

# *Celebrating* DOWNTOWN

Vol. 12 - June 2021

Special Section of the

**RepublicanAmerican**

*Main St.*  
**Waterbury**

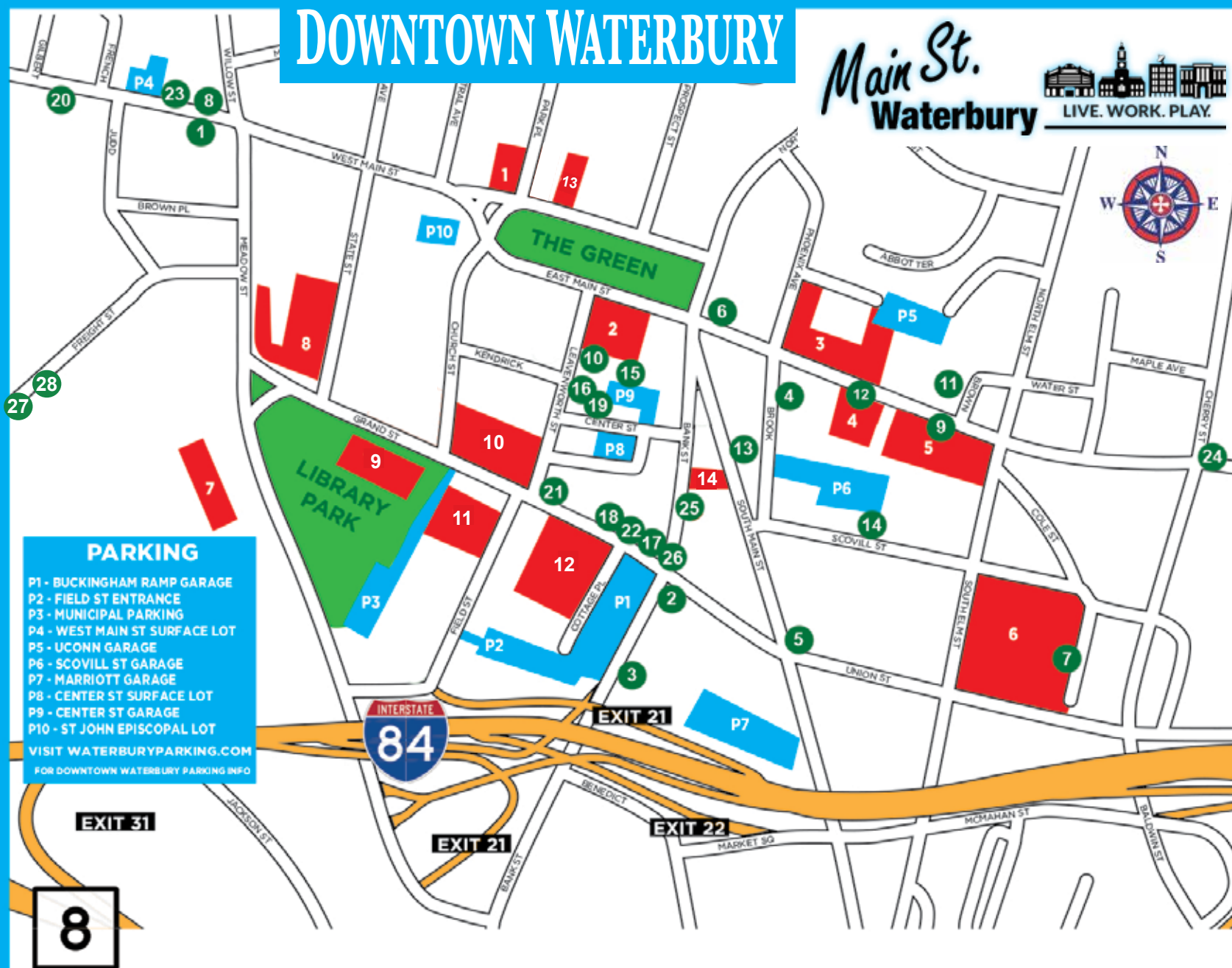


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# DOWNTOWN WATERBURY

Main St.  
Waterbury



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| 3. Diorio's Restaurant & Bar           | 16. Signature's Restaurant    |
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| 7. Jazzman Cafe at St. Mary's Hospital | 20. Cafe 457                  |
| 8. La Cazuela                          | 21. City Pizza and Espresso   |
| 9. Louie's Pizza                       | 22. Turf Bar & Grill          |
| 10. Drescher's Rest & Bar              | 23. Via Al Paraiso            |
| 11. China One                          | 24. Zia's Cucina              |
| 12. Palace Theater Poli Club           | 25. Spirit Cafe               |
| 13. Pizza Express                      | 26. Grand News Deli           |
|  | 27. Freight Street Grill      |
|  | 28. Brass Tacs Cafe           |

