

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 November 18 through January 25,
2016

DATE: January 26, 2016

Attached please find a report of activities conducted by the City of Meriden Office of Economic Development for the period November 18, 2015 through January 25, 2016.



City of Meriden, Office of Economic Development

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**Update of Economic Development Activities for the period
November 18, 2015 through January 26, 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

1) Website & Social Media

- a) 3068 users visited to Meriden2020.com between 11/18-1/25/2016. Most popular pages visited were “Downtown Redevelopment” and “Name the Park”
- b) Worked with Websolutions to update and relaunch Meridenbiz.com. 364 users visited Meridenbiz.com between 12/16-1/25/2016.

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MERIDEN BIZ

- 2) **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 (\$50 per banner for local businesses. Design and layout fees covered by City.) More information is available at <http://www.meriden2020.com/Downtown-Redevelopment/meet-your-downtown-merchants/>



3) Set up “Name the Park” webpage, contest and RJ print advertising campaign.

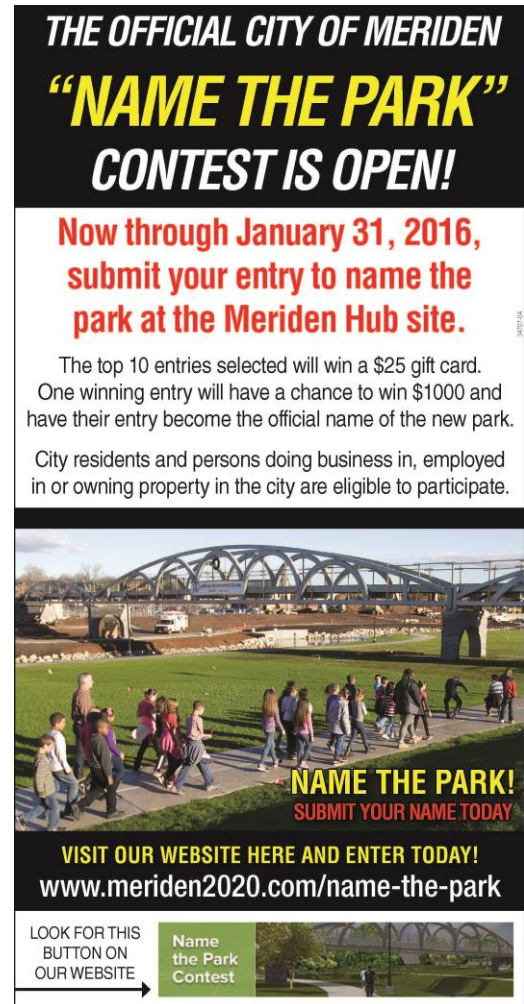
<http://www.meriden2020.com/name-the-park/> Entries accepted until 1/31/2016. Over 600 entries received to date. Names will be reviewed and ranked by staff committee for recommendation to Council in March.

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. That equals 84 days. Lamar provides 1665 spots per day for the 84 days, which equals 139,860 spots. Lamar spots allocated to the City are as follows:

- From 3/1/14 to 12/31/14 Lamar provided **635,959 spots**
- From 1/1/15 to 9/21/15 Lamar provided the City **291,996 spots**

Boards running during this report period include the United Way (October-December) and the Midstate Chamber of Commerce (January – March 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 4,000 sf commercial space at 21 Colony Street.
- 7) **Ribbon Cuttings/Ground Breakings/Grand Openings held:**
 - a. Laudano’s Pizza, Broad Street, November 23, 2015
 - b. Mangu restaurant, West Main Street, November 30, 2015
- 8) **Press Outreach:**
Meriden Record Journal newspaper highlights November 18 to January 17, 2016
 - a. Big Plans for the Old Firehouse
 - b. Five guys replaces Panera Bread
 - c. New Boutique opens in downtown Meriden
- 9) **State of CT Outreach**
 - a. 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. Hosted SBE/Enterprise Zone coordinators meeting November 18, 2015
 - b. 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 has been utilizing room 134 at Meriden City Hall every Tuesday and by appointment. Press conference to be held Feb 26 at City Hall.
- 10) **Bank Outreach:** Working with MEDCO to explore developing loan pool for small businesses and property owners. Discussions are ongoing.
- 11) **Partnering with SBA, SCORE and Midstate Chamber of Commerce to launch a new Small Business workshops starting February 24, 2016.**

II. 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 February 2016.
- B. **Downtown Parking:** Staff revised downtown parking recommendations. Currently under review by City Manager.
- C. **Kicked off “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. Will be conducting an employer survey to augment the SCRCOG study in cooperating with the Midstate Chamber. Presentation to Planning Commission and EDHZ Committee targeted for end of June 2016.

