



**Planning and Economic Development Department
State of the Town Message
January 18, 2018**

This report is submitted on behalf of the Wethersfield Planning and Economic Development Department and represents the combined activities of the Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC), the Economic Development and Improvement Commission (EDIC) and the Wethersfield Tourism Commission (Historic Wethersfield). This report looks back on the development activity that occurred in 2017 and identifies some of the projects that we can look forward to in 2018.

To this end I am pleased to report on the following notable accomplishments and developments.

NEW BUSINESS STARTS

New business starts were about level with 2016. During 2017 we welcomed 21 new businesses to Town:

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| 1. 1652 Berlin Turnpike – State Line Auto Sales. | 12. 1025 Silas Deane Highway – Hartford Health Care Primary Care Clinic |
| 2. 709 Silas Deane Highway – Key Bank. | 13. 1025 Silas Deane Highway – Urgent Care Medical Clinic |
| 3. 365 Maple – Family Dental Center. | 14. 672 Silas Deane Highway – Select Physical Therapy |
| 4. 1206 Silas Deane Highway – Miracle Ear. | 15. 70 Wolcott Hill Road – Sale e Pepe Restaurant |
| 5. 526 Silas Deane Highway - Headstrong Salon. | 16. 100 Great Meadow – 6th Floor - Prime AE |
| 6. 669 Silas Deane Highway – Ring’s End. | 17. 669C Silas Deane Highway – Periwinkles Gift Shop |
| 7. 1088 Silas Deane Highway – Chipotle Restaurant. | 18. 55 Town Line Road - Wethersfield Dental |
| 8. 740 Silas Deane Highway - Cheek’s Chicken and Waffles | 19. 943 Silas Deane Highway – 860 Repair |
| 9. 1177 Silas Deane Highway – LMFT Therapy | 20. 1392 Berlin Turnpike – Cardio Express |
| 10. 1862 Berlin Turnpike – El Pollo Guapo | 21. 100 Great Meadow Road – Hazen and Sawyer – 7th Floor |
| 11. 100 Great Meadow – Council on Problem Gambling – 7th Floor | |

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

In terms of business retention and expansion we experienced a significant increase from 2016. In 2017 we had 11 businesses that were either purchased by new owners, relocated within Town to a new home or expanded:

1. 404 Silas Deane Highway – Wethersfield Automotive – (New Owner)
2. 1310 Silas Deane Highway – People’s Bank – Interior Renovations.
3. 370 Silas Deane Highway – Transition Academy.
4. 282/284 Silas Deane Highway – Cove Deli (Relocation)
5. 936 Silas Deane Highway – Qualidigm. (Purchased building and renovated)
6. 808 Silas Deane Highway – Buy Rite Liquors (Expansion).
7. 146 Main Street – Larissa Lake – Salon and Spa. (Purchased building and renovated)
8. 1698 Berlin Turnpike – 5/15 Wine Spirits (New Ownership)
9. Main Street Creamery - New Owners
10. 434 Silas Deane Highway – Beaver Brook Animal Hospital – Purchased site, demolished blighted structures and constructed new building.
11. Berlin Turnpike – Cedar Hill Cemetery – New Construction - Mausoleum.

BUILDING PERMIT ACTIVITY

In terms of building permit activity the total number of building permits issued in 2017 (1,805) is slightly down from last year.

The total value of building permit activity increased by nearly \$6 million over the past year to over \$26,000,000 in 2017.

Commercial building permit activity also increased to \$7.5 million which is the highest level in several years.

REDEVELOPMENT

The Town remains focused on efforts to redevelop long standing vacant and underutilized properties, in 2017 the following progress was made:

- Plans approved to demolish and redevelop the former Fun Zone at 1178 Silas Deane Highway for the Borden mixed use project including 111 residential apartments.
- Construction is well underway at the former Church Homes property at 275 Ridge Road to redevelop the site into a 64 unit residential apartment building.
- Two (2) blighted and vacant properties were demolished and the site was redeveloped at 432 Silas Deane Highway to make way for the new Beaver Brook Animal Hospital.
- New ownership and investment is underway at the vacant former Carmen Anthony’s restaurant at 1770 Berlin Turnpike.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

The Economic Development and Improvement Commission (EDIC) continued its efforts to support the local business community in 2017. The EDIC continues to administer the following programs:

- Façade Improvement Program
- Ribbon Cuttings
- Salute To Business Event in December
- Town Guide and Calendar
- Welcome Wagon
- Business Directory
- Shop Wethersfield Program

- The Great Elm website

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The EDIC continued to administer the Façade Improvement Program. In 2017 the Commission secured a \$450,000 STEAP grant from the State DECD to continue to fund the program. In 2017 the Commission closed out 8 projects. To date, the Town has approved a total of 40 façade projects and has provided financial assistance of nearly \$1.2 million towards these projects. This public investment has resulted in private investment that totals over \$10 million dollars.

The following façade loans were closed in 2017:

- 446 Silas Deane Highway
- 146 Main Street
- 770 Silas Deane Highway
- 219-233 Silas Deane Highway
- 574 Silas Deane Highway
- 718 Silas Deane Highway
- 1321 Silas Deane Highway
- 730-734 Silas Deane Highway

TOURISM

The Tourism Commission continues to support and promote the Historic Wethersfield brand to residents and visitors and during 2017 accomplished the following:

- Continued to improve and maintain their website historicwethersfield.org
- Completed a new seasonal brochure/rack cards for distribution.
- Initiated the Annual community photo contest.
- Continued to coordinate and distribute a monthly event calendar of things to do in Wethersfield.
- Continues to take the lead with the implementation of the recommendations from the Old Wethersfield Master Plan. In 2017 worked to develop a series of pedestrian and bicycle improvement projects for a State Dot grant application for \$400,000.
- Continued to utilize magazine ads, media articles and literature distribution throughout the State and Region to encourage visitors.
- Supported efforts to bring the Hartford Belle Connecticut River cruises to Wethersfield.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The following single family residential development activity is reported:

- Whippoorwill Estates subdivision ten (10) building lots with several homes under construction.
- Reservoir Estates Subdivision twenty (20) building lots off Back Lane with several homes under construction.
- Princeton Street subdivision off Nott Street four (4) building lots approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Eight (8) new single family dwelling permits were issued for construction in 2017.

ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENT IN 2018

Looking ahead to 2018 it is anticipated that the following development activity will likely occur.

- River Café at 100 Great Meadow Road
- Kaliubon Ramen at 1331 Silas Deane Highway
- Pasta Vita at 1142 Silas Deane Highway
- Ulta Beauty and Kay Jewelers at the Wethersfield Shopping Center
- Goodwin Park on Ridge Road – 170 Ridge Road - 32 market rate apartments
- Restaurant Supply at 24 Maple Street
- Former Carmen Anthony’s Restaurant renovation at 1770 Berlin Turnpike
- 1881 Berlin Turnpike – Gas Station and Convenience Store
- 45 Arrow Road – 90,000 sf. self-storage facility
- 88 Executive Square – 10,000 sf. day care center
- 211 Main Street – New Education Center – Webb-Deane Stevens Museum