



**City of Groton**  
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Groton, Connecticut 06340  
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## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION & TIF ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**  
**June 16<sup>th</sup> 2021**  
**5:30PM - 7:00PM**

### **Agenda:**

- I. Call to Order @ 5:35pm**
  - a) Present: Jason Rusk (Chairman), Cheryl Auerbach, Margaret Hirsch, Nishant Sahoo
  - b) Liaison: Tina Daniels & Stephen Sheffield
  - c) Staff: Cierra Patrick
- II. Introduction**
- III. Minutes Approval**
  - a) April 7<sup>th</sup> 2021
    - Motion to accept the minutes of May 9, 2018
    - Motion: Jason Rusk
    - Seconded: Margaret Hirsch
    - Decision: 4-0-0
  - b) May 5<sup>th</sup> 2021
    - Motion to accept the minutes of May 9, 2018
    - Motion: Jason Rusk
    - Seconded: Margaret Hirsch
    - Decision: 4-0-0
- IV. New Business**
- V. Old Business**
  - a) EDC Working Groups

- I. Coastal Vulnerability
    - Reminder to register for the Community Resiliency Building Workshop has been rescheduled for on June 29<sup>th</sup> from 3:00-7:00pm @ Washington Park Pavilion 2. This event will be held in person
  - II. Pedestrian & Bicycle Network Assessment
    - Reminder that the working group will be meeting July 21<sup>st</sup> from 4:00-5:00pm @ City Hall
  - III. Thames Street Planning
    - Reminder that the working group will be meeting July 28<sup>th</sup> From 5:00-6:00pm via Zoom
  - IV. Thames Street Programing
    - Is now Groton City Programing
    - Reminder that the working group will be meeting July 14<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-5:00pm via Zoom
- b) Staff Report
- I. Project Status:
    1. Pedestrian & Bicycle Network Assessment
      - Met May 19<sup>th</sup> to assess Route 1. Council Lisa McCabe joined staff to walk and discuss pedestrian safety and community outreach. It was recommended the working group collaborate with Parks & Rec to develop a community walking group to get people involved and excited. Staff uploaded a digital street audit form on the City's Website for review.
    2. Resiliency & Hazard Mitigation
      - The Community Resiliency Building Workshop on June 29<sup>th</sup> will further explore City of Groton vulnerabilities to climate change, sea level rise, and intensified storm events. SLR Consulting is facilitating the workshop in preparation for the Community Resiliency Plan. Staff encourages community members to join the discussion and requested commissioners to spread the word.
    3. Strategic Communications
      - The project is steadily progressing and receiving positive feedback. Internally there's great collaboration on the development of content and working to deliver information community members are interested in. Staff requested commissioners to promote the newsletter and welcomes feedback on content. Proposed brand standard are currently being vetted internally. The first City of Groton photoshoot is scheduled for June 25<sup>th</sup>. This shoot will focus on the City's outdoor offerings, amenities, and community.
    4. JLUS Parking Management Plan

- The Southeastern Council of Governments will provide the City with a project update within the coming month.

5. Visioning Thames Street

- Staff is in negotiation with consultant on project timeline and implementation

II. Business Soft-Cost Grant

- The Commission discussed in the past the need to rewrite the Business Soft Cost grant to allow for additional eligible cost and to expand the program allowing assistance to existing businesses, not just new or expanding businesses.
- Staff conducted research and found that expanding the program to include minor façade improvements could have a positive impact on brick and mortar businesses while also contributing to the City's placemaking initiative.
- Staff will be presenting the rewrite of the programs policy and procedures to City Council on June 28<sup>th</sup>
- The Economic Development Grant Program will be administered by the Economic Development Commission (EDC). The EDC will determine initial eligibility for the program and recommend, to the City Council, applicants and the level of funding for reimbursement. The City Council has the final authority for the approval of the request and the amount within the parameters of these Policies and Procedures
- Commissioners asked whether the new administration procedures will add any delays. Staff noted that the new procedures could add a minimum 30 days to the approval process.
- Commissioners would like clarification on City Council's role in the program. Are EDC recommendations informative or an ask? Staff requested commissions to review the draft policy and provide staff with any notes/edits prior to the June 28<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole presentation.
- Staff informed that they received an application for the Business Soft Cost Grant that will be shared with the commission for review.
- Commissioners asked how the Strategic Communications branding component will correlate with the minor façade improvements and design standards for signage. Staff noted that signage regulations existing under the Building and Zoning Department. Businesses/ property owners have to apply for a sign permit prior to installation. Staff goes on to voice that City of Groton brand standards could be used to develop wayfinding signage or street signs but should be separate from local business branding. Businesses are encouraged to incorporate their own branding into their signage. Commissioners went on

to discuss business signage standards that could create a consistent and district look along corridors, distinguishing size, shape, color, and font's. This will be further discussed.

III. Projects in the City

1. [Five Corners Mixed-Use Design District \(MUDD\) Master Plan Application Notice of Decision](#) ~ Denied
  - The developer is interested in working with staff and the community to address concerns and assist in developing a vision/ concept plans for the future of the Five Corners neighborhood.
2. [New Construction: Multi-Family Residence \(128-138 Meridian St\) Notice of Decision](#) ~ Granted
  - The Condominiums will move forward with completing construction plans.
3. [EB Building #605 Modification of Special Permit #461 Notice of Decision](#) ~ Approved an extension of Work Hours with the following conditions: Monday- Friday 6am-11pm; Saturday 6am-6pm; no work on Sunday
4. [Pine Island Coastal Site Plan Permit: Addition of new dock and removal of existing dock Notice of Decision](#) ~ Granted
5. The former Colonel Ledyard School received approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission for a zone change to match the surrounding residential area. The preferred developer original proposal of a higher density has caused concerns with residents. The developer is currently in design phase and will present to the respected commission when ready.

IV. Communications

1. [Interview with Erik Brine, Director of the National Institute for Undersea Vehicle Technology](#)
2. [BlueTech Company, ThayerMahan, Experiences Meteoric Growth in Groton](#)
3. [Rent premiums on New Lab Space Beckon Office-to-Lab Conversions](#)
4. Planning and Economic Development will be kicking off the 2021 Community Design Workshop Series on June 24<sup>th</sup> from 5PM-7PM at Washington Park Pavilion 3.

VI. **Public Comments**

VII. **Adjournment**

Cheryl Auerbach moved to adjourn  
Margaret Hirsch seconded the motion  
The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 PM

Submitted by Cierra Patrick