



Meriden
Just Better For Business

City of Meriden, Connecticut
Economic Development Office

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Economic Development Housing and Zoning Committee
Interested Parties

FROM: Juliet Burdelski, Director of Economic Development

RE: Update of Economic Development Activities November 19, 2014 through
January 21, 2015

DATE: January 21, 2015

CC: Lawrence J. Kendzior, City Manager

Attached please find a report of activities conducted by the City of Meriden Office of Economic Development for the period November 19, 2014 through January 21, 2015.

**Update of Economic Development Activities for the period
November 19, 2014 through January 21, 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 currently staffed by Director Juliet Burdelski, and Economic Development Associate Paola Mantilla.

II. Marketing & Outreach Activities

A. Website & Social Media updates

1. Using Google Analytics, we show that 724 users visited meriden2020.com between November 19 and January 20, 2015. Added new content to Meriden2020 including things to do, events and community calendar, and news.
2. Posted Ec Dev news and info to @JulietBurdelski on twitter
3. Distributed news and info using Constant Contact account for Ec. Dev. News/announcements

B. Marketing and Research

1. Studied feasibility of developing City-owned South Mountain Road Parcel. Economic Development and Planning staff will present findings to EHDZ committee and Planning Commission at completion of project.
 - CERC South Mountain Road Study: CERC was retained by the City to complete a market study to explore development opportunities on City-owned South Mountain Road parcel. Project is co-managed with Planning Dept. Final report was provided to City December 2014. Recommendations for site were Recreational areas, Solar/Wind power plant, Tech/Healthcare space, Light manufacturing or Mixed-use Development. However development potential will be enhanced by merging City-owned and former NRG sites.

- SCRCOG has retained Milone and MacBroom on the City’s behalf to study transportation/utility access to South Mountain Road site. Study will incorporate findings from CERC market feasibility study. Draft report on Existing and Future Land Use and Transportation Conditions submitted to City staff in Dec. Consultant is currently working on recommendations for roadway improvements and will present that to the City in the next several weeks.
- 2. CERC continued marketing program. Billboards developed and running from November through December included the Nov. 26 to Jan. 2 Festival of Silver Lights and the MW United Way Community Campaign. Currently running are the “Live”, “Work”, “Go Places” and “Play” boards.



C. Local/Regional Economic Development Outreach

1. Finalized Small Business Workshop Series schedule with SBA, SCORE (Seasoned Corps of Retired Executives) and Midstate Chamber. Small business training will be held Feb 2, 10, 17, 24 and March 3, 10 at Middlesex Community College Meriden. Trainings are co-sponsored by City of Meriden Office of Economic Development.

D. Press Events/Press Outreach

1. Fielded regular calls from *Record Journal* reporters regarding economic development issues. Some of the stories covered included:

- ***Deal to bring mortgage lender to Meriden nearly done, 1-15***
- ***Program offers chance at home ownership in Meriden, 1-15***
- ***Meriden looks forward to reaping economic benefits sown in 2014, 1-9-2015***
- ***Program to support city building, 12/28/2014***
- ***Firms submit proposals for downtown Meriden properties, 12/21/2014***
- ***Car charging station installed at Meriden Public Library, 12/11/2014***
- ***Meriden offers dinner, prizes in exchange for downtown input, 12/9/2014***
- ***City may offer tax breaks to spur east side development, 12/1/2014***
- ***Meriden Parking Commission meets for the first time in five years, 11/26/2014***

2. Other press outreach

- WFSB News channel 3: “City officials trying to revitalize east side of Meriden”,
Posted: Dec 02, 2014 12:49 PM EST Updated: Dec 30, 2014 6:15 PM EST

E. Co-star commercial real estate reports

1. 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.

F. CT Main Street Center “Come Home to Downtown” Program

1. The Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) has selected Meriden to participate in the CMSC’s “Come Home to Downtown” Program in 2015. CT Main Street Center will complete a feasibility study of 21 Colony Street and make recommendations regarding

the conversion of the property to mixed use that includes at least 12 housing units.

Participating in the study is building owner John La Rosa.

- G. CPACE Marketing Program: The City continued to promote the CPACE energy program to property owners in Meriden. In addition to 290 Pratt Street, the Meriden YMCA recently closed on a CPACE project valued at over \$300,000.
- H. Year end highlights: The Office of Economic Development prepared “Highlights of Economic Development 2014” which was distributed to City Council and posted on meriden2020.com.
- I. State Delegation: Met with state legislative delegation on 1-5-2015 to review status of Economic Development activities and review funding needs. Prepared follow up memos regarding TOD Traffic funding request and funding request for Small Business Assistance (Funding for Façade Improvement Loan Program and Meriden Allocation of Small Business Express program funds).

III. Downtown Redevelopment & Infrastructure Improvement

- A. HUB Redevelopment—attended work progress meetings held onsite. Project is progressing on schedule.
- B. Worked with Luchs engineering to develop 3D renderings of construction plans. Posted renderings to meriden2020.com, set up QR code reader and mobile app “123View” (keycode KGKQ) to allow smartphone and tablet users *access to the* 3D model. Working with Luchs to expand model to include TOD redevelopment sites.
- C. Working with DPW, Parking Commission, MHA on alternative parking arrangements to offset closure of 24 Colony Street lot in February.

