

MERIDEN 2020

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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
April 18, 2017 to July 17, 2017

DATE: July 18, 2017

Attached please find a report of activities conducted by the City of Meriden Economic Development Department for the period April 18, 2017 through July 17, 2017.



City of Meriden, Office of Economic Development

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Meriden, CT 06450

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Update of Economic & Community Development Activities for the period
April 18, 2017 through July 17, 2017

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. Towards this end, we will focus on the following 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.

I. Marketing and Outreach

The Economic Development Department promotes Meriden as a great place to live, work and play through Meriden2020 campaign and through Meridenbiz.com. Specific activities include:

- **Meriden 2020.com and Meridenbiz.com:** 3500 users visited Meriden2020.com between April 18 and July 17, 2017. Most popular pages visited were “Events”, “Downtown Development” and “News”, specifically news related to events at the Meriden Green.
- **Downtown Street Banner Program:** Businesses, non-profits and property owners are invited to purchase a banner to be displayed on street poles along West Main and Colony Streets. Over 50 banners have been sold. A listing of all of the participating businesses and organizations can be found at <http://www.meriden2020.com/Downtown-Redevelopment/meet-your-downtown-merchants/>. New banners for 24 Colony Street and Interstate Glass will be installed in July 2017.

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- Meriden 2020 Campaign-Lamar/I-91 S billboard.** Under the digital public service component of the lease agreement with Lamar, the City is entitled to 2000 hours annually. From April through July, billboards were designed requested to run for the following special events and organizations: Meriden Rotary 5K on April 23, Meriden Daffodil Festival April 29-30, Summer Music Series, Meriden Markham Airport Fly In Festival on May 13, Food Truck Festival May 20-21, and Memorial Day Mile Race for Veterans on May 29.

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**5K & FUN RUN
IN OUR
MERIDEN**

MERIDEN2020.COM

RaceHubbardPark.com
April 23, 10AM



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**GREAT FOOD
IN OUR
MERIDEN**

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Food Truck Fair
MAY 20/21
11AM-4PM

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**LIVE MUSIC
& SUMMER
IN OUR
MERIDEN**

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June 16-Aug 25
7PM FRIDAYS | Meriden Green
RestoreWithTheArts.org

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**MEMORIAL DAY
IN OUR
MERIDEN**

MERIDEN2020.COM

Memorial Day Mile
ISRAEL PUTNAM SCHOOL | Mon. 5/29, 8:45AM

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**FAMILY FUN
IN OUR
MERIDEN**

MERIDEN2020.COM

Meriden Markham Airport
**FLY IN &
PUBLIC SAFETY FESTIVAL**
May 13, 2017 | 9AM-3PM

Meriden Daffodil Festival
April 29-30, 2017
HUBBARD PARK

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**SMELL THE
FLOWERS
IN OUR
MERIDEN**

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- **Co-star commercial real estate reports:** We utilize CoStar commercial real estate subscription to identify available commercial properties in Meriden. We provided info for several businesses interested purchasing commercial property in Meriden (100,000 sf manufacturing, downtown properties).
- **Small Business Outreach:** Completed a brain storming session at Nina’s Café in April with Chamber, the Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF) and Small Business Administration (SBA) on Small Business Bootcamp series. City is co-hosting summer boot camp for small businesses (“Ready Set Go”) with Chamber and SBA. Small Business sessions started July 13, 2017 and will continue to July 27, 2017 at the Meriden Library.
- **CTVisit.com:** The State has launched a new tourism website and allows municipalities to load information on special events and activities. City staff entered information on several tourist destinations, including Hubbard Park, Soloman Goffe House, the Meriden Historical Society and Gallery 53, and assisted these organizations participate in the “Open House” day on June 10.
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II. Downtown Redevelopment

The Economic Development Department works to foster development around transit and encourage infill development in downtown Meriden. This may include creating a more walkable and attractive downtown. Specific activities include:

