



## DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE MAY 2016

### MAJOR TOWN OF STRATFORD DEVELOPMENTS

- **Grant Money for Redevelopment:** - Stratford has been awarded- \$1,205,000 from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to remediate and abate a 3.6-acre former public school site at 1000 East Broadway. (The Center school building built in 1965) Town Council voted to accept the grant. Next step is a phase 3 environmental assessment and an RFP for LEP's to abate and demo the building. The town is working with the superintendent of schools on relocating the programs currently at Center School. The town plans to seek redevelopment opportunities that feature mixed-used, transit-oriented development. A draft of the Request for Proposals for developers has been completed.
- **Transit Oriented District (TOD).** The new Transit Oriented District Overlay Zone to Stratford's Zoning Regulations was approved by the Town Council in March 2015. In addition the State of Connecticut Office of Policy & Management (OPM) has recently announced that the Town of Stratford has been awarded a \$200,000 Transit Oriented Development Planning Grant for a Complete Streets Improvement Plan. This will allow the Town to further develop transportation choices within a half mile radius around the Stratford Train Station. An Advisory Committee and a Technical committee have been put together and a public information session was held April 19. A Facebook page for this project been created.
- **DECD Grant \$2.85 million:** Demolition and remediation of the former Contract Plating site at 540 Longbrook Ave has begun. The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) has awarded the town of Stratford a \$2,850,000 grant to remediate and demolish the 10.5 acre Contract Plating site which lies within Stratford's Transit Oriented Development District (TOD) for mixed use / TOD development. All the buildings have been removed. Testing of the ground has begun. An RFQ for developers has been completed and will be posted in the next month. Media coverage includes the Ct Post and Fairfield County Business Journal.
- **Mercer Coal Tower Demolition and Grant \$** Demolition and Remediation of the Mercer Towers began October 10/7/15. The towers have been completely demolished. The concrete is now being removed. Next step is to test the soil. We have obtained multiple funding sources. \$200,000 Brownfields grant from the EPA, \$150,000 from the Community Development Block Grant, as well as \$180,000 through the Greater Bridgeport revolving loan fund.

- **Wade's Garage** located on 2370 Stratford Avenue is now a town owned property. It was taken by the town through tax foreclosure. The back taxes owed to the town are in excess of \$45,000. Mr. Wade has been evicted and the town has begun clean up of the blight and testing for contamination. The town will do a phase 1 and phase 2 with EPA Petroleum Assessment Grant money.
- **576/600 East Broadway** An Agreement has been made between the EPA and the developer. Town Council has approved purchase to the developer, Salce Company. This is a superfund site. The EPA is working on a site plan that will include redevelopment and reuse of the property with this developer. The EPA has \$4mm to remediate the Raymark waste on the site.
- **Stratford Avenue Streetscape Project:** We are waiting for the Town council to approve and assign the contract to BL. Stratford is working on a streetscape improvement project for Stratford Avenue/ Honeyspot Road intersection. This includes new sidewalks, road and traffic flow improvements, new bus stop shelters, landscaping and signage. The construction will be paid in part by a grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, while the design work has been funded by the Town of Stratford. The CT DOT has approved the design work.
- **Commercial Grand List:** The Town of Stratford's grand list for Commercial Business has grown by more than \$75mm last year and approximately \$35mm in 2015.
- **Back Taxes/Foreclosures:** In July 2012 Mayor John Harkins established the ***Stratford Redevelopment Agency (RDA)***. This agency is also working with the town of Stratford on tax foreclosures of properties that have long outstanding tax bills with the town. Mayor Harkins has been aggressive in pursuing property owners who have outstanding tax bills with the town, some as much as 15 years in arrears. Prior to this the town collected about **\$350,000 in 2013** in back taxes from property owners. **In 2014 and 2015 the town collected more than \$2 million dollars** in back taxes from property owners.
- **\$24 million Approved for Exit 33 Interchange** DOT has been meeting with neighbors and businesses in the area showing the plan for the interchange. A full public meeting is scheduled for June 13<sup>th</sup>. The project is moving forward with construction expected to begin in 2017 and completion in 2019. Funding for the project was unanimously approved by the Greater Bridgeport and Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (GBVMPO). The approval by the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) will provide \$24 million in funding for various phases of the project.
- **RT. 110 Traffic Study:** Metro Cog and the Town of Stratford is conducting a traffic study with Tighe & Bonde on RT. 110, which is funded by a DOT grant. The purpose is to look at ways to ease current and future traffic flow in the area of Sikorsky and Ryder's landing. A draft of the final plan will be presented at a public meeting in May. Meetings have already taken place with the technical and the community committees. Meetings were held with Sikorsky Aircraft, Ryders landing and other stakeholders. Proposed plans are based on these meetings and the consultant's analysis.
- The Town of Stratford has worked with Stratford companies connecting them with the State of **Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development to secure more than \$3**

