

# Economic Development/Marketing/Grants/CDBG Report

January 2024

## Downtown/West End Updates

- Centre Square:
  - As discussed in December, PKL Ventures is working on its site plan and building plan for Parcel 10 on Centre Square.
  - Wheeler Health anticipates the completion of construction in June 2024.
  - Carrier's work on Centre Square Village is ahead of schedule.
  - The City is preparing to solicit for construction bids for the Centre Square Parking Structure in January. \*Estimates for the construction costs are higher than anticipated.
  - The City is working with Carrier on the retaining wall necessary on the railroad embankment.
  - The relocation of large Eversource equipment to serve the site will happen in parallel with garage construction.
  - Streetscape design work for North Main Street (in front of Centre Square Village) and eventually Main Street (in front of Parcel 10 project) is ongoing.
  - Looking forward, ECD may consider soliciting bids for development of the final parcel in early 2024.
- The "Sessions" building environmental cleanup continues through the end of 2023, with an anticipated complete remediation in early 2024.
- Golden Years continues work downtown and should be submitting a Downtown Grant shortly to help with a significant renovation.
- Staff continues to work with the owners of 234 Riverside Ave. in an effort to demolish the long-blighted former "Dodge Village" structure on the site.
- Staff is working on a second façade improvement project in the "West End" at Positano Plumbing.
- Yellow King Brews conducted a soft opening of its coffee cocktail bar/restaurant off Race Street the week between Christmas and New Year's.
- Staff are working with St. Vincent De Paul Mission on evaluating ways to address the increased need for homeless services.
- The Mayor's Office and ECD continue to push the owner of the former "Chic Miller" property toward cleanup/redevelopment options.

## Development Outside Downtown

- Real Café has opened a second location at 785 Terryville Ave. with new eatery the Munch Box just a few doors down in the same plaza.
- City staff will provide an update on the revolving loan program at the January ECD Board meeting.
- Route 6:

- City staff, along with State officials, continue to work on a traffic signal at the intersection of Sheila Court and Route 6 as both a safety measure and to support a new development on a large parcel east of Bristol Farms Plaza.
- The new Citgo gas station at the intersection of King St./Route 6 is under construction.
- The other new gas station on Farmington Ave. heading toward Plymouth/Terryville should resume construction shortly, as the owner is dealing with steel supply/labor issues.
- Cannabis retail: Fine Fettle, a well-known and well-regarded cannabis company, received City Council approval to open the City's second hybrid retail location. The location is the former Goodwill space on Farmington Ave.
- Cannabis manufacturing: In addition to New England Edibles on East Main Street, the ECD is working with a cannabis packaging company hoping to open on Cross St. and a potential large cultivation operation as well.

### **Small Business/Manufacturing Technical Assistance Grants Completed or In Process**

- Dunphy's Ice Cream: Assisting with upgrades to a new store including new flooring and plumbing.
- CT Advanced Spine: Assisting with exterior and interior improvements, repair electrical, plumbing, woodwork, and other renovations for a startup medical practice.
- The Dance Experience: Assisting with the remodel of a new dance studio.
- Bell City Crossfit: Working on upgrades to the bathroom and shower facilities of this popular gym on Emmett Street.
- Curtis Products – Round 2: Assist with a second round of manufacturing technical assistance to utilize remaining funds for marketing and sales consulting.
- Precise HVAC Home Services for business space upgrades on Wooster Court
- Tip Top Nails in the Shop Rite Plaza on new flooring
- Working with two great new businesses on Prospect St.: Rosie's Detailing and Rust to Riches
- Working with a new nail salon on North Main Street in need of assistance with a ventilator.

### **Marketing**

#### **Marketing and Public Relations Initiatives:**

- 1) The New Bristol All Heart Website – a digital campaign with NBC CT to promote the newly-designed website ran on streaming channels from November 28 through December 15, 2023. See report results from the campaign in Communications. The 30-second spot can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/880258481> PW = watchNBCCT.
- 2) The inaugural issue of the Bristol All Heart e-newsletter was emailed in December and will continue to be a quarterly publication. All those who sign up through the Bristol All Heart website will receive a copy in their inbox. All issues of the e-newsletter can also be viewed at: <https://bristolallheart.com/all-heart-newsletter/>

- 3) ECD is developing a campaign in partnership with Downtown Live/City Arts & Culture Commission to promote the 2024 shows at the Rockwell Theater. Anyone who signs up to receive the quarterly Bristol All Heart e-newsletter through the new Bristol All Heart website within a certain timeframe will be entered into a drawing to win a \$100 voucher to be used toward any show in 2024.
- 4) 894 Middle Street RFP Marketing: Advertising for the RFP will be scheduled this month to be published in local and national publications. Information about 894 Middle Street and the RFP will also be added to the Bristol All Heart website with links to the appropriate documents needed.

### **Grants Administration**

#### **Grants Activity:**

##### *Grant Activity Spreadsheet Jan 2024*

This spreadsheet for 2024 will be distributed at the meeting. Information about applications and awards handled by the Grants Administrator is provided for the ECD Board each year.

##### *FEMA SAFER Grant:*

The Grants Administrator is working with Fire Chief Richard Hart to prepare application materials for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant. This FEMA grant program is designed to assist local fire departments with the hiring of new staff to comply with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 structural response standards. SAFER grants provide 100% of new personnel salaries for 3-years, after which time the Fire Department must retain and support those positions using local funds.

There is no cost-sharing match required for this grant. Municipalities are allowed a 180-day recruitment period to fill the positions after a grant award.

### **CDBG Program Highlights**

- **CDBG Year 49**  
The second quarter of Year 49 is done and quarterly reports from grant recipients are expected soon.
- **CDBG Year 50**  
Application materials are available online and notification has been made via email to all local agencies. Ads announcing the availability of applications will be placed in the Press.
- **5-Year Consolidated Plan**  
The survey is available online (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MLYN2W7>) until the end of January. Results from the survey will be compiled and shared with the ECD Board at the February meeting.