

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE
SEPTEMBER 2021

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for September 2021.

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 met with the Long Term Recovery Committee (LTRC) on September 1st and 15th addressing funding strategies. The LTRC agreed to support the needs assessment process including a robust needs assessment and community engagement effort prior to the selection of individual projects. The Groton COW approved this process at their September 28th meeting. See the attached flow chart illustrating the process. In addition, the COW instructed the effort to also plan for an October 19th in person public forum to be held at the Senior Center at 6:00 p.m. Staff developed a select listing of 25 business representatives to discuss community COVID impacts to the business community at-large. These representatives were personally invited to attend the upcoming LTRC meeting on October 6th at 5:30 p.m.
- PPE Stockpile Project: Staff has ordered, received and stockpiled a significant quantity of PPE stored in a secure location. EDC members have begun handing out boxes of masks to businesses as a part of their “business outreach” in light of the Groton mask mandate. Staff will also be handing out family distribution packages including masks and sanitizer this October at two community events. At this moment, PPE supplies in Groton are still readily available at most retail locations.
- Marketing/Initiatives: Staff has been working with a project manager from “Bang the Table” – an online community engagement platform. Staff attended trainings and has been working to add content for a soft launch planned for early October. This tool will assist with vetting project ideas including those associated with American Recovery Plan funding.
- Groton Housing Studies: Staff received the final version of the Camoin 310 Market Rate Housing Study. It has been known that 80% of Groton’s workforce commutes and that there is a lack of demanded housing options and diversity. However, the actual future housing demand estimates were not known until now. The study illustrates demand for thousands more units over the next five years even after existing pipeline housing projects have been constructed. https://cms9files.revize.com/grotonct/document_center/Departments/Planning%20&%20development/Housing%20Market%20Study/FINAL%20Report%20-%202021%20Housing%20Market%20Study%20-%20Town%20of%20Groton.pdf The report contains clear infographic illustrations to best depict findings. There will be a public presentation by Camoin 310 on this topic on October 12th. The second housing document is the “Affordable Housing Plan” being completed by RKG which will be released within weeks.
- Connecticut Economic Development Association (CEDAS) Annual Meeting: Staff has been assisting with the coordination for the upcoming October 20th CEDAS annual meeting to be held at UConn – Avery Point Branford House. CEDAS has not held its meeting in southeastern CT for many years. This meeting will showcase Groton to economic developers from across CT.

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Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): There has not been any project activity since the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZ&C) has signaled to staff there is no interest in the larger mixed-use vision. The Commission is focused on creating the appropriate zoning regulation for the 80+ acres of property with 160,000 square feet of existing building space and environmentally contaminated property. Half the total land area will be redeveloped and half will be protected as public open space. The state, as the property owner, has been closely following this project and inquiries about its progress. <https://resplrhomes.com/mystic-river-bluffs/> is the developer's project website.
- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): Since the presentation to the COW on August 24th, staff and ThayerMahan have planned an October meeting to resolve the few remaining outstanding legal agreement details. The final agreement is anticipated to the Town Council this fall. ThayerMahan has grown from three to over 60 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): PJ&A and Lennar were unable to come to a final agreement with the four parcels. PJ&A is discussing the project with another multi-family developer. The project envisions approximately 300 apartments on 17.75 acres encompassing four lots (two town-owned and two private-owned). Anticipated tax benefits will be in the order of \$1 million annually. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>
- Triton Square (former Seely School): A site plan is being reviewed by Groton for the construction of the new multi-family development. Construction will begin after approval of such plan for the 280-unit multi-family apartment development. Targeted future tenants are 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): Bellsite LLC has been active in completing plans and inspections for this property. A site plan will be submitted to the City for consideration and approval prior to any work. Phase I will modify the existing school building into between 14-20 apartments. Phase II will include new buildings and apartments (less than 60 apartments) on the rear of the site. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>
- Public Property Redevelopment (Pleasant Valley School): Staff has been advancing the multi-family housing development project involving the future sale of the property. The COW discussed at the September 24th meeting that the John Flatley Company notified Groton they are no longer interested in proceeding with the project. Staff is preparing to edit the RFP and reissue for solicitations. <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/project-updates>

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Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 4 trade name certificates this month in the Town of Groton.

Social Media Metrics:

- 790 Facebook followers, negligible change
** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 82 LinkedIn page followers, negligible change from August.
** 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 (Aug 31-Sep 29) www.exploremoregroton.com
 - Total Sessions: 1,115 (948 new/167 returning), 26 pct. below 12-month avg.
 - Pages per session: 1.64, 4 pct. below 12-month avg.
 - Total Page Views: 1,829, 28 pct. below 12-month avg.
 - Average Time Duration: 0 minute 53 sec, 19 pct. below 12-month avg.
- There are 572 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, an eight-percent increase from August. Email addresses collected from meetings and events are being added to the mailing list.
(<https://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
October 2020	6.0	6.9	5.8
November 2020	8.0	8.7	7.7
December 2020	7.5	8.5	7.5
January 2021	9.1	9.5	8.5

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February 2021	8.7	9.4	8.3
March 2021	8.8	9.4	8.3
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

** CT Department of Labor website has not updated unemployment stats beyond August

Key Property Development Updates:

- 135 Gold Star Highway- Site Plan submitted for Days Inn conversion to multi – family housing
- 1154 Poquonnock Road – approval to convert commercial building into five multi-family residential units
- 12 Water Street – Convert 1,164 sq ft of commercial space to four residential micro apartments
- 12 Water Street – Convert 7,721 sq. ft. of commercial space into 13 residential one bedroom/studio/micro apartments

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>

RECOVERY FUNDS NEEDS ASSESSMENT & ALLOCATION PLAN

TOWN OF GROTON

REVISED 9/9/21

