



THE OLD STONE HOUSE

# TOWN OF GUILFORD

31 Park Street  
GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT 06437

SETTLED IN 1639

## **Economic Development Commission Annual Report 2017-2018**

Mark Wasserman – Chair  
Ted Sands, Vice Chair  
David Egan  
Damian Gunningsmith  
Michael Meisel  
Michael Orce  
Fran Paranto  
Wendy Dockray – new January 2018.  
Robert Cuozzo – resigned April 2018.  
Michael DeMeo – resigned March 2018, moved out of country.  
Leonard Prygoda – resigned Sept 2017 due to retirement.  
Mark White – resigned Dec 2017.

Brian McGlone – Economic Development Coordinator, Town Staff Representative  
Edward Lazarus – Shoreline Chamber of Commerce President, Liaison until October 2017. Sheri Cote, Shoreline Chamber of Commerce President, Liaison, January 2018.  
Kathy DeBurra – Recording Secretary through May 2018. Judy Anderson Castellano June 2018.

The Economic Development Commission is charged to conduct research into the economic conditions and trends in the Town and to make recommendations to appropriate Town officials and agencies regarding action to improve the Town's economic condition and development. The Commission may advertise, prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts and pamphlets which will further its official purposes.

### **Guilford's Economic Development Commission accomplished the following in 2017-2018:**

Several significant projects were approved or began during this period and many are now becoming a reality. All of these projects will support the grand list. Renovations and construction continued with The Residences at 66 High Street. The “historic Mill Building” was completed and the majority of the units were sold. The first new building, The Whitfield, was under construction with the grand opening in June 2017. Many units have been sold and construction started on the second building, The Leete building with occupancy expected during Q1-2019. Construction on the third building, The Chittenden, is not expected to start until late 2020 for 2021 occupancy. This project is gaining widespread attention throughout the state and New England, winning numerous awards for the renovation and preservation of the historic Mill Building along with the creation of the new buildings on this in-town site (transit oriented development, walkable to downtown, train station and other town amenities). Construction was completed on the first two buildings at the Patriot Center. Construction on the third building began in Q3 – 2017, and is expected to be completed by mid/late 2018. U-Haul has been working out of the former Mannix Auto Dealership site for several years with the intention of purchasing the site. They have been working through our processes and approvals with the intention of renovating the existing building to support retail and storage operations and build a new, 48K sf building to house storage units. Planning & Zoning approved their application in June 2018, however, a lawsuit was initiated, challenging compliance with town regulations. Significant renovation and construction plans have been put on-hold pending the outcome of the suit. A plan for 38 “cottage condos” was developed for 350 Goose Lane. However, the plan was not approved by the Inland Wetlands Commission and thus was abandoned. A previously approved plan for commercial office buildings was resurrected. The existing front building of 4.5K sf was renovated and a local business, The Stone Agency, moved into this space. Construction is underway for the first new building, a 16K sf structure, with occupancy expected late in 2018. Construction on the second new building of 24K sf is expected to begin early in 2019. Construction has been active on the west end of Route 1, including; The Mews, a 14 unit residential condominium development (former Guilford Tavern site), at Gatehouse West, 5 upscale condominium units and construction on a ten unit apartment complex, Schoolhouse Manor is underway. Guilford House is adding 19 units for assisted living care. The Middlesex-New Haven Realtor Association is renovating the former Broadway Mason supply location with occupancy expected mid-2019. They are moving to Guilford from North Haven. Agemy Financial acquired the former Wire Journal building and began a comprehensive redevelopment effort. Agemy will operate from this location and have approximately 4K sf available for other tenants.

Many businesses started during this period. New restaurants included; Amarone’s (replaced Carson’s), Chapter 1 (replaced D’Vine), Guilford Coffee House (replaced Frogurt Time), Java Hut (replaced Perk on Church) and CTLunch (replaced LaRosticceria). After 10+ years in business, Augur’s Pub closed their doors. Many service businesses opened including: Heritage Collision, Pressed and Dressed, Friedler Dental, Orangetheory Fitness and Esana Plastic Surgery Center and Med Spa. Viso Bello by the Shore, a day spa, opened where Distinctions (and Rituals) were located. Retail stores opened including; Kate Sew Modern, Rock-Paper-Sista, and Tracy Country & Coastal. Opportunities for additional retailers and/or food service providers exist within the Guilford Commons shopping center. No additional businesses have been added to

the initial 9 stores during the past year. Guilford Commons however, is still our single largest commercial real estate taxpayer in town.

