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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Guy Scaife, City Manager**

**Economic Development Housing and Zoning Committee**

**Interested Parties**

**FROM: Juliet Burdelski, Director of Economic Development**

**RE: Update of Economic Development & Community Development Activities**

**July 18, 2017 to September 15, 2017**

**DATE: September 19, 2017**

Attached please find a report of activities conducted by the City of Meriden Economic Development Department for the period July 18, 2017 through September 15, 2017 and highlights of all economic development activities this year.

**Update of Economic & Community Development Activities for the period**

July 18, 2017 through September 15, 2017 and year to date highlights

**Mission: The mission of the Economic Development Department is to sustain and grow the tax base, provide jobs, and create economic activity across numerous sectors within our community.**

**Objectives:**

* Collaborate with private, public and non-profit organizations that create jobs and economic activity in Meriden.
* Support and champion community leaders who work to make Meriden an attractive and economically viable place to live, work and recreate.
* Increase investment in Meriden’s inner city, attract businesses to Meriden across numerous economic sectors, and retain existing businesses that have invested in our community.
* Pursue funding for and help implement critical infrastructure improvements that are necessary to support and sustain economic growth.
* Engage in long-term planning while at the same time recognizing the short-term needs of Meriden business owners, residents and workers.

**Highlights of new business development and business expansions in 2017**

* Flats at 390, 390 Bee Street, Opened January 2017. Formerly the Infinity apartments
* Silver City Ballroom and Show Labs, 16 Church Street, Opened July 2017
* Med Express, 875 East Main Street, Opened August 2017
* AJ’s Oasis Restaurant, 142 Hanover Street, Re-opened August 2017
* Miss Chantel's Star Dance Academy, 606 Pomeroy Avenue, Opened September 2017
* Banana Brazil Restaurant, 124 Hanover Street, Opened September 2017
* Rose Flowers & Gifts, 232 West Main Street, Re-opened under new ownership March 2017
* Café Dolce, 33 West Main Street, Re-opened under new ownership, May 2017
* Ferraro’s 211 South Broad Street, Opened March 2017
* Plimpton & Hills, Plumbing Supply, 300 Research Pkwy, Opened June 2017
* TFF Virtual Shooting Range, 615 East Main Street, Opened June 2017

**Highlights of downtown redevelopment activities in 2017**

* Transferred 177 State Street to the Meriden Housing Authority for Meriden Commons 1 development project. Construction is underway and lease-up is anticipated for Spring 2018.
* Continued demolition of former Record Journal building at 11 Crown Street. Property transfer expected to be completed by end of 2018.
* Continued Mills demolition specifications. Demo project is expected to commence in early 2018.
* Completed “First Impressions” reciprocal site visit to Danbury CT. Information exchange meeting with Danbury participants scheduled for September 27, 2017.
* Assisted La Rosa Realty submit a CHAMP 11 funding application for an adaptive reuse development at 21 Colony Street. Project includes 8 market rate housing units, 4 affordable units and 6000 sf of commercial space. Funding announcements are expected in Fall 2017.
* Coordinated installation of planter boxes throughout downtown with seed funding provided by CEDF and YMCA/Downtown Neighborhood Association. Planter boxes were built by Wilcox Tech students and additional planters will be constructed by students at CWI2, located at 457 Center Street. Second phase will include downtown murals on vacant walls and on electrical boxes in downtown.
* Submitted $4m grant/loan application to DECD to cleanup 1 King Place. Application pending.
* Executed Master Developer Agreement with One King LLC for the 1 King Place site.
* Received a letter of interest from One King LLC to redevelopment 116 Cook Ave.
* Completed structural evaluation study of 116 Cook Ave. to determine redevelopment feasibility.
* Received proposal to purchase 69 East Main Street for new restaurant. Proposal acceptance contingent upon Phase II environmental site investigation (underway).
* City issued bids for Pratt Street Gateway and West Main/Colony Street sidewalk improvement projects.
* Meriden Transit Center near completion. Service to start May 2018.

**Highlights of business participation in City and State Incentive Programs**

* HEDCO and CEDF leads and closed loans – 6 for total closed loans $158,000 and pending closing 100k
* Current EZ State companies 4.
* IT Zone 1
* Local EZ companies 6

**Updates on Marketing and Outreach (July –September 2017)**

* + **Meriden 2020.com and Meridenbiz.com**: 6900 users visited Meriden2020.com between July 18 and September 15, 2017. Most popular pages visited were “Events”, “Downtown Development” and ”News”.
* **Street Banners**: New banners for 24 Colony Street and Interstate Glass were installed in July 2017. A listing of all of the participating businesses and organizations can be found at <http://www.meriden2020.com/Downtown-Redevelopment/meet-your-downtown-merchants-/>.
* **Billboards:** Summer Music Series, Meriden Farmer’s Market, United Way Campaign
* **Real estate inquiries:**  Fielded inquiries for downtown retail; utilized co star to produce reports of available properties.
* **SBDC Technical Assistance:** Provided referrals to SBDC for several potential new businesses. SBDC has leads on 30 potential new businesses in Meriden
* **CT Next:** Submitted $200,000 application to CT Next to support downtown façade and business development program in cooperation with Midstate Chamber and MEDCO.