## POINTS OF INTEREST

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Mattatuck Museum                    | 9. Silas Bronson Library       |
| 2. Rowland State Government Center     | 10. Chase Municipal Building   |
| 3. UCONN Waterbury Campus              | 11. City Hall                  |
| 4. Palace Theater                      | 12. U.S. Post Office           |
| 5. Waterbury Arts Magnet School        | 13. Greater Waterbury YMCA     |
| 6. St. Mary's Hospital                 | 14. Shakesperience Productions |
| 7. Republican-American Newspaper       |                                |
| 8. State of Connecticut Superior Court |                                |

Celebrating DOWNTOWN

On the Cover: Aerial view of Downtown Waterbury  
courtesy of Derek L. Ward  
Inside Photo: Waterbury Clock Tower by Derek L. Ward

Main St.  
Waterbury

  
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- Design:** Anabela Maia
- Promotion:** Paula Massey
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Vision Statement

"Downtown Waterbury, an easily accessible regional center and neighborhood in which to live, learn, work, and play."

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**Carl Rosa**

CEO, Main Street Waterbury



Sunday, June 13, 2021

On behalf of Main Street Waterbury, we are pleased to present the twelfth issue of Celebrating Downtown. Now in our 18th year, we are staying focused on projects and programs that make downtown Waterbury clean, safe, and friendly. We are a 501c3 not for profit organization and to date, our very loyal and dedicated volunteers have logged in over 30,000 hours donating their time and talents for our mission of a beautiful downtown district. We are proud to have achieved for our 17th consecutive year, a National Accreditation designation from Main Street America. This honor is bestowed upon Main Street programs from across the country who consistently demonstrate high standards in administration of the four-point approach of design, promotion, organization, and economic vitality to downtown revitalization.

As we emerge from the grip of a global pandemic, we are working hard to adapt, transition and look for positive and creative ways to help downtown businesses survive, thrive, and prosper. In fact, the services, partnerships, and support that Main Street Waterbury provide and encourage are needed now more than ever before in our lifetime.

Of course, we would not be able to operate without the consistent and strong support of our Board of Directors, volunteers, partners, generous donors, and downtown stakeholders. In particular, we'd like to thank the City of Waterbury, The Waterbury Development Corporation, the Waterbury Regional Chamber of Commerce, Post University, the University of Connecticut Waterbury Campus, the Connecticut Main Street Center, the Connecticut Community Foundation, The Republican-American Newspaper, and so many more organizations and businesses who continue to believe in us and our efforts for downtown Waterbury.

The good news is that despite the pandemic disruptions, we are still making progress for downtown as planned projects come to fruition and continue to excite. Hard work, cooperation, and partnerships, by so many does not go unnoticed and as you'll see in this issue, the articles will inform you, update you, and hopefully continue to inspire you to help us with our mission and vision as we strive to make downtown Waterbury "an easily accessible regional center and neighborhood in which to live, learn, work, and play."

**Carl Rosa**  
CEO, Main Street Waterbury

# Chamber Continues Driving Business To Membership



**David Huck**  
*Waterbury Regional Chamber  
 Communications &  
 Social Media Director*

Since 1889, the Waterbury Regional Chamber has kept steadfast to its mission of strengthening the regional economy by serving its members as a network, resource, and advocate. The Waterbury Regional Chamber is really three chambers in one. Through its affiliation with the Naugatuck Chamber of Commerce and the Watertown-Oakville Chamber, the Chamber represents over 1,000 businesses across 14 communities in the Greater Waterbury area. The Chamber is also a valuable resource for consumers.