III. 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 Grant. Approval was granted and funding has been granted.
- 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. The application for grant and loan were approved and final details are being worked on by the attorney and state office.
- C. Access Care Pharmacy – 152 Colony. Lease has been signed, new tenants are now working with planning and engineering for mailing address, permits and signage. They currently own two pharmacies--in New Britain. Assisting with City permitting process.
- D. Accel-408 North Colony Street-Manufacturing Assistance financing application submitted to DECD Early August 2015. Letter of intent has been provided to them by DECD. Staff assisted Accel complete Urban Job tax abatement application September 30, 2015 and they have been certified by DECD.
- E. 1388 East Main/Former Jacoby's. Met with Engineering, Planning, Housing and Owner to coordinate timing and project permitting process. Discussions ongoing. Assisted business owner follow up with application to DECD for loan and grant under Small Business Express Program. Letter of intent from DECD office is pending.
- F. C-Town – Assisting owner apply to Small Business Express program; discussions are ongoing.
- G. WEPA Art Studio, Karen Jaime – Assisted owner obtain a small business loan from SAMA. Loan closed July 2015. Business opened end of summer. Grand opening held October 13, 2015. Owner currently seeking tavern permit from State (would allow beer sales).
- H. 29 W. Main – Mangu Restaurant. Assisted owner to obtain a small business loan/grant from SAMA. Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening held November 2015.
- I. Moran Appliances – 664 W. Main Street. Providing assistance to complete environmental investigations and remortgage property. Mr. Moran purchased building in June.
- J. 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.
- K. Aperture, 107 Pond View. City provided assistance regarding process for Planning & Zoning and Building approvals. Purchased 170 Pond View Drive December 2015. Resolution submitted to council for \$15k relocation incentive.
- L. Logan Steel, 119 Empire Ave. Worked with City to access CT Works On the Job Training grant. Has hired one employee and an additional hire is pending. Assisted company with application submission to DECD for \$800k loan/grant. Application pending at DECD.
- M. 105 Hanover – Assisting new owners with an application to Small Business Express program to expand Art Capsule LLC. Space will be used to showcase art collections, retail, special events and digitization of collections. They will be working with SBDC here at city hall to put the application together and access funding.
- N. My City Kitchen – Working with Director Kashia Cave to find a new location for the business, she has met with SBDC and is working on a business plan.

IV. Grant Funded Projects

- 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. Compiling application for 2016 TOD Pilot Grant. Application due Feb 4, 2016.
- 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. Seeking firm to complete environmental assessments. Contract is pending state approval.
 - 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 2016.
 - 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.
 - 9. DECD Brownfields Cleanup: Submitted application to co fund demolition and remediation of Mills housing complex. Application is under review by state DECD.
- C. Choice Neighborhoods
 - 1. Participated in regular project meetings with WRT, MHA, HUD, and other organizations
 - 2. Working with MHA to apply for Choice Neighborhoods Action Activity grant. To be submitted Feb 9, 2016.

V. Committees/Boards

- A. Blight & Brownfields: Meeting held October 29, 2015. Next meeting March 24, 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 1/11/2016. Advanced disposition of city owned properties in accordance with City codes. Properties pending transfer include: 125 Grove Street, 177 Mt. Pleasant, 27 Graveline. Properties listed for sale with real estate agent include 14 Breckenridge, 21 South Second Street, 75 South Ave.

- C. Greater Meriden Chamber Meeting 11/18/2015
- D. MEDCO Meeting 11/18/2015. MEDCO Ex Comm meeting 1/13/2016.
- E. Paola Mantilla, Economic Development Associate has join CEDF Corporate Board. Attended meetings November 19, December 17, and January 21, 2016.
- F. Meriden Manufacturing Assistance Agency Meeting 1/11/2016. Approved \$15,000 relocation incentive for Aperture at 170 Pond View.
- G. City MHA Joint Working Group held 1/11/2016. Filling in as staff to committee under Grants Administrator position is filled.

Report prepared by: Juliet Burdelski & Paola Mantilla January 25, 2016.