



Business Newsletter – August

Business Breakfast

We are very excited to announce that our next Business Breakfast will be held at **Rapscallion Brewery on Tuesday, September 12th with doors opening at 7:45 am**. As was requested at the last breakfast, will be a discussing the Commercial Tourist District study conducted by the Town a few years ago, what has been accomplished so far, and what business owners can do to help improve the corridor. We are also excited to announce that we will have a panel discussion with our inspectional services (building, health and fire) to talk about future initiatives they are developing and to answer questions. As always we will also provide you with an update on the different economic development projects the Town is working on, and we will leave plenty of time at the end for discussion and questions. Food and beverages will be provided.

If you would like to join us, please RSVP with Kevin Filchak via email at kfilchak@town.sturbridge.ma.us or call 508-347-2500 ext. 1411.

Survey Results

As was discussed at the last business breakfast this past June, the Town conducted a survey of businesses and asked that they participate in a SWOT analysis of the Town. It should be noted that while the Town did receive a number of survey responses as well as input at the breakfast, there was not enough surveys to make them a statistically significant sample of all Town businesses. However it does provide us with a good snapshot of those businesses who participated and those who were present at the Business Breakfast. After compiling all of the results there were a few takeaways, all of which have been provided to the Board of Selectmen, Town Staff and the appropriate local Boards and Committees.

1. Businesses see Local Boards and Committees as challenging
2. Sturbridge benefits greatly from its location
3. There is potential for greater collaboration amongst businesses
4. Roadways, parking and blight in Town present a great challenge to development
5. There is potential for local economic growth by attracting more anchor businesses (e.g. Sports Complex)
6. Town Staff are a strength in our community

From these survey results, I have proposed two courses of action for the Town to take:

1. Continue its outreach efforts to the business community, such as through its tours program, the business classes, the breakfasts, etc.
2. Form a focus group, made up of a diverse group of business owners representing all business sectors in Town. This group will focus on answering three questions:
 - a. What are the current challenges for businesses in Sturbridge as it relates to local Town government?
 - b. What are the short and long term solutions for each of the challenges identified?
 - c. How should the Town evolve to become business friendly to all businesses in Sturbridge?

The findings of this group will then be shared with the Board of Selectmen and other Boards and Committees that interact with the business community. We are in the early discussions regarding next steps. We will provide more information shortly.

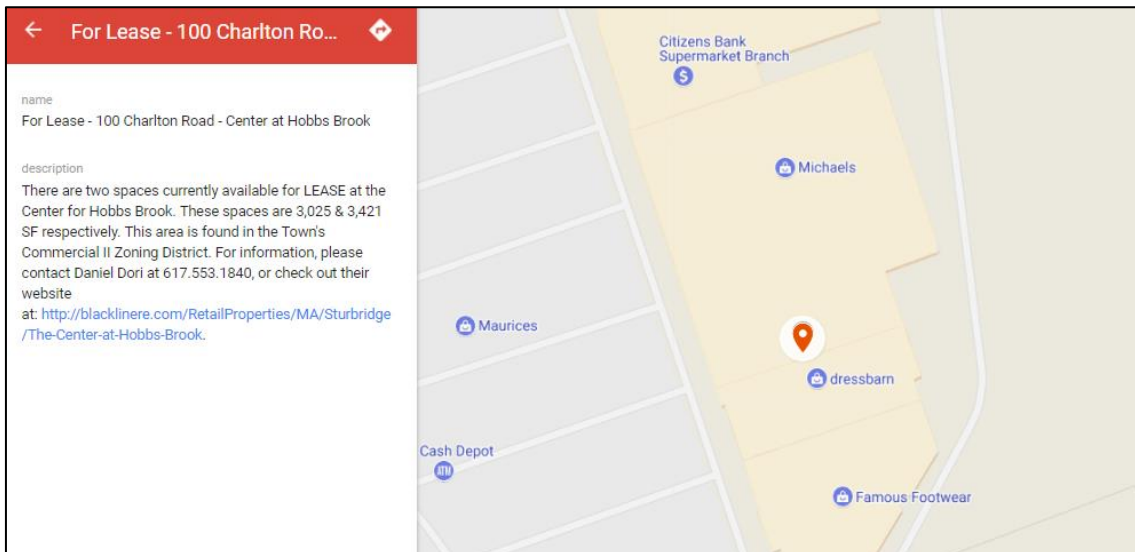
New Town Website

The Town of Sturbridge has recently developed a newly redesigned Town Website. The new site is designed for ease of use and is accessible on any device. Of particular importance to you is that there is a dedicated page just for businesses. Here you can find information on our business classes, links to resources, details about our tax incentive programs, a business directory and much more. We expect to roll out this website within the next few weeks. We will email the link out to everyone when it becomes available.



Site Finder Program

Another key aspect of the new website is the Town's new "Site Finder" program, where the Town lists properties that are available for sale or lease using a Google Maps based program (see below). We are working to highlight these properties



to any potential investors. It is our goal to see all of these properties filled with businesses that support the diversity of the Sturbridge economy. If you have a commercial or industrial parcel that is for sale or lease in Sturbridge, please contact me directly so that we can list it on the Town's new Site Finder.

This newsletter will be published on a monthly basis. It will be emailed to those businesses that provide their email to the Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator, and it will be published on the Town website under the "Business" tab. If you ever have any questions, comments, concerns or ideas for Sturbridge, please do not hesitate to contact me anytime by phone at 508-347-2500 ext. 1411 or by email at kfilchak@town.sturbridge.ma.us.