- **CT Main Street Center “Come Home to Downtown” Program:** City was selected by the CT Main Street Center to participate in a “downtown fellowship” program that would provide a staff person for two years to assist with downtown management and marketing. Presentation was made by City staff and several downtown stakeholders on March 24. Discussions are ongoing. City is also working with CT Main Street Center to identify funding for 21 Colony Street historic adaptive reuse project. La Rosa Realty submitted a CHAMP 11 funding application June 2017 for 8 market rate housing units, 4 affordable units and 6000 sf of commercial space. Funding announcements are expected in late August 2017.
- **Secured commitments from CEDF and YMCA/Downtown Neighborhood Association (\$12,500 total) to support “downtown beautification program”** including purchase of trash receptacles, flower planter boxes and the installation of community art in downtown Meriden. Planters were designed by students at Wilcox Tech and have been installed at different locations on Colony Street and West Main Street. YMCA will also be completing a community arts project and new refuse cans will be purchased following completion of the new sidewalks on W. Main and Colony Street.



Planter at Nina's Cafe W. Main Street

III. Business Retention and Development (new activity during the reporting period)

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. Work is underway and restaurant to open Fall 2017.
- **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. Closing schedule for July 20, 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.
- **Show Lab** – New business at 16 Church Street (formerly the Vault). They are working with SBDC and were recently approved for a loan through CEDF. Site will be a special events venue specializing in custom lighting and entertainment. A Business after hours/Ribbon cutting was held July 6, 2017.
- **Tradebe** – 234 Pratt Street. Ec Dev. Staff assisted with finding office space for company offices. Company was previously leasing at 47 Gracey Ave. Tradebe purchased property in April and as of May 2017 they have relocated all administrative operations to this new location.
- **Ragozzino Foods** – held meeting in January with executive team to discuss future plans. A referral was done from Economic Development to DECD. In June the state has provided financial assistance package to assist company’s growth.
- **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.
- **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 Business Express funding application to DECD for expansion and upgrades. \$30,000 matching grant application approved December 2016. Improvements completed and new dining area



Poblanita, Colony St.

was set up. Owner working with HEDCO for additional funding application for façade improvements.

- **Skybox Restaurant, 1376 East Main Street**-Assisting owner identify permanent financing for restaurant operation. Discussions ongoing.

IV. 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 summer 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 to be completed in July 2017.
 - 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 Cleanup 177 State Street (\$597,000): Soil cleanup completed February 2017. Property transfer completed in April 2017. Construction of Meriden Commons 1 is underway. Groundbreaking for development held June 12, 2017.
 - 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 will be submitted in July 2017. Total cleanup cost for this building is \$4m. Developer agreement is subject to City of Meriden cleaning up the site. City has been selected for an interview on the project on June 26, 2017. Award announcements to be done August 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.



Crown Street demo 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.
- **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 its financial accounting system upgrade from a local chart of accounts to a state-developed uniform chart of accounts.
- **CT Next-Innovative Places Grant:** The Midstate Chamber has been awarded a CT Next Innovation Places Planning grant. Planning grant was used to develop an innovation plan for downtown Meriden. City staff participated in **CT Next-Innovation Places Planning Grant and Implementation Grant application in cooperation with the Midstate Chamber and MEDCO**. If awarded, grant funds will be used to foster new business development and entrepreneurial support activities in Meriden.

V. 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 June 20, 2017, July 18, 2017. Department staff initiates requests to dispose city-owned properties. City owned properties approved for transfer include:
 - 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 --Closing pending.
 - 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.

- 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 2017.
- 6) Economic Development Housing Zoning Committee meeting April 2017.
- 7) Downtown Neighborhood Association Meeting April and May 15, 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 CWI2 board meeting.
- 12) Staff attended monthly Farmer's market meetings.
- 13) Attended DECD Tourism Conference May 4, 2017.
- 14) Attended CT Main Street award ceremony-Meriden Green May 18, 2017.
- 15) Attended Chamber breakfast May 19, 2017.
- 16) Attended CERC presentation on Economic Development June 13, 2017.
- 17) Attended the Fair Housing Association of Connecticut's Annual Conference on April 26, 2017.
- 18) Hosted a public hearing on the City's Neighborhood Association Act submission to the State on May 24, 2017.
- 19) Met with Zach Dendas, Deputy Director of Outreach for Senator Chris Murphy, on June 20, 2017.
- 20) Attended Connecticut Housing Coalition's Annual Meeting and board meeting on June 28, 2017.

Report prepared by: Juliet Burdelski, Paola Mantilla, and Tyler Fairbairn, July 18, 2017.