**million in Business express grants and loans.** This program has helped create more than 100 jobs for Stratford and retained more than 450. Additionally, The DECD has also worked with 4 companies on the **Job Expansion Tax Credit Program** to create 18 new jobs in Stratford. We have created more than 1,000 new jobs and retained more than 700 in the last 3 years.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Developer Point Stratford Renewal (PSR)** The State of CT has awarded Point Stratford Renewal a grant of \$900,000 for “predevelopment planning and environmental compliance analysis” for the Point Stratford project. The developer (PSR), the Army and CT DEEP continue to discuss the remediation of the property, the Housatonic River Mudflats and the transfer of the property. The Army Core of engineers has submitted a plan to CT DEEP on clean up of the mudflats. The army has agreed to pay for the remediation of the mudflats. Once a final plan is in place PSR is expected to close on the property. Legislation to create a Special Tax District to enhance the proposed infrastructure of the Stratford Army Engine Plant passed both the state House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor. PSR presented their preliminary plan which will allow for public access to the waterfront and a greenway. They are also working with the towns zoning office to create a zoning overlay for the property. They are continuing to meet with prospective developers and businesses for a mixed use development. They currently have several LOI’s (letters of intent).
- **Ross & Roberts (West broad Street):** This site has officially been listed with Real estate broker Jon Angel. There are a number of interested developers for the property. The current owners have completed and Phase 1 and 2 environmental assessment. They have committed \$500 to remediate the property for industrial use.
- **Hawley Lane Medical Building:** Construction has begun for a brand new medical building at the Hawley lane property adjacent to the BIG Y. This will include a kidney dialysis center.
- **Burns Construction** is expanding in Stratford at their Access Road location. Burns plans to hire 175 new employees by April 1, 2016. Burns has been in Stratford since the 1960’s and has grown to more than 380 employees. They plan to continue to hire additional workers. They are building a brand new building on their current location. They expect to hire an additional 175 employees over the next few years. Burns began moving vehicles the second week of January and the first steps in the project are underway.
- **Hubbell Electric Water Heaters:** is also expanding in Stratford. With this expansion they will be adding more than 36 new employees. They currently have 75 employees. Hubbell has also received a grant/loan from the state of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development for \$2.1 million dollars to support this growth and job creation. Hubbell is a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation company in Stratford. They have been to the zoning office with their draft plans to expand their property on Seymour Ave.
- **Two Roads Brewing Co:** Two Roads Brewing Co is expanding their footprint on Stratford Ave. The company has closed on the former Baird Property abutting their current property. The new property is approximately 3 acres.