Interest and activity continues around town. The diverse examples above confirm the desirability of Guilford as a place to live, work, shop and dine.

### **Administrative, Organizational, & Professional Development**

Continued to enhance Town website with featured commercial properties inventory and additional demographic information.

Members attended economic development related seminars. Incorporated subject matter experts into EDC meetings to expand knowledge base of commission members. Effective July 2018, the time of EDC meetings moved from 5pm to 8am. The primary driver was to attract more local Guilford businesses as EDC Commissioners.

### **Events**

In collaboration with the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce, participated in numerous New Member “Ribbon Cuttings”, Business-After-Hours Networking, and Tourism initiatives. Supported local events like; Taste of the Shoreline, Chowder Challenge, Sidewalk Sale Days, Wellness Fair and the Annual Tree Lighting.

Implemented our second “Business Recognition Program”, based on milestone years of service in Guilford, using 5 year intervals as the benchmark. We celebrated with a breakfast event held at the Guilford Community Center in May 2018. Businesses recognized included; MIX Design (10 yrs), Charlie’s Closet (20 yrs), Remington Orthodontist (25 yrs), Bohan & Bradstreet (30 yrs), Evergreen Fine Crafts (35 yrs), Skinsations (40 yrs), Strawberry Hollow Farm (50 yrs), Guilford Art League (70 yrs), Page Insurance (75 yrs), and the Hyland House Museum at 100 yrs old.

Planning began in the fall of 2016 for the inaugural Guilford Performing Arts Festival (GPAF). A working committee was formed in March 2017 to implement the 4 day event in October 2017. Forty-four events with 350 individual performers occurred in 17 venues over the 4 days, attended by nearly 3,700 people. Many businesses reported a strong influx of business during the GPAF. This will become a bi-annual event with the second scheduled to occur in 2019.

### **Community Outreach**

Expanded scope of information and ease of use of website for residents and prospective businesses.

Continued to inform public on EDC initiatives via, Guilford Events magazine, Facebook, E-Newsletters, press releases, and the town website.

Continued tourism initiatives as a way of bringing additional people to Guilford to support our local businesses. Created a simple “rack card” to promote Guilford’s primary tourism attractions. And participated in the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce Tourism Map and Town Directory as a way of increasing visibility locally and beyond. We worked with the State Film office, updating Guilford pictures and attractions as possible

locations for films and commercials. During the past year, Chasing Classic Cars filmed a segment, featuring Palumbo's Automotive selling a car they restored. HGTV filmed a segment, "Log Cabin Living", featuring several local homes for sale being pursued by a family. The segment aired late in 2018. We are working with State DOT representatives to enhance signage on I- 95 and off the major exits in an effort to attract more tourists to historic Guilford. We are working with St. George's Church to expand employee parking opportunities for the local Whitfield and Water Street merchants.

### **Regional Outreach**

Guilford continues as an active member of REX. We utilized REX data and resources as we researched an Extended Stay Hotel as a possibility for Guilford. We discussed with several developers but decided that Guilford is an unlikely location for such a facility. In conjunction with REX and Workforce Alliance, work fairs have occurred to support Guilford Commons and other employment needs. Several local businesses have directly worked with Workforce Alliance to find certain skilled labor. We participated with REX in developing CEDS (regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) with our focus on Workforce Development and Housing Diversity. We worked with REX on transportation initiatives, with a particular focus on the Tweed Airport expansion. REX continues to promote Guilford with tourism initiatives and represents Guilford at local and national trade shows and events.

### **Interaction with Town Boards, Commissions, and Departments**

Worked with Guilford Police and Public Works Departments, once CTDOT required us to eliminate two parallel and two angled parking spots in the center of town. Advised all impacted businesses of the plan and rationale prior to implementation.

Worked with Planning & Zoning to amend the Zoning Code, allowing restaurants in the MR-1 Zone. One business impacted by this change is the Guilford Yacht Club. They want to provide food service to the public (non-members) and provide more access to the water area and views.

Worked with Design Review and Planning & Zoning to allow Outdoor Seating at Amarone's Restaurant.

Submitted by Mark Wasserman and Brian McGlone May 1, 2019