

Economic Development Division Update

November 2015

The following economic development activities were undertaken by staff during the period of November 1st through November 30th:

Administration:

- Staffing : Kristin Clarke offered her resignation from the Economic Development Specialist position to pursue other professional opportunities. Her last day was Monday, November 23rd.
- Budget: Staff is beginning the FY 2017 budget process.

Economic Development Efforts:

- “Business in Focus”: Staff prepared for and completed a formal interview with “Business in Focus” magazine on November 4th. Major contributors to the interview were Al Valenti and Peter Legnos. Over 15 high resolution photos were provided to the magazine. Staff completed a final review of the written article on November 25th. The article will be printed and distributed to over 250,000 subscribers in the U.S. and Canada. This article will benefit Groton’s exposure outside of the Connecticut market. Staff did confirm with the City of Stamford’s Economic Development Director that he found the similar Stamford product to be of benefit.
- Zoning Audit and Market Analysis: Staff has coordinated with VHB and Camoin on the draft products following the October 29th Focus Group meeting. The Zoning Audit draft is now in hand and is ready for distribution. The Market Analysis draft is due by December 4th and will be distributed shortly thereafter to the Focus Group. A meeting with the Focus Group to address both drafts is likely prior to the holidays.
- Mystic Education Center: Staff toured the property and buildings on November 6th with officials from the CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and a developer prospect. Additionally, staff coordinated with VHB and Camoin for the completion of a feasibility study for the property including consideration of multiple redevelopment scenarios. Staff will meet with DECD on December 2nd to discuss next steps.
- Brownfields Program Grant Application: Staff completed and submitted the Brownfields program grant proposal and submitted the package to the state on November 16th. Also completed was a public outreach meeting on November 12th. The grant proposal focused on an “Area-wide Revitalization Planning Grant” from the CT Office of Brownfields targeting the Poquonnock Bridge Village area. If preliminarily selected, staff will be interviewed in December as Groton makes it through a competitive process. If the \$200,000 grant request is awarded, funds can also be used for marketing, planning, transportation, and design.
- Airport Development Zone: Staff gained approval in November from the Town for the submittal of the ADZ application to the DECD. This development and submittal of this application will be a major undertaking involving significant research and analysis involving data projections of job and business growth. The application is still being developed.
- Electric Plug-in Vehicles: Staff is seeking local approval of project documentation to be submitted for state funding of electric plug-in vehicles and associated electric charging stations.

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Although this funding is beneficial in funding upgrades to the Town's fleet, if funded, the project can also benefit Groton's branding especially if the program is later expanded to private property.

- Property Listings on Town Website: Staff has updated the Town of Groton Economic Development webpage specific to "Featured Properties." This has been needed and will be updated on a regular, ongoing basis in the future.
<http://www.groton-ct.gov/depts/plandev/properties.asp>
- "Business Welcome Package": Staff continues to make improvements on assembling a package to be used for new businesses. A business approval flow chart, welcome letter, and resource listing are being developed.
- Mystic Visitors Information Kiosk: Staff continues to progress in gaining internal approval for use of the Mystic community policing substation for a visitor information kiosk. Once final approval is gained, staff can move forward to solicit partners for its operation.

Meetings/Outreach:

- Staff participated in meetings/conversations with partner agencies including CT Department of Economic and Community Development, CT Department of Housing, seCTer, and Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, Greater Mystic Chamber, and the University of Connecticut – Avery Point.
- Staff participated in a Northeastern Developers Association (NEDA) webinar entitled, "Trends in Manufacturing" on November 12th.
- Staff continues to work with several parties interested in the reuse and redevelopment of the former Poquonnock Bridge Fire House as a priority focus. Tracking the volume of communications has improved, but more can be done. There were 21 recorded inquiries and communication with business prospects in November. Of particular interest were a "NanoBrewery", Groton Shopper's Mart (Theater), and a new training/education office at 1 Long Point Road. Once initial contact is made, staff serves as the "Point of Contact" to assist the business through the process.
- Beyond reacting to business inquiries, staff has also increased outreach focused on attracting businesses to Groton through direct contact. Most outreach attempts do not lead to immediate traction, but some do. As one example, Tractor Supply Company was contacted and they have begun dialogue with staff regarding locating a store in Groton. The market analysis data specific to demand for the "building materials/garden equipment/supply" sector was helpful. Similarly, the final market analysis will assist in targeting businesses where there is local market demand (also known as "market leakage").