

# **MERIDEN 2020**

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## **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 January 27-April 18, 2016

**DATE:** April 18, 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 January 27, 2016 through April 18, 2016.



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

142 East Main Street, Room 217

Meriden, CT 06450

**PHONE** (203) 630-4151 **FAX** (203) 630-4274

**Update of Economic Development Activities for the period**  
January 27, 2016 through April 18, 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**

- a) 3303 users visited to Meriden2020.com between 1/26/2016 and 4/14/2016. Most popular pages visited were “Downtown Redevelopment” and “The-Meriden-HUB-Park-and-Flood-Control-Project”
- b) Worked with Websolutions to update and relaunch Meridenbiz.com. 29 users visited Meridenbiz.com between 1/26/2016 and 4/14/2016.

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**MERIDEN BIZ**

- 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 40 banners have been sold to date. 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 and recommendations to Council.**

Coordinated staff review of name the park contest entries, notified contest entrants of top ten entries, prepared memo for Council recommending top ten entries, including:

- Downtown Crossing
- Harbor Brook Green
- Meriden Green
- Meriden Hub
- Meriden on the Green
- Pilgrim Harbor Park
- Renaissance Park
- Silver Bridge Park
- Silver City Commons
- Silver City Crossing

**4) 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 include Midstate Chamber of Commerce (January – March 2016) and the Meriden Daffodil Festival arch-April 2016)



- 5) 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.
- 6) 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 is working with the property owner and CHTD to identify financing strategies to implement the project, which would include 12-16 units and 1600-2000 sf commercial space at 21 Colony Street.
- 7) Ribbon Cuttings/Ground Breakings/Grand Openings held:
  - a. Record Journal at 500 S. Broad Street, January 27, 2016
  - b. Art Capsule, 105 Hanover Street, February 19, 2016
  - c. Small Business Development Center in Meriden, February 26, 2016
  - d. Daly Services, February 29, 2016
- 8) Advertising/Press Outreach:
  - a. Place ad and submitted economic town profile for Global Trade Magazine’s *April/May Site Selection Planning Guide* that featured Meriden and the State of CT. Globaltrademag.com
- 9) Regional and State of CT Outreach & Events
  - a. Attended DECD Economic Development Summit, February 16, 2106
  - b. Hosted DECD Minority and Women’s Business Initiative meeting on February 25, 2016 at Meriden City Hall. Meeting attended by 15 Meriden small businesses.
  - c. Held meeting with Kristina Newman-Scott, State of CT DECD Director of Culture and Tourism March 28, 2018.
  - d. Participated as a speaker at CPACE/CEDAS workshop at State Capitol March 29, 2016
  - e. Held meeting with REX Development to discuss Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) updates on 2/17/2016
  - f. Met with CERC’s director of municipal services to discuss collaboration
- 10) Bank Outreach: Working with MEDCO to explore developing loan pool for small businesses and property owners. HEDCO meeting held Feb 17, 2016 to discuss program administration
- 11) Held Small Business workshops in cooperation with SCORE and Midstate Chamber of Commerce February 24-March 30, 2016.

## **II. Downtown Redevelopment**

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- A. TOD Site Redevelopment/Developer Selection: Completed Master Development Agreements for the Michaels Organization (11 Crown Street) and Pennrose (Hub site).
- B. Continued “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. Completed employer survey and focus group on April 14, 2015. Findings from survey and focus group will be included in final report. Presentation to Planning Commission and EDHZ Committee and/or City Council targeted for end of June 2016.