With the start of the pandemic in 2020, the Chamber, like so many other organizations and businesses, had to quickly adapt to meet the needs of our members in new and creative ways. While holding events, workshops, and seminars online became the new norm, the Chamber also worked hard to provide the latest information on regulations to ensure that businesses could make the necessary changes or get the support they needed to withstand the changed economic environment. Though treasured in-person events like the Naugatuck Duck Day was moved to a virtual format, the Chamber still managed to give back over \$10,000 to area

nonprofits. Over the last year, the Chamber retained 88 percent of its members and gained 40 new members, outpacing the industry average among other chambers. This is a testament to the immense value that the Chamber brings to its members and the region.

During the pandemic, the Chamber was able to bring together a diverse array of individuals to present the latest ongoing recovery efforts in our communities and statewide. The Chamber held virtual meetings with Governor Ned Lamont, Waterbury Mayor Neil O'Leary, actress Valerie Bertinelli, and other local professionals—supporting events like our annual Legislative Summit and Business Women's Forum. In addition to this programming, the Chamber has also been a steady conduit for our members by sharing with them the latest financial programs, COVID-19 changes, and other resources. The Chamber also supports regular networking events, along with specific programs aimed at developing our area's next generation of leaders.

Another way the Chamber kept active its role as a voice for businesses was through the launch of its weekly Chamber Perk series. This initiative allows members to take part in a unique marketing opportunity that gives businesses the chance to showcase to the public an exclusive offer, driving new leads to their storefronts, while at the same time strengthening their presence online through digital promotion by the Chamber on its social media



accounts, digital content creation, and through its newsletters. Before the start of the 2021 Legislative session, the Waterbury Regional Chamber released its legislative agenda, a list of specific goals and objectives for the Legislature and Governor to consider. With the pandemic having taken such a toll on our economy, several of the policy objectives focused on leveraging federal aid to help businesses rebuild, supporting COVID-related investments such as a testing and equipment, and concentrating on workforce development initiatives. The Chamber also advocated for prioritizing funding for STEM and trade education and training to ensure that the region's many manufacturers have a skilled labor force in the future. Other areas the Chamber supported included properly funding transportation and infrastructure projects—specifically the Waterbury rail line, equitable funding for public institutions of

higher education, transportation-oriented development initiatives, and enhancing state marketing efforts for tourism, among other objectives.

As a consumer, the Chamber offers an array of resources to help you find trusted businesses in the region. On [www.waterburychamber.com](http://www.waterburychamber.com), individuals can browse the Chamber's Member Directory, view upcoming events, and see the benefits of becoming a Chamber member, as well as view the Chamber Perk of the Week. To learn more about the Chamber and its efforts over the last year, you can browse the 2020-21 Annual Report, which is located on the front page of the website. A great way to stay connected is through the Chamber's social media channels, where you'll find the latest information and exclusive offers to help enrich your life.

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# Summers With The YMCA Keeps The Community Moving



**BY Allison Reklaitis**  
Development Director Greater  
Waterbury YMCA

Coming off of one of the most chaotic years in the organization's history, the Greater Waterbury YMCA is looking forward to an exciting summer in 2021! Summer camp is one of the Y's most renowned programs, and this year's camp experience is going to be the best season yet. Enrollment at Camps Mataucha and Oakasha (located in Watertown and Southbury) are seeing record numbers for this summer. Now more than ever, local children need time to reconnect with each other and spend time out doors. Each day campers get the opportunity to engage in a broad range of activities including: swimming, arts and crafts, games, a variety of sports, nature exploration, and more. This season Camp Mataucha campers will also get a chance to use the brand new Paula and Joel LaBonte Playground, generously supported by the David, Helen, and Marian Woodward Fund as well as The Watertown Foundation.

The Y's annual Race 4 Chase youth triathlon program will be taking

place at the West Main Street facility this summer. This program sponsored by the Chase Michael Anthony Kowalski Foundation, offers 40 local youths, ages 6-12, a chance to hone their running, swimming, and biking skills, while learning the benefits of good nutrition and physical activity. The program culminates with the children participating in a sanctioned youth triathlon event at the end of July.

While the Y camps always usher in the summer season with an air of excitement, other Y programs are also back in full swing. LiveStrong and a local favorite, the Tri-Club, have been welcoming participants back into the fold. Members are finding their way back to group fitness classes and the Wellness Center, and the indoor pool is back in action hosting swim lessons as well as the Barracuda Swim Team.

