19-impacts-update-groton-businesssurvey-results>
- Groton Marketing: Staff is planning to participate virtually in the RECon New York annual retail event sponsored by the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) on December 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Groton has participated for multiple consecutive years to promote Groton to investors. ICSC offers strategies to find new ways to conduct business and grow including deal making. Additionally, staff submitted an article to *Business Facilities Magazine* for the upcoming Groton spotlight in December. Staff participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony on November 16<sup>th</sup> for Progression Training at 250 Leonard Drive, Unit 24. Progression Training is an indoor sports skills facility for athletes specializing in basketball and more.
- Economic Assistance Fund (EAF): Staff presented the 3 Water Street (The Standard) award recommendation to the Committee of the Whole (COW) on November 17<sup>th</sup>. The COW supported the EAF request and final Town Council approval is anticipated on December 1<sup>st</sup>. This project is forecast to generate approximately \$224,505 in annual taxes (currently paying less than \$16,000 annual). Current assessed value is \$608,930. Projected post-improved assessment is \$8.1 million.
- Mystic Parking Study: Groton held the second Mystic Parking Study meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup> with John Burke as the parking consultant. He serves as the consultant for both Groton and Stonington. Most of the meeting focused on parking priorities with strong emphasis on improved and efficient parking system management. Future implementation strategies will be the focus shortly including partnerships.
- Wayfinding Sign Implementation: Staff is coordinating with BETA in preparing for the phased initial implementation of the completed Wayfinding Sign Plan. The goal is to have signage installed by spring. There will be two targeted areas for this first phase including North Road

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(Route 117) from I-95 to Route 1 as well as downtown Mystic. The \$50,000 budget for signage will only allow this first phase, but a decent sampling of signage will offer an example of what is intended for implementation townwide.

### Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): The “Mystic River Bluffs” project is advancing with staff meetings weekly. See the link for more project information <https://resplerhomes.com/mystic-river-bluffs/>. The COW was provided a project update on November 10<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the Town Council approved a short-term tax agreement for the project on November 11<sup>th</sup>. The zoning district draft was presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission on November 17<sup>th</sup> for discussion and consideration. A draft concept plan was also provided at that time to the Commission. In addition, there was a tour by a few Town Council and RTM members of the property on November 21<sup>st</sup>. Cost estimating for the Pratt Building redevelopment is underway focusing on the renovation of the building and future public recreation facility use. Groton’s consultants (Greenplay/Pirie) are completing these estimates. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) budgeting is still ongoing including assistance from Camoin on behalf of Groton.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): Town Council was provided an update on November 11<sup>th</sup>. The Purchase and Sales (P&S) agreement and the DECD Brownfields grant agreement are still pending. ThayerMahan has grown from three to over 50 employees in three years. They are committed to the project in making this their future world headquarters.
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): The COW addressed future hearing for the excess property disposition on November 10<sup>th</sup>. The project envisions the development of approximately 300 apartments on 17.75 acres. An option agreement will be provided to Town Council shortly for this public/private partnership involving a national developer.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Seely School): The “Triton Square” project short-term tax agreement was approved by the Town Council on November 11<sup>th</sup>. This agreement delays new tax increases until building construction begins. The 308-unit multi-family apartment development concept plan was endorsed. Targeted future tenants are young professionals and “empty-nesters.” Anticipated future property tax revenue is in the magnitude of \$1 million annually. See this project page. <https://www.seelyschool.com/>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Colonel Ledyard School): A draft purchase agreement has been finalized and will be forwarded to the COW shortly. A hearing regarding the property’s disposition was discussed by the COW on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Bellsite, LLC (Bill Bellock) is the preferred developer and is eager to move this multi-family residential project forward. Phase I will consist of converting the existing school building into apartments. Phase II will include new buildings and apartments to the rear of the site.

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- Public Property Redevelopment (Pleasant Valley School): Staff is reviewing the submitted proposals in response to the issued RFP. Staff will be scheduling a Committee review in December. Discussions with short-listed developers will occur in January 2021.

**Economic Development Metrics:**

Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 5 trade name certificates this month in the Town of Groton.

Social Media Metrics:

- 610 Facebook followers, negligible change  
\*\* Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:  
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 68 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: (October 26 – November 24) [www.exploremoregroton.com](http://www.exploremoregroton.com)

- Total Sessions: 1,421 (1,249 new/172 returning), decrease 4 percent
- Pages per session: 1.54, increase 1 percent
- Total Page Views: 2,371, decrease 1 percent
- Average Time Duration: 0 min 59 seconds, increase 18 percent
- 476 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, negligible change  
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>)

**Unemployment Data (Percent %)**

Month	Groton	Norwich-New London- Westerly Labor Market Area	Connecticut
January 2020	3.7	4.5	4.4
February 2020	3.6	4.4	4.4
March 2020	3.0	3.8	3.6
April 2020	11.1	13.8	8.0
May 2020	12.6	15.0	9.4
June 2020	11.8	13.3	10.2
July 2020	10.9	12.4	10.3
August 2020	8.6	10.2	8.2
September 2020	8.0	9.1	7.5
<b>October 2020</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>5.8</b>

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**Key Property Development Updates:**

- |                        |                |                                  |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| • 3 Water Street       | The Standard   | Construction is ongoing          |
| • 531 Route 12         | Cardinal Honda | Addition and remodel ongoing     |
| • 425 Goldstar Highway | Girard Nissan  | 1st phase of remodel ongoing     |
| • Seely School Drive   | Triton Square  | Submitted a wetlands application |

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>