- Bounce U: Bounce U has filed bankruptcy and closed its doors on Garfield Ave. We are working with multiple brokers to find a new tenant for the building.
- PizzaCo: This new restaurant on Stratford Ave across from the Brewery was approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Next step is the Zoning Commission.
- Stratford Hotel (former Ramada): There is a reputable developer currently negotiating to purchase the hotel. They are partnering with a national chain to renovate and clean up this blighted property.
- UI Substation: This project was just approved by the Siting Council. It that will provide additional revenue to the town. A new substation will be built. The new facility, located next to an older substation that will come off-line, will be located on Stratford Avenue. The new substation is expected to generate an additional \$775,000 in tax revenue per year.
- Coating Design Group Inc is a new company to Stratford. The company just purchased a building on Sniffens land for \$1,950,000. They will bring 34 employees to Stratford and plan to hire an additional 11 employees at this facility. The company was founded in 1988 and moved here from Milford. American Graphics, who occupied the building prior, remains in Stratford and has moved to 55 Old South Ave in Stratford.
- Advanced Auto Parts Distribution: Advances Auto Parts has signed a 5 year lease at 120 Allen St. This will serve as a warehouse and distribution center.
- Gaetanos: Gaetanos will be opening in a new location on Barnum Ave in June. This new space has 20 parking spaces and additional space inside.
- Other new companies to Stratford: 4 new companies have recently moved to Stratford. *MDJ Studios* from Brooklyn, NY is leasing space at 740 Woodend Ave. *Merrimac Building Supply* from Berlin, CT has leased 7600 sq feet at 85 Lupes Dr. *Bristol Fashion Cabinetry and Millwork* has moved to 64 Dodge Ave occupying 6000 sq ft. *Anatolia Group* from Massachusetts is leasing space at 97 West Ave. *Saugatuck Kitchens, Unicore, Advanced Auto Parts, Coating Design Group, Kirby Carpet Cleaners, Norwalk Powdered Metals, Fairfield Ales, Church Owl Brewery, Cober Electronics, Versa Media, Norceadia, LA Barnaby, The Lazy Dog, Maxwells, Joey C's, Harvest House, Jump Off* are some of the new businesses to Stratford in the past few years.
- Kaster Moving Company Expanded in Stratford: Kaster Moving Company has purchased an industrial building in Stratford for \$5.15 million from Stratford Land Development. This purchase is to offer storage solutions to the moving company. The 87,150 square-foot space is on 400 Long Beach Blvd. Kaster Moving Company currently has 40 employees. They leased their former property to Jump Off Trampoline Park.
- Jump Off Trampoline Park: A new trampoline park for kids and adults has opened in Stratford. Jump Off is now leasing space at the former Kaster Moving Company on Garfield Ave.
- Saugatuck Kitchen: Just purchased 125 Bruce Avenue previously owned by Nuovo Pasta. They are a gourmet food manufacturer. They bring 20 new employees to Stratford. They purchased the property for \$3 million. Nuovo Pasta has stayed in Stratford and has expanded to a new building on

Honeyspot Rd extension and has created more than 20 new jobs. Saugatuck Kitchen was awarded the **2016 DECD small business of the year award** this May in Hartford.

