

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

May 2024

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

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

### **Economic Development Activities:**

- Community Challenge Grant: Staff continues to advance this grant funded “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). Town coordinated the state required 8-24 reviews for the town PZC. Also, information was provided to Groton City for their completion of that same state required process. The Town and City are finalizing a pedestrian access easement across Groton Utilities property for the pedestrian river crossing. CT DECD and the town have targeted end of June for a closing which will allow the project implementation to begin. Also, staff is completing an “Administrative Plan” for DECD reference. DECD allows three years to initiate program expenses and up to five years for final expenditure. A related housing project at 58 Fort Hill Road is advancing to PZC review this summer. This 58 Fort Hill Road project was originally included in the original Community Challenge Grant proposal. DECD shifted this component to the CT Department of Housing (DOH) for financing.
- “Tourism” Listening Tour: The town hosted The Eastern Regional Tourism District (ERTD) on a stop for their Tourism Listening Tour. On May 8<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 – 3:00 pm, Tourism Director, Rachel Lenda and Brand Director, Ellen Woolf came to the Groton Public Library. Attendees were able to share successes, concerns, and ideas as far as tourism in both the region and state. This served as one regional meetings for the ERTD and the CT Office of Tourism.
- Groton Community Conversations: The Office of Planning and Development Services staff hosted the fourth workshop from the “Groton Community Conversations” workshop series aimed at fostering community engagement and Groton’s future. This workshop titled “CIVICS 101 – Encouraging Community Engagement” was held on May 29<sup>th</sup> at the Groton Public Library. We will launch the next session of workshops in the fall. You can find all past presentations and information on future workshops at [bit.ly/GrotonCommunityConvo](http://bit.ly/GrotonCommunityConvo)
- 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): The Town Council will hold a public hearing on the NAA

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applications from Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc., Riverfront Children's Center, and Groton Public Schools that were received by the April 9th deadline. The submittals will be sent to the state for final approval by the July 1st deadline.

### Public Property Redevelopment:

- Public Property Redevelopment (former Groton Heights School): Staff attended a Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting on May 14th to review and discuss the Groton Heights RFP. Town Council approval of the RFP is required. 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 finalized terms with a multi-family use developer (Orr Partners). The town will share the detailed plans with the Town Council by the end of June. The detailed plans are similar to the previously received concept plan on which the option agreement is based. 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 advancing quickly. Final inspections and initial leasing are expected later in 2024. Don Mar Development continues to construct the 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. This property will be one of the top 10 taxpayers in Groton upon completion.
- 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 has provided the

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Committee of the Whole (COW) the draft Pleasant Valley School RFP. This will item was scheduled to be heard on May 28<sup>th</sup>, but has been continued to June 4<sup>th</sup>. 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 4 trade name certificates received this month in the Town of Groton.

#### Social Media Metrics:

- 1,057 Facebook followers, no increase from April.  
\*\* Please follow the Facebook page and share our posts to your network: <https://www.facebook.com/GrotonEconomicDevelopment/>
- 145 followers to our LinkedIn page, no increase from April.  
\*\* 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 27 - May 30) [www.greatergroton.com](http://www.greatergroton.com)
  - Total Visits 1,031
  - Max. Visitors Per Day 65
  - New Registrations 14
  - Engaged Visitors 21
  - Informed Visitors 268
  - Aware Visitors 812

- Unemployment Data (Percent %)

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	<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
March 2024	3.5	4.0	4.2
<b>April 2024</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.5</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>