

MEMORANDUM

**TO: Lawrence J. Kendzior, City Manager
Economic Development Housing and Zoning Committee
Interested Parties**

FROM: Juliet Burdelski, Director of Economic Development

**RE: Update of Economic Development Activities August 18 through
November 17, 2015**

DATE: November 17, 2015

Attached please find a report of activities conducted by the City of Meriden Office of Economic Development for the period August 18 through November 17, 2015.



Update of Economic Development Activities for the period August 18, 2015 through November 17, 2015

The mission of the Office of Economic Development 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. General

The Office of Economic Development is staffed by Director Juliet Burdelski, and Economic Development Associate Paola Mantilla.

II. Marketing and Outreach Activities

- A. Website & Social Media Highlights: Regularly added new content to Meriden2020 including things to do, events and community calendar, and news. Using Google Analytics, we show that 2500 users visited meriden2020.com from August 17 through November 17, 2015. The most popular pages visited were “Downtown Redevelopment” and “Name the Park”
- B. Downtown Street Banner Program: Launched the Downtown Street Banner Program where businesses, non profits and property owners are invited to purchase a banner to be displayed on street poles along West Main and Colony Streets. 34 banners have been sold to date. More information is available at <http://www.meriden2020.com/Downtown-Redevelopment/meet-your-downtown-merchants/>



C. Meriden 2020 Campaign-Billboards: Continued to work with CERC/Liz Panke Designs on Meriden2020 marketing campaign. Billboards designed and used this quarter include:

- Meriden Farmer’s market (ad running July 1- Oct 24)
- Fly In Festival (ad running Aug 5-Oct 3)
- United Way (October 24-present)



D. Co-star commercial real estate reports: Continued to utilize CoStar commercial real estate subscription to identify available commercial properties in Meriden. Downloaded info for several businesses interested in moving to Meriden. Information allows City to access latest information on commercial real estate listings.

E. CT Main Street Center “Come Home to Downtown” Program: CT Main Street Center is finalized its analysis of 21 Colony Street adaptive reuse project. Staff will be working with the property owner and CHTD to determine the next steps and potential financing strategies.

F. Ribbon Cuttings/Ground Breakings/Grand Openings held:

- Boscov’s Meriden Mall, October 8, 2015
- Advance Auto Parts, East Main Street, October 9, 2015
- WEPA Art Studio, West Main Street, October 13, 2015

G. State of CT Outreach

- Small Business Express/DECD: Met with DECD program staff to discuss Meriden's interest in taking greater advantage of state's SBE grant and loan program. Hosting SBE/Enterprise Zone coordinators meeting November 18, 2015
- Small Business Development Center. SBDC and the City of Meriden have agreed to work together to provide technical assistance to small businesses at no charge. SBDC will have staff available at Meriden City Hall once a week and by appointment.
- DECD Minority Business Initiative. www.Ct.gov/mbi The State of CT has invited Meriden to participate in the MBI program, which seeks to increase small business growth by 4% annually. The City participated in a kick off workshop on October 30 and has been assigned a DECD staff representative to assist with outreach and identification of small business participants and champions.

H. Bank Outreach: Working with MEDCO to explore developing loan pool for small businesses and property owners. Discussions are ongoing.

I. US SBA-Celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month event held October 22 at City Hall Council Chamber in collaboration with small business partners including CEDF, HEDCO, MEDCO, Midstate Chamber. Event was attended by 10 small business owners that are seeking to grow their businesses in Meriden. This event also a pre-launch of a new series of small business classes for Spring 2016.

III. Downtown Redevelopment

A. TOD Site Redevelopment/Developer Selection: Completed TOD Developer selection process for the redevelopment of City-owned sites in the TOD zoning district. In the process of developing master developer agreements with goal to complete MDA agreements by January 19, 2016.

B. Downtown Parking: Staff revised downtown parking recommendations. Currently under review by City Manager.

IV. Business Retention and Development

A. 81 West Main Street Eben-Ezer Restaurant – Provided technical assistance to restaurant owner and assisted the owner secure a small business loan from Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF). Loan will be used to upgrade restaurant equipment and for marketing. Funding application also submitted August 5, 2015 to DECD Small Business Express loan program. \$20,000 grant application is pending.

B. Turbo America Technology LLC – Assisted company locate small manufacturing firm from Hartford to 1400 Old North Colony Road, where they signed a lease for five years. City staff assisted Turbo submit an Urban Jobs application for tax abatement to DECD September 3, 2015. Economic Development in partnership with SBDC completed a small business express application and submitted to DECD late August. Decision on \$300,000 loan/\$100,000 grant package is pending.

C. Access Care Pharmacy –Negotiating lease space on Colony Street next to C-Town. They currently own two pharmacies--in New Britain and one in Waterbury. Assisting with state grant application and on City permitting process.

