

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

April 2024

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for **April 2024**.

Additional news specific to Groton Economic Development is found here: <http://www.exploremoregroton.com/news-and-media/news>

### **Economic Development Activities:**

- Small Business Pivot Grant: Staff has disbursed funds to four of the eight recipients. The maximum award issued is \$5,000. Funds are still available through the allocation of \$100,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Staff will open up another application round in the coming months.
- Community Challenge Grant: Staff continues to address Connecticut DECD requirements for the “Poquonnock Bridge Village Revitalization” project. This involves a state grant of \$6.4 million for the Poquonnock neighborhood to add housing (51 units at Grasso Gardens) and public infrastructure upgrades (sidewalks, boardwalk, and walkways). Next steps include finalizing a legal agreement with the Groton Housing Authority, completing a project “Administrative Plan”, securing an access easement from Groton Utilities/City of Groton, and closing on the Community Challenge grant (town and DECD). The state allows three years to initiate program expenses and up to five years for final expenditure.
- ICSC CT: Staff attended the ICSC & Ideas Connecticut event on April 3, 2024. This is on a much smaller scale than the ICSC New England and ICSC New York events that staff has attended in the past. The event offers community changemakers and ground-breakers one day of meaningful connections, insights and deals that bring local businesses and communities to life.
- Tourism Listening Tour: The Eastern Regional Tourism District reached out to staff about hosting a stop on their Tourism Listening Tour. Anthony Anthony, Chief Marketing Officer for DECD, will be making 2-3 stops in May. Groton hosted them during their tour last year and we were able to secure a spot this year on May 8<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Groton Public Library.
- Groton Community Conversations: The Office of Planning and Development Services staff hosted the third workshop from the “Groton Community Conversations” workshop series aimed at fostering community engagement and Groton’s future. This workshop titled “Home Matters – Addressing the Housing Needs in Groton” was held on April 25<sup>th</sup> at the Community Baptist Church, 950 Gold Star Highway, Groton. Our next workshop is titled CIVICS 101 – Encouraging Community Engagement. This workshop will focus on the structure of our government in Groton, our Boards and Commissions and their roles and how you can get involved. You can find all past presentations and information on future workshops at [bit.ly/GrotonCommunityConvo](http://bit.ly/GrotonCommunityConvo)

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- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Staff coordinated with the Finance Department to complete the required U.S. Treasury Annual Report. Most of the ARPA legal agreements are finalized. Payments to projects are being made as they meet specified thresholds. Funding is being made available to non-municipal recipients on a reimbursement basis.
- Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA): Staff received NAA applications from Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc., Riverfront Children’s Center, and Groton Public Schools by the April 9th deadline. Staff processed them and forwarded to the COW in April. A public hearing will be held in May followed by a vote in June. The submittals will then be sent to the state for final approval by the July 1st deadline.
- Economic Development Specialist Position: Our new Economic Development Specialist, Corinne Piazza, started on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. She comes from The Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake City, Utah and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the division.

### Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (former Groton Heights School): Staff attended a Town Council public meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup> regarding development and Groton Heights. Groton staff have maintained discussions with the Bill Memorial Library regarding a potential land swap as a part of the overall project. The previously held TOPE meeting recommended support for this project including advancing a future RFP to the Town Council. Developers were notified that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Groton Heights will soon be issued. As a result, several property tours are being conducted with various groups. Numerous investors and developers have expressed interest in this property.
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): PJ&A, holder of the land option agreement, has progressed in finalizing terms with a multi-family use developer (Orr Partners). Plans will be forthcoming shortly that are similar to past plans. The Town Council granted an 18 month extension to the option agreement. The project had envisioned a multi-family housing development 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://ctexaminer.com/2022/05/11/groton-council-greenlights-324-unit-apartment-complex-on-former-town-land/>
- Triton Square (former Seely School): The construction on-site has been progressing rapidly (see attached photos). Final inspections and initial leasing is expected by the end of 2024. Don Mar Development continues with the construction of a 304 unit residential development. The owner stated that they have a large waiting list for these future units. 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/>

