

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

February 2023

The following summarizes Economic Development Division activities for February 2023.

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 presented the Town Council selected projects to the RTM Finance Committee on February 22nd. The Committee voted in favor and to forward the request to the full RTM. The projects are valued at \$2,466,503.
- Claude Chester Reuse Public Meeting: On Tuesday, February 7th, members of town staff and the design firm Kent + Frost held a public information session at the Town Hall Annex. About 50 people attended. At the event, a series of development concepts for the former Claude Chester School site were presented. Proposed elements included athletic fields, a community aquatics center, and an outdoor splash pad. Members of the public are invited to vote for their preferred development concept in advance of Town Council review in late March. The public input survey can be found at <https://www.greatergroton.com/visioning-claude-chester>
- Downtown Mystic Parking Study Implementation Public Meeting: Staff participated in a downtown Mystic Parking Study meeting on February 21st at the Union Baptist Church. John Burke, Parking Consultant, provided the presentation. Following the presentation, small break-out groups held discussions and main points were documented by staff. This input was used to gauge public sentiment and will be forwarded to the Town Council for their deliberations on future parking recommendation implementation.
- Electric Boat Legislative Breakfast: Staff attended the EB Legislative Breakfast on February 27th. Hiring has continued to be strong and is growing. Kevin Graney, General Dynamics Electric Boat President, stated that hiring goals for 2023 are higher than 2022. He also explained that this hiring trend will remain strong for a minimum of 10 years. EB has current agreements to build new submarines for the next 20 years. 95% of the EB workers live within 50 miles of either Groton, CT or Quonset Point, RI. Congressman Courtney stressed the new federal appropriations have increased significantly and also include some provisions for related growth such as housing, transportation, worker relocation, workforce retention plus expansion of the talent pipeline.
- Department of Defense (DoD) – Defense Community Infrastructure PILOT Program: Staff participated in a webinar on February 16th focused on this program to learn about a future grant funding round. Significant grants are available to military communities to help with infrastructure outside of the base. Groton is focused on a transit hub project. Design and match funding would be required.

Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (Mystic Education Center): There was no activity in February. The current property today has over 160,000 square feet of existing building space including a 40,000 indoor recreation facility. Also, the site holds environmentally contaminated land.

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- Public Property Redevelopment (Groton Heights): No change in February. ThayerMahan has been completing final internal review and they determined the project faces significant environmental remediation costs. ThayerMahan has grown from three to over 80 employees in three years.
- Public Property Redevelopment (517/529 Gold Star Highway): PJ&A, holder of the option agreement, continues to seek quality developers. They have requested a conversation with the COW on February 28th to discuss advancing the project. The project had envisioned about 324 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://ctexaminer.com/2022/05/11/groton-council-greenlights-324-unit-apartment-complex-on-former-town-land/>
- Triton Square (former Seely School): No change in February. The project awaits final resolution on the zoning approval appeal. The 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): Bellsite, LLC has requested an option extension since approvals have taken longer than anticipated. The developer will be requesting this at the COW on February 28th. Plans have been resubmitted to the City of Groton’s Planning & Zoning Commission for consideration. The detailed plans include a total of 65 residential units (multi-family). 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 February. Town Council continues to address the property reuse process changes prior to releasing this project for RFP. Staff did submit a grant Community Investment Fund (CIF) grant proposal for building removal and land preparation. Interest in the property by the development community is strong.

Economic Development Metrics:

Trade Name Metrics:

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

Social Media Metrics:

- 896 Facebook followers, 1% increase from January.
** Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network:
<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 112 followers to our LinkedIn page, minimal change from January.
** Please follow the LinkedIn page and share our posts to your network:

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<https://www.linkedin.com/company/groton-economic-development/>

** Please like and SHARE posts on social media to expand the reach!

- Website Metrics (Jan 25-Feb 23) www.exploremoregroton.com
 - Total Sessions: 1,112 (973 new/139 returning), 2 pct. Below 12-month avg.
 - Pages per session: 1.66, 8 pct. Below 12-month avg.
 - Total Page Views: 1,846, 11 pct. Below 12-month avg.
 - Average Time Duration: 50 sec, 19 pct. Below 12-month avg.
- There are 647 subscribers on the Newsletter Mailing List, no change from January.
(<http://www.exploremoregroton.com/groton/news-and-media/sign-up-for-our-newsletter>)
- GreaterGroton.com Activity (Jan 24-Feb 23) www.greatergroton.com
 - Total Visits 1,666
 - Max. Visitors Per Day 294
 - New Registrations 44
 - Engaged Visitors 257
 - Informed Visitors 746
 - Aware Visitors 1,430
- Top Projects

Project	Engaged Participants	Informed Participants	Aware Participants
Visioning Claude Chester School	204	404	688
Parking in Mystic	43	176	349
Short Term Rentals in Groton	8	111	161
American Rescue Plan	0	48	79
Cannabis in Groton	2	17	39
Retail Opportunities in Groton	6	14	37
Downtown Mystic Resiliency & Sustainability Plan	0	14	36

- Unemployment Data (Percent %)

	Groton	Norwich-New London-Westerly Labor Market Area	Connecticut
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	3.6	4.0	3.7
May 2022	3.7	4.2	4.0
June 2022	4.0	4.4	4.1
July 2022	4.0	4.5	4.3

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August 2022	3.6	4.5	4.3
September 2022	3.8	4.1	3.9
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	3.0	3.2	3.1

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>