**CT Main Street:** Meriden Rising Event scheduled October 17, 2017.

**Business Retention and Development Assistance**

The Economic Development department assists Meriden business owners access capital and incentives through private, local, state and federal programs for their business growth. We also provide information on available incentives and state funding programs for new and expanding businesses. Specific activities included:

* **Banana Brasil** – Assisted business owner with find appropriate location for restaurant. Owner purchased 124 Hanover Street (former Verdolini’s restaurant) November 2016. Restaurant to opened September 13, 2017. Owner is looking into other business ventures in Meriden and working with ED.
* **Crystal Grocery 226 West Main Street** – assisting owner purchase property where they currently lease. Application to assist in business expansion was submitted to DECD and has been approved for a loan of $226K and $30k Grant through the Small Business Express program. Property purchased completed August 2017.
* **Bakery on the Green 29 W. Main Street–** Assisted business with finding location and submitting funding application to HEDCO. Looking to open late 2017.
* **Senia Beauty Salon** – 31 West Main Street. Working with business owner to obtain financing with HEDCO for façade improvements.
* **Poblanita Bakery** – 39 Colony Street. Working with business owner to improve façade and dining area. Owner took advantage of planter boxes and has set up outdoor dining area.
* **1388 East Main/Former Jacoby’s**. Construction progressing for east side restaurant/market.
* **Moran Appliances** – 664 W. Main Street. Assisted owner complete Phase I/II Environmental Site Assessments using USEPA funds. HEDCO loan application approved and closed May 2017. Pending additional funding for property renovations. City is also working with Mr. Moran on environmental cleanup application.
* **Aperture Optical 170 Pond View**—City approved $300,000 MAP Loan to the business. Loan closing pending and subject to first mortgage holder approval.
* **Nina’s Café, 39 West Main Street**– City and SBDC assisted owner submit CT DECD Small
* **Tacos Mi Nachos-** Workingwith owner to expand his business in Meriden. Property has been identify.
* **Honey Spot –** Working with business owner for new business opportunities in Meriden.
* **Ebenezer Restaurant -** Working with business owner for potential business expansion, additional funding required.
* **Quality Bar and Grille –** Working with a possible new owner. Referred him over to CEDF for financing opportunity.
* **Skybox Restaurant, 1376 East Main Street**-Assisting owner identify permanent financing for restaurant operation. Discussions ongoing. Seller has listed property for lease or sale.

**Grant Funded Projects**

The Economic Development Department manages several grant funded projects aimed at fostering economic development and improving quality of life for all Meriden residents. Specific activities include:

