

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

September 2019

The following summarizes economic development division activities for September 2019.

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>

Economic Development Activities:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Award: Groton received a \$1.5 million CDBG grant award for our proposal involving Mystic River Homes. This is a large grant relative to CT's total \$13 million statewide allocation. Work will entail ADA access improvements, elevator replacement and upgrades, new fire system pump, hot water system upgrades, new backup generator, interior flooring upgrades, common area upgrades, unit upgrades, and new roadways and parking areas.
- Marketing: Several new Groton promotional videos have been added to <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/videos>. Staff is also beginning to focus on capturing business input through videos. A "Business Roundtable" event was held on September 12th at Bio CT Commons that was well attended by local business people.
- Nautilus Dock Agreement: The CT Port Authority (CPA) provided the executed agreement to the Town for the \$730,000 grant to be used to expand the Nautilus Dock. These funds will be directly used by the Navy to implement the project.
- Connecticut Economic Development Association (CEDAS) "Best Practices": Staff submitted the Groton "Best Practices" application to CEDAS. This required significant preparation time. We believe certification is likely. The awards will be granted in October.
- Fixed Tax Assessment Policy: Staff provided the draft Fixed Tax Assessment Policy to the COW. The Town Council will be asked to approve the policy this fall. The policy will offer a documented and consistent approach on how tax abatement requests are addressed as an incentive.
- Economic Strategies Plan: Staff continues to advance this administrative document through the assistance of Camoin Associates. The strategies document will identify ongoing efforts and offer an action plan for future economic development initiatives.
- Opportunity Zone (OZ): Staff and CERC met with several investors and property owners in the Groton OZ. The objective is to understand their growth and investment needs and to match stakeholders with the OZ benefits.
- Thames River Innovation Place (TRIP): Staff has reviewed the draft Year 3 TRIP proposal to be submitted to CT Next. There is a significant focus on the maritime sector and innovation center development. The TRIP presentation to the CT Next Board will be on October 8th.

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- Wayfinding Sign Implementation: Staff has met with BETA to address the implementation priority areas for the Wayfinding Sign project. The objective is to gain maximum exposure for Phase I of the project while also demonstrating a variety of sign types and sizes.
- Electric Boat South Yard Groundbreaking: Staff attended the September 13th groundbreaking for the five acre building for EB's South Yard.
- Mystic Parking: Staff met with the Parking Committee to further discuss management approaches to Mystic's Parking challenges. The group is focused on short-ranged efforts to improve parking management efficiency. These include better use of existing parking spaces, enforcement, and technological management solutions.

Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): Staff finalized discussions with a recreation consultant to assist with the reprogramming of the Pratt Building for recreation uses. Town Council will be asked to approve an award for this consultant in October. The preferred developer and state are expected to sign the Purchase & Sale (P&S) in October for the upland portion of the MEC property. Next steps after the final signatures will be the public outreach. In general, the project entails a "village concept" for the large, 80+-acre property.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): Staff met with DECD staff at the property to address final details regarding the \$225,000 brownfield grant. Legal preparations are now being made for a Purchase & Sale (P&S) agreement to be executed soon. The Groton Heights redevelopment will begin this fall involving property purchase, Bill Memorial Library land swap, zoning approvals, environmental remediation, and the abandonment of Library Street (town-owned paper road). Government approvals are targeted for 2019 with construction occurring in 2020. There is a goal for a late 2020 occupancy.
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): Project designs and plans are advancing since the option agreement was executed in August. The project will entail the development of approximately 300 apartments on 17.75 acres. These will assist Groton in reducing the high 80% commuter statistic and in offering modern housing product to our workforce.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Seeley School): Staff continues to work with short-listed developers in finalizing the best preferred development proposal for the property.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Colonel Ledyard School): Staff conducted showings for the property. Proposals were received on Friday, September 27th in response to the issued RFP. Staff will coordinate the review and interviews for the project.

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- Public Property Redevelopment (Pleasant Valley School): Staff toured the property and initiated environmental reviews (Phase I). Alternative locations for the Robotics Program were researched. Marketing will occur through the remainder of 2019 with an RFP during spring of 2020.

Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 8 trade name certificates this month in the Town of Groton. 68 total for 2019.

Social Media Metrics:

- 396 Facebook page followers, up 2% from last month
** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 43 LinkedIn page followers, up 2% from last month
** 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: (August 28 – September 26) www.exploremoregroton.com

- Total Sessions: 987 (779 new/208 returning), down 18%
 - Pages per session: 2.09, up 14%
 - Total Page Views: 2,063, down 7%
 - Average Time Duration: 1 min 19 seconds, down 10%
 - 339 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, up 0%
- Email addresses collected from meetings and events are now being added to the mailing list.
(<http://www.exploremoregroton.com/groton/news-and-media/sign-up-for-our-newsletter>)

Upcoming Meetings of Interest and Key Dates:

- October 5th from 11a-5p – Fall Festival – Poquonnock Plains Park
- October 16th at 5:30p – Beautification Committee – Groton Public Library
- November 7th at 5:30p – Beautification Committee – Senior Center

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>

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