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- Public Property Redevelopment (former Colonel Ledyard School): Bellsite, LLC is completing interior demolition and partial building renovation. The town and Bellsite, LLC completed the sale for the property on September 14, 2023. The project will include 64 residential units (multi-family) within close proximity to Electric Boat. 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.theday.com/local-news/20230623/plans-for-apartments-at-former-groton-city-school-approved/>
- Public Property Redevelopment (former Pleasant Valley School): Staff attended a Town Council public meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup> regarding development and Pleasant Valley School. The previously held TOPE meeting recommended support for this project including advancing a future RFP to the Town Council. Developers were notified that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Pleasant Valley will soon be issued. As a result, several property tours are being conducted with various groups. Numerous investors and developers have expressed interest in developing this property.
- Public Property Redevelopment (former S.B. Butler School): Staff coordinated the updating of an appraisal for the property. Staff participated in the Town Owned Excess Property Committee (TOPE) meeting on November 15, 2023. The TOPE opened a discussion regarding the future excessing of the former S.B. Butler School. Public comments were taken during the meeting. Several developers have approached the town indicating interest in the property.

### Economic Development Metrics:

#### Trade Name Metrics:

- There were 10 trade name certificates received this month in the Town of Groton.

#### Social Media Metrics:

- 1,057 Facebook followers, 1% increase from March.  
\*\* Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network: <https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 145 followers to our LinkedIn page, negligible increase from March.  
\*\* 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 [www.exploremoregroton.com](http://www.exploremoregroton.com) – Not available this time period.
- GreaterGroton.com Activity (April 1- April 26) [www.greatergroton.com](http://www.greatergroton.com)

- Total Visits 1,231

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

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- Max. Visitors Per Day 131
- New Registrations 7
- Engaged Visitors 34
- Informed Visitors 272
- Aware Visitors 716

- Unemployment Data (Percent %)

	<b>Groton</b>	<b>Norwich-New London- Westerly Labor Market</b>	<b>Connecticut</b>
October 2022	4.2	4.2	4.0
November 2022	3.4	3.7	3.5
December 2022	3.0	3.2	3.1
January 2023	3.5	4.1	4.2
February 2023	3.8	4.5	4.6
March 2023	3.8	4.1	4.3
April 2023	2.8	2.9	3.0
May 2023	3.3	3.6	3.7
June 2023	3.3	3.7	4.0
July 2023	3.2	3.6	3.9
August 2023	2.9	3.2	3.5
September 2023	2.6	2.7	3.0
October 2023	2.9	3.2	3.4
November 2023	3.1	3.2	3.5
December 2023	3.4	3.7	3.9
January 2024	4.3	4.8	4.4
February 2024	4.4	5.2	5.4
<b>March 2024</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>

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>

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*April 2024*

Triton Square Progress as of April 25, 2024



# Groton Community Conversations

## Workshop Series

Join the Office of Planning and Development Services for a workshop series, designed to empower you with insights into the essential elements that contribute to the success of a thriving community.

### CIVICS 101 - Encouraging Community Participation

- Provide an overview of the town's governmental structure, including the roles and responsibilities of the Town Council and RTM.
- Understand the roles and functions of various boards and commissions in local government.
- Explore opportunities for citizens to actively participate in civic life and contribute to decision-making processes.



**Food will be  
provided - come  
for the food, stay  
for the workshop**

[bit.ly/GrotonCommunityConvo](https://bit.ly/GrotonCommunityConvo)



**May  
29**



**Groton  
Public Library**

52 Newtown  
Road, Groton



**5:45p -  
7:15p**

### **Upcoming Workshops**

Check our website for recordings and material from our past workshops

**Stay tuned for our fall  
Workshop Series  
beginning in September**