IV. Business Retention and Development

- A. 508/580 North Colony Street/ Accel- recently closed on their sale-lease back agreement and paid off their Meriden Manufacturing Assistance Program loan balance in full (\$200,000).
- B. 1388 East Main/Former Jacoby’s. Provided additional information to broker regarding City policy on flood control improvements. Adjacent property (1376 East Main Street) recently sold for \$85,000.
- C. Thompson Candy-80 South Vine St.. City recently approved extension of Manufacturing Assistance Program loan forbearance agreement through 2017. Loan modification documents recorded January 15, 2015.
- D. 81 West Main Street – Eben-ezer Restaurant. Ongoing meetings to assist business owner with DECD financing for business enhancements, obtain permits for outside sitting and liquor permits. Loan application submitted to state for review and permitting application also submitted for review to allow outside sitting and has been approved. DECD Small Business Express loan application pending.
- E. 72 Cook Avenue – United Laundry, ongoing outreach to assist new business maximize benefits at the local level and state.
- F. C-Town – Assisting owners submit Small Business Express grant/loan package.
- G. 39 West Main Street – Met restaurant owner, presented information on City/State tax incentives and other programs. Toured the site to share our ideas. Grand opening held January 9, 2015.
- H. 39 West Main Street – Jay Driving School working on permitting and license. Grand opening February 2015.
- I. Alternative Paths – Mental therapy office, 3 Colony Street. Assisted owner prepare Small Business Express grant and loan application (October 2014). DECD approval pending. .
- J. Condado Grill Restaurant Colony Street. Construction completed. Provided information on tax incentives related to property improvements to the site. Soft opening held December 26, 2014. Chamber ribbon cutting scheduled 5:30 PM, January 23, 2015.
- K. 226 West Main – Crystal Grocery Store. Working with owner to obtain variance for liquor permit

- L. Karen Jaime – working with Mrs. Jaime to potentially open and Arts Grill Restaurant in the TOD area. Working with SAMA to assist with the finances. Application submitted January 2015.
- M. 29 W. Main – Mangu Restaurant. Working with new business owners to obtain additional financing to complete architectural design and final purchase of kitchen appliances. Application has been submitted to SAMA for review January 2015.
- N. The Money Source-500 Broad St. Provided information regarding IT zone incentive.
- O. Propose East Main Street Incentive Zone to freeze property taxes for businesses located in C-2, C-3 Zones on East Main Street from Bee St. to Middlefield line.

V. Grant Funded Projects

A. TOD Pilot Project

1. Parking Study Update

The City retained Fuss & O’neill to update the 2006 Parking Study. Staff and consultants met in January 2015 to review preliminary research and recommendations. Public meeting to review recommendations is anticipated in Feb 2015 in cooperation with the Parking Commission. Study will recommend updates to 2006 parking study based on changes/new development resulting from TOD programs and anticipated closure of Colony Street parking lot.

2. Developer RFQ/RFP Process

The City is currently in the final stage of this process with the goal to advance several city-owned sites to the development stage. On December 19, City received development proposals from three development teams (Pennrose Properties, POKO and the Michaels Organization). Two proposals were received for the HUB site, one proposal was received for 116 Cook Ave./Factory H and one proposal was received for 11 Crown Street. The proposals include mixed use developments totaling 435-561 units with a minimum of 130 affordable units (30% of the total units) to be developed over 8 years. The staff committee is scheduled to meeting on January 29 to review the submittals.

B. Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup

1. 116 Cook Ave. Cleanup Grant (\$240,000)

- Cleanup of underground storage tank completed November 14, 2014.

2. HUB/50 East Main Street Cleanup Grant (\$240,000)

- Work is ongoing.

3. CT DECD Municipal Brownfields Assessment and Inventory grant.

- \$200,000 grant funds awarded to assess environmental hazards at the Mills redevelopment site. DECD contract award in process. Funds will be used to investigate Mills site, a prerequisite for future development. RFP for environmental engineering services to be issued 60-90 days.

4. DECD Office of Brownfield Redevelopment

- City was awarded \$597,000 to clean up 177 State Street and \$180,000 to assess 1 King. Work to be completed in 2016.

5. FY 2015 EPA Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup grants

- Application for City wide assessment submitted December 2014 (\$200,000)
- Application for 11 Crown Street cleanup submitted December 2014 (\$240,000)

6. 24, 38-44 Colony Street

- Reviewed HUD Part 58 Environmental Assessment for property transfer and redevelopment of 24, 38-44 Colony Street. Public comment period is open until February 2, 2015.

C. EV Connecticut

1. Charging station installed at City Hall/Public Library parking lot December 2014. City will submit for reimbursement of expenses to CT DEEP under EV Connecticut program.
- D. Choice Neighborhoods
 1. Participated in project meetings with WRT, MHA, HUD, and other organizations to discuss project overview and City's role.
 2. Participated in December 9, 2014 event "Imagining our Downtown".
- E. Preservation of Place grant
 1. Meriden was not selected to receive funding in 2015.

VII. Committees/Boards

- A. Blight & Brownfields: Next meeting January 29 2015.
- B. Economic Development Task Force. (1/2/2015) Advanced disposition of city owned properties in accordance with City codes.
 - a. 24 Breckenridge. The MHA has a program whereby its Section 8 clients can use their Section 8 voucher towards a mortgage payment. The proposed project uses the 203k loan program, which is a federal program to support homeownership for moderate income homebuyers. The funding for the purchase and rehab is provided by McCue Mortgage as a mortgage to the homebuyer. The total mortgage and purchase price is not to exceed \$120,000 (\$30,000 for property acquisition, estimated \$80,000 for rehab). A home purchased with a 203k loan does not have long term affordability restrictions. The MHA selected the homebuyer as a candidate because she is a Section 8 client and has participated in the Family Self Sufficiency program, which requires homeownership and credit counseling prior to ownership.
- C. Greater Meriden Chamber (1/14/2015)
- D. MEDCO (12/10/2014)

Report prepared by:
Juliet Burdelski
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January 20, 2015