

# **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 Activities June 22 – September 13, 2016

**DATE:** September 13, 2016

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Attached please find a report of activities conducted by the City of Meriden Office of Economic Development for the period June 22, 2016 through September 13, 2016.



**City of Meriden, Office of Economic Development**

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Meriden, CT 06450

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**Update of Economic Development Activities for the period**  
June 22, 2016 through September 13, 2016

**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.

The Office of Economic Development is staffed by Director Juliet Burdelski, and Economic Development Associate Paola Mantilla. This report was prepared by Juliet & Paola.

**I. Marketing and Outreach**

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**1) Website & Social Media**

- 5497 users visited to Meriden2020.com between June 22 and September 13, 2016. Most popular pages visited were “Meriden Green” and “Events”
- 180 users visited Meridenbiz.com between 6/22/2016 and 9/13/2016.

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- 2) 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/>



### 3) Completed “Name the Park” contest

Letters and gift card awards were given to contest winners in August. A logo design for the winning name, the “Meriden Green” was created and will be utilized to promote the park and activities there. Information on the Meriden Green and park activities is available on <http://www.meriden2020.com/meriden-green/>



### 4) Meriden Green Grand Opening and ongoing promotion

Worked with City staff to hold Meriden Green Grand Opening on September 9, 2016 and Community Day on September 10, 2016. Activities completed by ED staff included:

- Save the Date card (emailed to City Council and staff, key stakeholders)
- Printed Invitation (mailed to boards and commissioners, key stakeholders, state local and federal officials)
- Bulls Eye Flyer in Record Journal
- Event Page and RSVP form at [Meriden2020.com/meridengreen](http://Meriden2020.com/meridengreen)
- Speakers Program/Agenda
- Radio Advertising on KISS 95.7 and 101.3 F

### 5) 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. Boards running during this report period included Friday Night summer music Series, Meriden Farmer’s market, the Meriden Green Opening, National Night Out and the Silver City Wine and Brewfest.





- 6) **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.
- 7) **CT Main Street Center “Come Home to Downtown” Program:** CT Main Street Center finalized its analysis of 21 Colony Street adaptive reuse project. Staff worked with the property owner to submit \$1.2 million funding application to CT Department of Housing DOH “Just in Time” program. Project includes 12 rental housing units (10 market rate, 2 affordable) and 6000 sf commercial space at 21 Colony Street. Adaptive reuse project preserves historic structure and leverages \$1.2 million provide investment. DOH approval is pending.
- 8) **Events attended:**
  - a. DECD Economic Development EZ Meeting Groton CT, August 17, 2016.
  - b. Attended Meriden National Night Out August 2, 2016.
  - c. Participated on CPACE presentation on July 27, 2016 at 290 Pratt Street.
  - d. Northeast Economic Developers Association (NEDA) conference on September 12, 2016 in New Haven.
- 9) **Downtown Neighborhood Association meetings (June 15)**
- 10) **Bank Outreach:** Working with Chamber, Liberty Bank and the Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF) on Small Business Training Program starting September 21, 2016. Business owners that complete the training session will be eligible for a \$5000 Line of Credit from Liberty Bank and a \$5000 loan from CEDF.

## II. Downtown Redevelopment

1. Completed “First Mile/Last Mile” study in cooperation with SCRGOC and Milone and MacBroom. The purpose of the study is to identify gaps in service and strategies to encourage the use of public transportation and future commuter rail service in downtown Meriden.
2. Secured commitments from CEDF and YMCA/Downtown Neighborhood Association (\$12,500 total) to support “downtown beautification program” including purchase of trash receptacles and flower planter boxes and the installation of community art in downtown Meriden. Gallery 53 has already

started with their project, WEPA Art studio to start Mid-September and both projects to be completed September 27, 2016. Trash receptacles and planter boxes to be delivered End of September 2016.

3. Scheduled to Host meeting with DECD and downtown stakeholders on Tuesday, September 27, 2016 to discuss “placemaking” and DECD resources for arts and culture, small business development and brownfields redevelopment.