Most importantly, the Y continues to be a place within Waterbury that all local residents can count on. From high quality preschool, to before and after school care; from swim lessons, to youth basketball; or from group fitness classes to personal training, the Y is the community's backbone for Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility.

# United Way Expands Services To Meet Influx Of Need



**Linda Zukauskas**  
Communications Associate  
United Way of Greater Waterbur

As restrictions end and we can see an end to the pandemic, the community continues to pull together to address ongoing needs that were either triggered by or made more severe by COVID-19. For example, United Way of Greater Waterbury has recently partnered with Main Street Waterbury to make sure that \$200 mobile wallet gift cards reach small business owners and employees who have been negatively impacted.

"We are very excited to work with the United Way of Greater Waterbury on this important program that can provide a critical benefit to some of our struggling downtown small business owners and employees, who have especially been hit hard by the pandemic", Carl Rosa CEO of Main Street Waterbury stated. Additional partners include Team Inc., Staywell Health Center, the Connecticut Restaurant Association, the Town of Cheshire and the Jewish Federation of Western Connecticut. Partnerships like this are one part of a multi-faceted approach that United Way began in March 2020 in response to the pandemic. By working with other United Way organizations across the state, our local United Way has been able to help people access basic needs. In the first phase of the program, after 270 mobile wallet gift cards were distributed through 10 community agencies, recipients were able to purchase food and household supplies, pay utility bills, and access transportation. The safety net put in place stopped the snowball effect that was most likely to take place as the economy was suddenly and significantly affected.

United Way of Greater Waterbury also partnered with the Connecticut Community Foundation to create the COVID-19 Response Fund, which raised much needed funds for non-profit agencies so they could submit and receive grants in a timeframe that was condensed to days instead of weeks or even months. In turn, the agencies were able to feed those who would otherwise go hungry, provide safe housing for those in need of shelter, and meet the needs of those who became sick as a result of COVID-19.

The fund has approved more than \$742,000 in grants as of April 5, 2021 and reviewed over \$2.5 million in grant requests. As one agency stated, "Without the use and availability of these funds, we



*The United Way of Greater Waterbury responded to the COVID-19 pandemic through several avenues and partnerships. Jessica Carlino, Volunteer Engagement Coordinator, and Renee Young, Community Impact Manager, pitched in to help distribute personal protective equipment to local agencies providing support to those in need.*

could not provide the essential services necessary to those in our community experiencing poverty and food insecurity." The COVID-19 Response Fund also ensured the safety of agency volunteers by providing Personal Protective Equipment. Funding and supplies meant that the agencies most skilled to address the problems faced by our neighbors were able to ramp up to the new demand, saving time, money, and manpower otherwise needed to save lives. Of course, United Way of Greater Waterbury worked with the City of Waterbury through the COVID-19 Basic Needs Response Team. Individuals and families who were in quarantine while battling or recovering from the virus were able to receive vital support. To date, the COVID-19 Basic Needs Response Team has provided help to 934 COVID positive households, representing 3,030 individuals and families. Four Corners Store, LaBonne's Markets, and ShopRite participated in 1,066 grocery orders and emergency supplies (cleaning supplies, medication, diapers, and thermometers) delivered and funds supporting these services total \$125,005. By addressing the immediate needs of individuals, the community was safer as a whole and used fewer resources in a proactive response than would have been needed to react.

## BEAT THE HEAT the Y

JOIN THE WATERBURY YMCA IN THE MONTH OF JUNE

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For more information on this promotion or Membership in general, please call the Welcome Center at (203) 754-9622 ext 300.

Adult	\$50	\$0
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## JUNE PROMOTION

# Silas Bronson Library Gets Creative With Access To Books!



**Raechel Guest**  
*Director, Silas Bronson Library*

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- 134 Grandview Ave., (203) 573-7130
- 2150 East Main St., (203) 575-0516
- 715 Lakewood Rd., (203) 759-1122
- Waterbury Hospital, (203) 573-6041
- Women's Health & Shoulder/Hand Center, 134 Grandview Ave., (203) 575-2593

#### SURROUNDING AREA

- 305 Church St., **Naugatuck**, (203) 723-4010
- 690 Main St. South, Suite 5., **Southbury**, (203) 267-4060
- 1625 Straits TnPk, **Middlebury**, (203) 598-0400
- 84 Oxford Rd., Rt. 67, **Oxford**, (203) 881-0830
- 131 Main St., **Thomaston**, (860) 283-4700
- 650 Wolcott Rd., **Wolcott**, (203) 879-6700
- 365 Main St., **Watertown**, (475) 207-9244