* TOD Pilot Project: City was awarded $870,000 in 2016 TOD Pilot funds awarded to advance TOD multi modal improvement project in downtown Meriden. Funds will be used in fall 2017 for roadway and sidewalk improvements downtown.
* Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Grants:
* 116 Cook Ave. Cleanup Grant (USEPA $240,000) & HUD Section 108 Loan ($335,000). 250 tons of interior debris and hazardous materials removed from building July-Sept 2016. Plans for development pending. Partial cleanup at site completed. Structural evaluation completed August 2017. Redevelopment plans pending.
* CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Assessment at the Mills (State $200,000): Worked with AECom to complete assessment of environmental hazards 62 Cedar St, 161 State St and 144 Mills Memorial. Work is ongoing. Grant funds are being used to develop technical bid specifications for Mills demo.
* CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Assessment at 1 King Place ($180,000 grant, $221,000 loan): State awarded $221,000 Interim cleanup work completed March 2016. Fuss & O’Neill selected to complete Phase II/III Environmental Site assessments and a Hazardous Building Materials survey of the property. Work (partial cleanup of asbestos) is substantially completed. Developer has been selected and a proposed developer agreement was approved by council June 2017.
* City submitted $2m CT DECD Municipal Brownfield Cleanup grant application for 1 King Place in June 2017. $2m loan application submitted July 2017. Total cleanup cost for this building is $4m. Developer agreement is subject to City of Meriden cleaning up the site. Award announcements expected October 2017. A
* CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Cleanup at 11 Crown Street ($1.73 million). Manafort awarded demo contract December 2016. Remediation started March 2017. Demolition ceremony held May 5, 2017. Demo has started and to be completed by end of July. 2017.
* USEPA Brownfields Assessment. $200,000 awarded for brownfield assessment, reuse planning, community outreach, and project management. Work is ongoing. Assessment sites include: 53 Colony, 55 Colony and 664 W. Main Street (Moran’s), 208-226 West Main Street (Crystal Grocery)124 Hanover Street, 48 Arch Parkway, 21 Colony Street, 69 East Main Street, 84 Grove Street and 88 Grove Street.
* DECD Brownfields Area wide Revitalization (BAR): Received $100,000 application to develop a commercial/retail marketing strategy for the TOD area and to complete site use planning at 16 Church St. and 25-33 Colony Street. BL Companies selected. Kick off meeting held September 27, 2016. BL Companies and City participated in Deal Making Conference March 8, 2017 at the CT Convention Center. BL held a series of meeting to review branding for downtown. City and other partners presented and update on the grant to DECD on March 29, 2017. Public meeting held June 15 2017.
* DECD Brownfields Cleanup: Received $2 million to fund demolition and remediation of Mills housing complex. Demo specifications in process. MHA received approval to relocate all tenants (demo dispo approval). Demo scheduled for early 2018. As of early July, 37 tenants remain to be relocated. Upon relocation AECOM will complete destructive testing and finalize demo specifications and bid package.
* USEPA Cleanup grant: Applied for $200,000 cleanup grant from USEPA to be matched with $40,000 in local funds for UST and PCB cleanup at 1 King Place. .City of Meriden was not awarded. Pending meeting with EPA to discuss declination.
* Farmers Market Promotion Program: in March 2017 the City applied for a $75,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to market, promote and expand programming at the downtown Farmers Market. Award announcement pending.
* Neglected Cemetery Grant:  The City was awarded a $2,000 grant on December 5, 2016 through the State Office of Policy and Management’s Neglected Cemetery Account Grant Program.  The grant will contribute to the cleanup and maintenance of West Cemetery, located between Hanover Street, Orange Street and Cook Avenue.   City staff has met with the West Cemetery Association and are working to identify the most cost efficient, high visibility project to be completed with the Neglected Cemetery Grant award.
* Community Development Block Grant:  The City of Meriden administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, an annual entitlement grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development aimed to benefit low- and moderate-income Meriden residents.  During the program year which ended June 30, the City approved seven (7) loans to income-eligible homeowners to make critical repairs to their homes and/or to address code violations through the CDBG-funded Neighborhood Preservation Program.  Grant activities – including programs for youth, senior citizens, employment training/opportunities, the homeless, and adults with special needs – carried out by CDBG subrecipients have benefited 26,328 people through the first three quarters of the program year. While final reporting is being calculated for Program Year 42, the City is preparing for the start of Program Year 43, with contracts expected to be issued to subrecipients by mid-August. The City is funding 31 different Public Service activities in Program Year 43, and will be using CDBG to launch the Meriden Commercial Façade Rehabilitation Program and Making Meriden grant match competition. The City was awarded $934,701 in CDBG funds for the coming year. HUD approval of Annual Action Plan received September 2017. Contracting is proceeding with subgrantees.
* Uniform Chart of Accounts Grant: the State Office of Policy and Management granted the City an eighteen month extension on its $30,000 grant award to complete it financial accounting system upgrade from a local chart of accounts to a state-developed uniform chart of accounts.
* CT Next-Innovative Places Grant: Submitted $200,000 application to CT Next to support downtown façade and business development program in cooperation with Midstate Chamber and MEDCO.

**Transfers of City Owned Property (include updates from Debbie)**

* 6 for a total of $18,500. 6 additional property pending transfer for total of 7600.00
  + 77 Broad Street Rear –Legal and Eng. working on easement agreement, once completed then closing can be scheduled.
  + 32 W. Main Street (partial)– Closing pending.
  + 48 Arch Parkway --Closed
  + 16 Springdale Avenue – Closing pending
  + 1576 North Broad Street. Engineering in process of updated survey/map.
  + 71 Prospect—Closing pending.
  + 100 Meridian Street (purchase) –Closing scheduled July 24, 2017
  + 1152 Hanover Ave. Land donation to City. Closing pending
  + 192 Grove Street. Closing pending
  + 60 East Main Street – Closing pending approved transfer of 68 East Main.
  + 86 Hillside Ave. Sold.
  + 57 Hillside Ave. Sold.
  + 177 Mt Pleasant. Sold
  + 285 Cook Ave. Land donation to city. Closed.

**Committees/Boards and other activities**

1. Blight & Brownfields held on June 15, 2017. Copies of meeting summary available at http://www.meridenbiz.com/brownfields/blight-and-brownfields-committee/
2. Economic Development Task Force. Meetings held July 18, 2017.
3. Midstate Chamber meetings: Attended monthly board meetings
4. MEDCO: Attended quarterly board meeting and monthly Executive Committee meetings.
5. Attended City MHA Joint Working Group July and September 2017.
6. Economic Development Housing Zoning Committee July 2017.
7. Downtown Neighborhood Association Meeting August, 2017.
8. Connecticut Economic Development Association: Attended monthly Board of Directors meetings.
9. Community Economic Development Fund: Attended monthly Board meetings.
10. Staff attended monthly Chamber HOLA meetings.
11. Staff attended monthly Farmer’s market meetings.
12. Attended Chamber breakfast September 9, 2017.
13. Held interviews for Grants Administrator/Community Development Manager position.
14. Attended CEDF Montly Corporation Board meeting.
15. Attended Meriden Farmer Market Board Meeting.
16. Attended State Enterprise Zone Quarterly Meeting.

Report prepared by: Juliet Burdelski, Paola Mantilla, September 15, 2017