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

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- A. Access Care Pharmacy –152 Colony. Assisting with City permitting process for signage in TOD. Opening planned May 2016.
- B. Accel-408 North Colony Street-Manufacturing Assistance. Assisted Accel apply for \$3 million grant/loan package from DECD. Funding approved in March 2016. Assisting with City permitting process for solar panel installation.
- C. 1388 East Main/Former Jacoby’s. Assisted property owner secure grant/loan package from DECD. Assisting with City permitting process for restaurant/market.
- D. WEPA Art Studio, Karen Jaime – Assisted owner with application to DECD to support community arts and mural project in downtown Meriden.
- E. Moran Appliances – 664 W. Main Street. Providing assistance to complete environmental investigations and remortgage property.
- F. Logan Steel, 119 Empire Ave. Assisted property owner apply for grant/loan package from DECD. Award is pending.
- G. My City Kitchen – Working with Director Kashia Cave to find a new location. Referred owner to SBDC for development of a business plan.
- H. 53 Colony Street/Gallery 53. Secured commitment to complete lead paint testing on exterior painted surfaces and seek funding for a façade improvement and mural project at 53 Colony Street facing the rail station
- I. 55 Colony Street/Studios. Secured commitment to complete lead paint testing on exterior painted surfaces and seek funding for a façade improvement and mural project at 55 Colony Street facing the rail station. Referred owner to SBDC for development of a business plan.
- J. Farm Fresh CT. Provided list of potential properties for Aquaponics facility and information on business incentives in Meriden.
- K. Cardinal Engineering—3 Colony Street. Civil Engineering firm recently expanded by hiring 3 new positions. Looking for additional engineering opportunities. Additional follow up scheduled.
- L. Aperture Optical—Recently acquired 170 Pond View for optics manufacturing facility. Assisting owner evaluate funding opportunities to support business expansion.
- M. S & C Tire – New business expanding to Meriden and has put an offer to purchase 327 West Main Street (former Jiffy Lube). City and SBDC assisting owner apply for DECD funding for property acquisition
- N. Nina’s Café – City and SBDC assisted owner submit Small Business Express funding application to DECD for expansion and upgrades.
- O. Computer Express – A business from Berlin looking to relocate to Meriden. City and SBDC assisted owner submit funding application to DECD Small Business Express program. Loan approved, but still looking for Meriden property for purchase.

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

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- A. TOD Pilot Project
  - 1. TOD Traffic engineering and project management (\$125,000, CT OPM): Work is ongoing and will be used to fund engineering design plans for W. Main and Colony Street.
  - 2. Submitted \$2 million 2016 TOD Pilot grant application 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/>
- B. Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup

1. 116 Cook Ave. Cleanup Grant (USEPA \$240,000) & HUD Section 108 Loan (\$335,000). Worked with Tighe & Bond to complete bid specifications for cleanup of debris and hazardous materials at 116 Cook Ave. Bids due April 26, 2016.
  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): Worked with AECOM to complete assessment of environmental hazards 62 Cedar St, 161 State St and 144 Mills Memorial. Work is ongoing.
  4. 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 2016.
  5. 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 is ongoing.
  6. 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.
  7. 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.
  8. 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. Work is ongoing.
  9. DECD Brownfields Cleanup: Received \$2 million to co fund demolition and remediation of Mills housing complex. Work to be completed in 2016 and 2017.
- C. Choice Neighborhoods
1. Worked with MHA to apply for \$1.5 million Choice Neighborhoods Action Activity grant. Notification expected in April or May 2016.
  2. Attended Choice Neighborhoods Conference in Washington DC, March 17-18. 2016.

## **V. Committees/Boards**

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- A. Blight & Brownfields: Meeting held March 24, 2015. Next meeting July 21, 2016.
- B. Economic Development Task Force. Meeting held 3/21/2016. Next meeting 4/18/2016.
- C. Midstate Chamber meetings: Attended Feb 10, March 9, April 6 Board meetings
- D. MEDCO: Attended 2/17/2015 board meeting. Attended MEDCO Ex Comm meeting 4/13/2016
- E. Attended CEDF Board meeting January, February and March, 2016.
- F. Attended City MHA Joint Working Group 3/14/2016, 4/11/2016.
- G. Economic Development Housing Zoning Committee meeting March 15, 2016.
- H. Downtown Neighborhood Association Meeting March 23, 2016

Report prepared by: Juliet Burdelski & Paola Mantilla, April 18, 2016.