

To: Town Council, Economic Development Commission

From: John Elsesser, Town Manager; Eric Trott, Director of Planning and Development

Re: Economic development updates

Date: October 18, 2019 (updated: January 16, 2020. April 16, 2020)

We thought we would take a minute to share some Economic Development updates. This is to keep you in the loop and have accurate information as the social media world sometimes gets ahead of the truth. In general it would be helpful to not widely distribute this information since it can change quickly and you may be caught in passing on stale information.

**Village:**

1600 Main St: The old house and barn next to the School Admin building was proposed to be demolished soon to address the blight conditions by the owner, but it has not occurred. The owner has taken recent steps to hire a demolition contractor, but they have been fully brought on board yet. Quietly on market for commercial use: 2 acres on sewer - commercially zoned. New owners are not interested in building new gas station/convenience store and plan on minor renovations of the Citgo station.

1465 Main St: Former Devine's building (former small engine/boat repair). Sold to new owner who wishes to do fleet vehicle repair (oil truck) and repair of tractors for personal use. Work is underway to improve the property, despite a recent contaminant leak on the premises.

Reid's: Property has been purchased by owner of Lakeview Restaurant who recently opened a take-out only pizza restaurant after he temporarily closed Lakeview.

1340 Main ST: Coventry Antiques - Environmental clean-up conducted by Red Tech (owner) who are looking for buyer. Have someone interested and trying to get CT DEEP paperwork to allow a mortgage to be issued. Prospective owner has hired an architect and engineer, and plan on a professional office.

1011 Main St: Beebe House – Staff has been told by the realtor that a sales contract is in progress for a breakfast-lunch place, but no activity has occurred recently.

Sanborn's Garage: Sale unlikely without an environmental study. Eric Trott went to a CRCOG brownfields workshop to learn what type of assistance is available. There are limited opportunities for private gas station sites. Rental is still possible. Staff understands that there had been some environmental testing done which revealed no contamination of the site.

Teleflex: EDC visited with Teleflex in late 2019 and learned of the growth of the firm. They are running three shifts and looking for 15 or so more employees. Staff met with the plant manager to discuss their plans, how we may be able to work on parking issues, and how we can help in recruiting. Teleflex is now renting the lower level of the building where Pizza on Main is located for storage.

1034 Main St: Former Sanborn Auto Parts - antique shop closed – new tenant is occupying and selling pool table supplies and antiques. New owner exploring options including residential.

580 Main Street: DragonFire Meadery - (Mead me on Main...too soon?) Owner will be proceeding with sampling in the mead production building which was delayed due to the need to change liquor control law. Mead is a fermented substance made from honey. The owner continues to perform work to the site to further accommodate the business.

1409 Main St: Former House on the Hill Antiques – Property actively on market for sale, but no inquiries have been made with Land Use Office. \$699,000 price likely not reasonable considering constraints of site.

Bidwell Spirit Shoppe: Owner of Spirit Shoppe has purchased entire building. Currently doing minor improvements to stabilize building and rentals.

Nathan Hale Antiques: Nathan Hale Antiques is attempting to purchase the entire building, but complications have arisen with a deed restriction which appears to limit adaptive re-use.

Coventry Laundromat building: New personal training business has moved into the upper level.

Lakeview Restaurant: The owner was contemplating improvements to the cottage that is located within the limits of the outdoor patio, which would allow for it to be utilized on a year round basis for residential purposes. The restaurant has been temporarily closed due to the pandemic.

#### **RT 44:**

1600 Boston Turnpike: Former eye doctor office. The property has been conveyed to a developer who is looking to establish a retail use. Two staff meetings have occurred with the developer and design team to prepare plans that can be submitted to the State DOT and Inland Wetlands Agency. Complications have arisen with the design in relation to the wetlands on site and the need to design an on-site septic system.

Dunkin Donuts: DnD wants to change their drive through configuration to improve cueing. Waiting for permission from Colvest (owner). Designer has been hired to prepare plans, which staff has reviewed and commented on. A special permit amendment is expected to be reviewed for the proposal soon.

Colvest: Colvest has leveled out their property next to CVS and is working on a septic repair. No discussion recently on any new construction but they did have an approved permit which expired for a large plaza which could be quickly re-permitted.