- Federal Express Distribution Center: Stratford Land Development has sold its property in the Stratford Executive Park located off of Lordship Blvd for \$20 million dollars. The town received a \$50,000 conveyance tax. The new owners of the property will build 225,000 sq ft building and lease to Federal Express expanding in Stratford. They have received approval for Tax abatement from the Town Council. Federal Express will create 68 new jobs and retain 85 jobs in the Town of Stratford. Fed Ex is expected open in August of 2016.
- Sikorsky/Lockhead: Lockheed Martin's acquisition of Sikorsky Aircraft has cleared its final regulatory hurdle. Mayor Harkins and team met with Lockheed officials in April and in January. Regulators with the Ministry of Commerce in China have signed off on the \$9 billion deal, the last of eight jurisdictions to approve the acquisition. US regulators approved the sale of the American helicopter company by owner United Technologies Corporation in September. Lockheed Martin officially purchased Sikorsky on November 6, 2015..
- Hawley Lane Property: The Town of Stratford has received \$640,000 in back taxes on this property. With a foreclosure/sale dates pending by the town the taxes were paid. A developer is in the process of purchasing the property from the current owners. They have plans for condominiums and a restaurant on the property located behind 99 Hawley Lane. This property is almost 30 acres. They plan to come to zoning with their plans in the next few months.
- New Breweries: 2 new small scale breweries have moved to Stratford. Both are start up companies. Fairfield Craft Ales is on Honeyspot Road. Church Owl Brewery, which makes gluten free beer, is on Access Rd.
- 2009 Main Street Christ Church parking lot: Zoning has approved a plan for an apartment building on this property. This will include about 40 units of 1 and 2 bedrooms.
- 1019 Main Street: This property was sold to a developer. Construction has begun for a 10 unit Condominium at the site.
- Rexel, a global leader in the distribution of electrical supplies and services, has moved from Access Road to 480 Lordship Blvd (the former Gama building) Rexel operates in 38 countries with a network of some 2,200 branches. They employ over 30,000 people. Rexel's sales were 13.1 billion in 2014
- Fitness Edge: A ribbon cutting is being held May 9, 2016. The Fitness Edge has moved to The Dock Shopping center. The Owners of 99 Bearsdley Ave are looking for a new tenant for the space off I95. We have been assisting them in finding a new tenant.
- Popeye's Chicken: The chain is currently suing the Town of Stratford Zoning Commission for denying its applications to come to Stratford at the Dock Shopping center. They had received zoning approvals from the Zoning Board of Appeals and have signed a lease with Urstadt Biddle. The decision is expected soon.

- AAA: Neighbors won their court case against the Zoning Commission. Economic Development will continue to work with AAA to find a location in Stratford and continue to promote the Ferry Blvd property for development which will clean up the blighted commercial property and return it to its full tax potential . AAA would have added approximately \$100,000 + annually to the grand tax list.
- Former Skating Rink: Washington Parkway A developer has purchased the property. The plan is to build residential condominiums. He has met with neighborhood groups and will officially apply to Zoning in the next few months. He has significantly cleaned up the blighted property.
- CDI - Connecticut Distributors Inc: CDI has expanded its business in Stratford! Construction is complete on the 50,000 Square foot addition to the building on Lordship Boulevard. Town and State officials attended a ribbon cutting in October. CDI will be creating 17 new jobs with this expansion.
- Forest City's or 1111 Stratford Ave 128-unit apartment complex is 100% leased with a waiting list Avalon Bay Apartments– These units are located on the North end of Stratford. They are currently 100% leased and have a waiting list.
- Exxon Gas Station/ Stratford Ave: Exxon has demolished the building to remedy contamination. Once Exxon concludes the remediation of the property, they will list the property. The Town of Stratford has an interested cash buyer.
- Exxon Mobile on Lordship Blvd This property is still available for lease. The mayor and economic development met with owner Anthony Argento about future plans for the property. The meeting went very well and they are actively trying to lease out the 19 acre property. Stew Leonard's Market has been contacted about this location but is currently building in Long Island and is not expanding in Connecticut at this time. We have introduced multiple developers to the owner.
- Paradise Green Retail Space: Allstate has opened an office at the new building at 3651 Main Street in Paradise Green. This is a new two-story, 6,000 square-foot building available for retail and office space. There is an existing retail business in Stratford looking to expand to this location.
- Business Awards: The town of Stratford, the state Department of Community and Economic Development and the Stratford Chamber of Commerce partnered with the BRBS honored nine regional companies at the first Business Recognition Reception. New companies being honored include: Unicare, 150 new jobs to town, and Norwalk Powdered Metals, 24 new employees. Connecticut Distributors Inc., added 17 new employees and 50,000 square feet of space to its Stratford site; Aptar, built 45,000 square feet; Main Enterprises Inc, 72 employees ; and Hubbell Water Heaters, add 36 positions over the next three years. Two Roads Brewing, 81 full-time and 20 part-time employees; Nouvo Pasta, 95 employees; and Hampford Research, with 34 full-time employees.