### **III. Business Retention and Development (new activity only)**

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1. Access Care Pharmacy –152 Colony. Project completed and CO was issued. Pharmacy has opened. Ribbon Cutting scheduled September 23, 2016.
2. 1388 East Main/Former Jacoby’s. Assisting with City permitting process for restaurant/market.
3. WEPA Art Studio, Karen Jaime 35 West Main Street – Assisted owner with application to DECD to support community arts and mural project in downtown Meriden. Project is underway.
4. Moran Appliances – 664 W. Main Street. Assisted owner complete Phase I/II Environmental Site Assessments using USEPA funds. Working with owner on financing options for first mortgage through CEDF. Application pending.
5. Logan Steel, 119 Empire Ave. Assisted property owner apply for grant/loan package from DECD. \$1.1 m funds were approved by bond commission.
6. 51/53/55 Colony Street/Gallery 53 & Studios at 55 Colony Street. Completed lead paint testing on eastern facing exteriors. Working with owners of 53 and 55 Colony on Community Arts project in cooperation with Downtown Neighborhood Association and CEDF.
7. Aperture Optical 170 Pond View—Recently acquired and improving 170 Pond View for optics manufacturing facility. Assisting owner evaluate funding opportunities to support business expansion. City approved \$300,000 MAP Loan to the business.
8. 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 has been approved.
9. Flexo Converters, 1200 Northrop Road – Working with owners on several funding opportunities for potential business expansion in Meriden.
10. QS Technology 602 Pomeroy Ave. – Working with new owners for potential tax abatement, funding opportunities and other programs.
11. Canberra 800 Research Parkway– working with DECD on business retention incentive.
12. Crystal Grocery 226 West Main Street – working with owner on the purchase of their current location. Application to assist in business expansion was submitted to DECD pending review.
13. TFF Range – New business start up. SBDC and City assisted business owner with business plan and financing application to CEDF.
14. All Sketched Out – New business start up. SBDC and City working with owner on business plan.
15. Cruz Day Care- Looking to expand Wallingford based day care to Meriden. Providing location and financing assistance in cooperation with SBDC.

### **IV. Grant Funded Projects**

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- 1) TOD Pilot Project  
\$870,000 in new 2016 TOD Pilot funds awarded to advance TOD multi modal improvement project in downtown Meriden. Copy of grant application is available at <http://www.meriden2020.com/Downtown-Redevelopment/tod-transportation-grant-2016/>.

## 2) 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. City staff and Tighe & Bond to assess future cleanup actions in September.
- HUB/50 East Main Street Cleanup Grant (USEPA \$240,000): Cleanup completed. Site opened September 9, 2016.
- 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.
- CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Cleanup 177 State Street (\$597,000): Worked with AECOM to complete final plans for cleanup at 177 State Street. Bids for cleanup to be released in September 2016.
- 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 selection in process.
- CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Cleanup at 11 Crown Street (\$1.73 million). Working with Tighe & Bond to complete cleanup and demo specifications for 11 Crown Street. Work is ongoing. Bids for demo/cleanup to be released in September 2016.
- USEPA Brownfields Assessment. \$200,000 awarded for brownfield assessment, reuse planning, community outreach, and project management. Work is ongoing. Three sites to be assessed include 53 Colony, 55 Colony and 664 W. Main Street. Assessments have been completed and City is working with property owners that need remediation.
- 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. Work to formally kick off September 27, 2016.
- DECD Brownfields Cleanup: Received \$2 million to co fund demolition and remediation of Mills housing complex. Work to be completed in 2016 and 2017.

## 3) Choice Neighborhoods

Worked with MHA and WRT to apply for a \$20 million. Choice Implementation Grant, application submitted June 28, 2016. If awarded, City will serve as Neighborhood Implementation Coordinator, and will implement projects included in budget including expansion of NPP/Home Rehab loan program, façade Improvement grants and loans to small businesses and property owners in downtown, funding for gap financing for economic development projects, expansion of WiFi downtown, and wayfinding signage downtown. Notification expected by end of September 2016.

## 4) CT Next-Innovative Places Grant:

A collaborative effort between City, Midstate Chamber and Dr. Drew Harris from CCSU taking the lead. If awarded, a planning grant will be used to augment our downtown marketing and outreach activities by conducting further outreach to younger residents and students interested in living, working and starting their business in downtown Meriden. We have been invited to a pre-award training seminar on Sept 27 & 29. Planning grantees will be notified the week of October 24, 2016.

## V. Committees/Boards Other outreach

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- 1) Blight & Brownfields held on July 21, 2016. Next meeting Nov 17.
- 2) Economic Development Task Force. Meeting held August 8, 2016. Recent sales and other transactions included:
  - 159 Lewis Ave. – **Sold and closed**
  - 14 Breckenridge Ave. **Sold and Closed**
  - 75 South Ave. File to Legal for closing.
  - 1 King Place (partial Lot). File to Legal for closing.
  - 86 Hillside Ave. File to Legal for closing.
  - 21 South Second Street. File to Legal for closing.
  - 401 Center St. File to Legal for closing.
  - 21 S. Second St. File to Legal for closing.
  - 86 Hillside Ave. File to Legal for closing.
- 3) Chamber meetings: Attended May 11, 201, June 8 Board meetings
- 4) MEDCO: Attended 5/25/2016 board meeting. Attended MEDCO Ex Comm meeting 6/8/2016 & 8/10/2016.
- 5) Attended City MHA Joint Working Group August 8, 2016.
- 6) Economic Development Housing Zoning Committee meeting July 25, 2016.
- 7) Downtown Neighborhood Association Meeting April, June 2016

Report prepared by: Juliet Burdelski & Paola Mantilla, September 14, 2016.