- D. Color Me Sweet Bakery Shop. Small business looking to open retail store on W. Main Street. Staff is assisting her submit grant/loan application to DECD for equipment purchase. She is working with SAMA to help her with the startup cost loan.
- E. AGC Inc. – Provided company information on local/state incentives available. Transfer of 25 jobs to the Meriden facility is possible. Outgoing communication with them about other benefits.
- F. Accel-408 North Colony Street-Financing application submitted to DECD Early August 2015. Decision pending. Staff assisted Accel complete Urban Job tax abatement application September 30, 2015.
- G. 1388 East Main/Former Jacoby’s. Met with Engineering, Planning, Housing and Owner to coordinate timing and project permitting process. Discussions ongoing.
- H. 72 Cook Avenue – United Laundry. Staff assisted owners submit an Enterprise Zone tax abatement application to City Tax office September 30, 2015.
- I. C-Town – Assisting owners with sub-lease small building to pharmacy. Providing assistance on application to Small Business Express program.
- J. WEPA Art Studio, Karen Jaime – Assisted owner to obtain a small business loan from SAMA. Loan closed July 2015. Business opened end of summer. Grand opening held October 13, 2015.
- K. 29 W. Main – Mangu Restaurant. Assisted owner to obtain a small business loan/grant from SAMA. Restaurant is under construction. Opening November 2015.
- L. The Money Source-500 Broad St. Staff assisted Money Source submit City IT Zone Tax incentive application September 30, 2015. They have hired about 80 employees so far and looking to hire another 25 by end of the year. Worked with City to access CT Works On the Job Training grant program. Has hired one employee and an additional hire through OJT program is pending.
- M. Moran Appliances – W. Main Street. Providing assistance to complete environmental investigations and remortgage property. Mr. Moran purchased building in June.
- N. Comfort Inn-800 East Main Street. Working with owners to find an owner/operator to run bar/restaurant on site. 4000 sf leasable space on ground floor also available. Discussions ongoing.
- O. Meriden Motor Company 1378 East Main (former Colony Ford)-dba JD Byrider-Assisted owners with completion of the East Main Street Tax incentive application, which was submitted in September.
- P. Aperture, 107 Pond View. City provided assistance regarding process for Planning & Zoning and Building approvals. Discussions ongoing.
- Q. The Miller Company, 99 Center Street. Held site visit in October. Interested in subleasing part of their manufacturing site. Discussion ongoing.
- R. Logan Steel, 119 Empire Ave. Worked with City to access CT Works On the Job Training grant program. Has hired one employee and an additional hire is pending.
- S. Jonal Labs. Worked with City to access CT Works On the Job Training grant program. Has hired one employee using OJT program.

V. Grant Funded Projects

- A. TOD Pilot Project (2015)-Work is ongoing and will be used to fund engineering design plans for W. Main and Colony Street TOD Traffic Improvement Plan.
- B. Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup

1. 116 Cook Ave. Cleanup Grant (USEPA \$240,000) & HUD Section 108 Loan (\$335,00) Cleanup of underground storage tank completed November 14, 2014. Balance of grant funds will be used for removal of hazardous materials from inside the structure. Tighe & Bond has been selected as the Environmental Consultant. Bid to be released in December.
 2. HUB/50 East Main Street Cleanup Grant (USEPA \$240,000): Cleanup of contaminated soils in the SE corner of the HUB site. Work is ongoing.
 3. CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Assessment at the Mills (State \$200,000): Assessment of environmental hazards 62 Cedar St, 161 State St and 144 Mills Memorial. AECOM have been selected to do assessments. Work is ongoing.
 4. CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Cleanup 177 State Street (\$597,000): Environmental consultant agreement finalized. AECOM has been selected as the Environmental consultant and also will be performing geotechnical testing. Work is ongoing.
 5. CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Assessment at 1 King Place (\$180,000 grant, \$221,000 loan): State awarded \$221,000 Forgivable loan to conduct interim cleanup activities prior to further assessment. Fuss and O'Neil have been selected as the Environmental consultant. Interim cleanup work commenced October 2015 and is ongoing.
 6. CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Cleanup at 11 Crown Street (\$1.73 million). State awarded funds to cleanup and demo 11 Crown Street. City selected Tighe & Bond to complete technical specifications and to oversee project.
 7. USEPA Brownfields Assessment. \$200,000 awarded for brownfield assessment, reuse planning, community outreach, and project management. Assessment and site reuse planning to commence in 2015.
 8. DECD Brownfields Areawide Revitalization (BAR): Submitted \$100,000 application to develop a commercial/retail marketing strategy for the TOD area.
- C. Choice Neighborhoods
1. Participated in regular project meetings with WRT, MHA, HUD, and other organizations
 2. Worked with Pennrose and MHA to finalize key component of Mills demolition and redevelopment project, including LIHTC application for \$24 million development at 161-177 State Street.

VII. Committees/Boards

- A. Blight & Brownfields: Meeting held October 29, 2015. Next meeting March 17, 2016.
- B. Economic Development Task Force. Ec Development Office provides staff assistance for all meetings of the EDTF related to acquisition and disposition of City properties. Meeting held 8/17/2015 and 10/19/2015. Advanced disposition of city owned properties in accordance with City codes. Properties pending transfer include: 125 Grove Street, 77 Broad Street Rear, 177 Mt. Pleasant.
- C. Greater Meriden Chamber Meeting 11/18/2015
- D. MEDCO Meeting 11/18/2015.
- E. Paola Mantilla, Economic Development Associate has join CEDF Corporate Board. First meeting attended October 15, 2015.

Report prepared by: Juliet Burdelski & Paola Mantilla November 17, 2015.