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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**

**September 16, 2017 to November 14, 2017.**

**DATE: November 14, 2017**

Attached please find a report of activities conducted by the City of Meriden Economic Development Department for the period September 16, 2017 through November 14, 2017 and highlights of all economic development activities this year.

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

September 16, 2017 through November 14, 2017

**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.
* Demolition of former Record Journal building at 11 Crown Street has been completed. Property transfer expected to be completed by end of 2018.
* Continued Mills demolition specifications. Demo project is expected to commence in early 2018.
* Had with Danbury for exchange meeting with participants. First Impressions final report was provided to City Council October 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. Project has received History Tax Credits confirmation.
* Second phase of the beautification project 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.
* One King LLC was designated as preferred developer for 116 Cook Avenue in October 2017. The City completed structural evaluation study of 116 Cook Ave. to determine redevelopment feasibility, this report was provided to the developer. Developer has committed to provide the City a development plan within the next six months
* Received proposal to purchase 69 East Main Street for new restaurant. Proposal was acceptance contingent upon Phase II environmental site investigation. Analysis completed using EPA funds, soils meet redevelopment criteria and development can proceed. Resolution to be presented at the next council meeting.
* City issued bids for Pratt Street Gateway and West Main/Colony Street sidewalk improvement projects. La Rosa Construction was awarded project and work will commence early Spring 2018.
* Meriden Transit Center near completion. Train station will open December 2017. Service to start May 2018.

**Updates on Marketing and Outreach (September- November 2017)**

* + **Meriden 2020.com and Meridenbiz.com**: 1800 users visited Meriden2020.com and Meridenbiz.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-/>. We are working with park and recs to fix current broken banner poles and continue to add new banners as new businesses open in downtown.
* **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 over 30 potential new businesses in Meriden
* **CT Housing Coalition –** Field Trip to Meriden Event scheduled for Nov. 15, 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.
* **Senia Beauty Salon** – 31 West Main Street. Working with business owner and property owner to apply for the Meriden Match program.
* **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. She will also be applying for Meriden Match program.
* **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.
* **Tacos Mi Nachos-** Workingwith owner to expand his business in Meriden. Property has been identify. Owner is looking to purchase 69 East Main Street. City will be presenting his offer to council at the next November meeting.
* **Ebenezer Restaurant -** Working with business owner for potential business expansion, additional funding required.
* **Zorba’s –** Assisting restaurant owner with new business opportunities in Meriden.
* **31 Pratt Street –** Working with property owner and business owner to submit application to Meriden Match program.

**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. One King Place LLC has been designated as the preferred developer.
* 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 November 2017.
* 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. Manafort has completed per contract. Working with Michael on a few final issues to complete property transfer by end of December 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. On October 2017, the final report was presented to the public with a walking tour of the downtown “Meriden Rising” .
* 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. AECOM is currently finalizing demo specifications and bid package. RFP to go out January 2018 for a project start date of April 2018 and final demo August 2018.
* USEPA Cleanup grant: November 2017, city 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.
* Choice Neighborhood Grant: working with MHA to resubmit an $18m grant due Nov 22, 2017. Notifications on the grant due Spring 2018.
* 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.   Sections of fencing along Orange and Hanover Street were repaired by Cornerstone Fence at a cost of $3,000. An additional $1,000 was borrowed from blight funds to fund the additional work that the budget of the grant wouldn’t be able to cover. Staff is now working on a reimbursement request.
* 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 deadline for pre-applications to be received for the Meriden Match program is December 1, 2017. 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: October 2017, Assisted MEDCO submit $200,000 to CT Next to support downtown façade and business development program in cooperation with Midstate Chamber and City.

**Transfers of City Owned Property**

* 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.
* 60 East Main Street – Closing pending approved transfer of 68 East Main.
* 69 East Main Street –To Council 11/20/2017

**Committees/Boards and other activities**

1. Economic Development Task Force. Meetings held October 25, 2017.
2. Midstate Chamber meetings: Attended monthly board meetings
3. MEDCO: Attended quarterly board meeting and monthly Executive Committee meetings.
4. Attended City MHA Joint Working Group September, October and November 2017.
5. Economic Development Housing Zoning Committee September 2017.
6. Downtown Neighborhood Association Monthly Meeting.
7. Connecticut Economic Development Association: Attended monthly Board of Directors meetings.
8. Community Economic Development Fund: Attended monthly Board meetings.
9. Staff attended monthly Chamber HOLA meetings.
10. Staff attended monthly Farmer’s market meetings.
11. Attended Chamber breakfast October 2017.
12. Attended CEDF Monthly Corporation Board meeting.
13. Attended Meriden Farmer Market Board Meeting.
14. Attended CT Housing Coalition October 26, 2017.
15. Attended NEDAS Conference December 2-3
16. Attended CDBG training October 25-26
17. Attended Community Reinvestment Act Training on October 30, 2017.

Report prepared by: Juliet Burdelski, Paola Mantilla, and Matt Sarcione November 14, 2017