Hartford HealthCare (Dr. Keenan replacement office): The Hospital has allocated funds for a new location for Dr. Keenan. They have located a prospective site on RTE 44 and have hired a design team to prepare plans for a 7,000 s.f. medical center. Staff continues to have ongoing communication with the design team as this project is occurring at the same time as the one at 1600 Boston Tpke.

Vinton Village: Wicked Slice reopened in the fall of 2019. No real movement on CanDance studio space or other tenants yet. The plaza owner also owns the adjacent apartments and is hoping to tear them down and construct new units. It is all septic dependent. The current units are not in great shape. Owner continues to do testing and design. Staff has met with the owner and designer a couple of times to further examine the project.

Cumberland Farms: Construction commenced in December and has proceeded quickly. The construction activities had been halted temporarily on the project due to the pandemic, but will continue in early June.

On the Go gas station: Owner was approved to make sandwiches but has not started the project. They also recently received a grocery beer liquor permit approval with PZC and the State.

Creative Living Community of CT: Application for a mixed use at the former Crestland Llama farm was approved. They are trying to find financing for the first phase of mixed apartments and farm retail. Agricultural activities have commenced on site, as well as stabilization of the buildings. Staff is working with CLCC to submit a Neighborhood Assistance Act application with the State to gain funds to help support the construction of an 'educational' greenhouse.

#### **Other projects:**

Charles Boggini Company: We are working with the Boggini brothers on Bread and Milk Street for an addition to their building that requires the location of a different septic reserve area. Have had productive meetings between staff and the owners to chart options to go forward. They need space to address new CDB production that they have contracts for by using their expertise in emulsions from their soda syrup business. Staff continues to reach out to the owners to offer assistance, but indicated that they are on hold for the moment.

Daly Road and Main: The building owner is looking to add a rear deck to the Penalty Box. Design for this is being considered. No urgent plans for the empty end unit. However, some prospective plans for interior modifications have been reviewed by Town Staff that improve the Penalty Box unit and connect it with the end unit for expanded food service.

Caprilands: The Town has hired an architect and engineering team to conduct a historic building assessment that is being funded by a State Historic Preservation Grant. The report has been completed, and was included in a RFP for adaptive reuse. The RFP was issued in March with a May 11 deadline. Only one response was submitted that was not deemed adequate. The Estate will pursue the sale of the property on the open market.

Dimitri's: Owner to commence interior renovation project to expand take out area and shift bar further into restaurant. Permits were previously approved to begin work.

Dana Barnes – owner of Twin Hills Country Club: Staff met with Dana to discuss the improvements that he is doing on site. Dana is also a real estate developer. Ideas were shared and discussed on how he could potentially be involved in a Coventry project.

Knights of Columbus building – Snake Hill Road – Staff is working with a commercial archery club that wishes to purchase the property for indoor and outdoor activities. A special permit application was approved by the PZC in April. However, the owner is uncertain if he will proceed due to the impact by the pandemic.

Nadeau: The EDC reached out to Ron Nadeau (owner of Sabrina Pools and Industrial Park on Bread and Milk Street) to discuss his plans for the site and others that Nadeau owns. He did not wish to meet with the EDC.

Sadlak Innovative Design: The EDC reached out to the owner who is located in the Nadeau Industrial Park to see if he would be interested in attending an upcoming EDC meeting to see if the Town can help. He politely declined at this time.

RTE 44 sewers: We continue to push the Town Line (Bolton/Coventry Gateway) sewer extension concept. CT DEEP told us that we do not need to reply to the Council of Environmental Quality letter which did not support the extension. CT DEEP issued a letter indicating that they will not support the proposal. Staff is working with our State Representative/Senator and State Staff to rectify this matter. No new updates on this.

Regional Economic Development Action Plan: The consultant, AdvanceCT (formerly the CT Economic Resource Center, has completed a first draft of the action plan. Town Staff of the 4 towns have completed the review of the draft and provided comments to the consultant. The consultant will review the comments and revise the document accordingly. A public forum, via Zoom, to unveil the document is expected in June.

Plan of Conservation and Development update: The final draft has been prepared and will be brought to public hearing on May 26.

3399 Main Street: A solar farm project is being considered for the site. A preliminary discussion was held with the PZC and the developer to gain input, answer questions. A lease is the process of being finalized. Once complete the developer will pursue a special permit with PZC.