12 Convenient Locations

# Mattatuck Museums' Re-Opening Is Long Awaited And Perfectly Timed



**Stephanie Harris** *Chief Experience Officer, Mattatuck Museum*

After nearly two years and \$9 million, the Mattatuck Museum is proud to welcome visitors into their beautiful new building. Boasting a new addition and renovated interiors, updated amenities, and ample free parking, your visit to the Museum will not disappoint. The Mattatuck is celebrating its grand opening with an exciting roster of Summer exhibitions and programs followed by a fan-favorite artist in the fall.

The renovation project has brought to life a reimagined space that continues to be a welcoming, inclusive, stimulating, and enriching community anchor. The New Mattatuck Museum includes an extensive 14,000 square foot renovation to the existing building and an addition of almost 7,000 square feet to expand educational programming, collections storage, and exhibitions. The project allows the Museum to implement an exciting vision that includes two new classrooms; a freight-sized elevator to accommodate large scale traveling exhibitions; 1,500 square feet of new gallery space; and a more welcoming and inviting public space. In addition, beautiful new amenities including a new plaza and garden, open foyer, expanded Museum Shop, café, and an outdoor roof terrace overlooking Waterbury's historic green add to the visitor's experience.

"The goal of this project was to literally open up the Museum to our community and to welcome them into their museum," shared Museum Director Bob Burns, "Through the hard work of countless individuals, the revitalized Museum is a major social, cultural, and educational draw to downtown Waterbury. We are already seeing the community coming in to explore the new space – whether it be taking a few minutes to relax on the Roof Terrace, picking up a gift from the Museum Shop, or enjoying the exhibits." The renovation also includes a re-in-



*A family examines sculpture in "A Face Like Mine" the Museum's major summer exhibition*

terpretation of the Orton P. Camp, Jr. History Exhibit to better tell stories of important transitional moments in the City's past. "Much like how big changes in a person's life cause them to reflect and choose a path forward, Waterbury's history reveals how times of change created a city that adapted to persevere," explains Burns. "In refocusing the way history is told, the reinstalled gallery promotes the connection between the visitor's own life with Waterbury's history and encourages reflection on how moments of transition in a city's story are not so different from a person's life."

To celebrate this newly transformed space, the Mattatuck presents *A Face Like Mine*, a major exhibition more than two years in the making, organized in collaboration with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *A Face Like Mine* presents 100 years of Black figurative art in the United States, from the Harlem Renaissance to today. By featuring portraits of Black people by Black artists, this ex-

hibition celebrates Black identity and cultural heritage and argues for the inclusion of these works in the global art historical canon. The fifty artists of *A Face Like Mine* have represented themselves and their community through various media—including sculpture, photography, painting, works on paper, and assemblage. Artists included are Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Kerry James Marshall, Lorna Simpson, James VanDerZee, and Kehinde Wiley among many others. They have depicted their reality through their gaze, investing themes of Black identity, place, family, and performance as cornerstones of American portraiture.

*A Face Like Mine*, on view through September 12, is the second in a three-part exhibition series developed in collaboration with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The MFA Boston is the lead museum from Northeast cohort of the Art Bridges + Terra Foundation initiative. The initiative, wholly funded by Art Bridges, supports multi-year ex-

hibition partnerships with the mission of expanding access to American art across the US.

"It was important to feature this exhibition as part of the Grand Opening to reflect the Museum's desire to be inclusive and welcoming, in particular to the surrounding community that has not always seen itself reflected within the Museum," says Burns. "This is part of a larger effort to live by our mission and core values when developing exhibitions and programs." This exhibition is accompanied by an exceptional line-up of programs aimed at engaging with adults, kids, and families in the Museum's community. These programs include conversations about hip-hop and the political landscape of the U.S., artist using photography to create Black imagery, and African American voices describing major historical events. The Museum will also feature a film screening of *A Face Like Mine*, a film created in response to the exhibition by local film maker Mya Gray; a Music Showcase



*Visitors enjoy the newly reinstalled collection gallery*

highlighting talented rappers, singers, and spoken word artists; as well as writing, collage, and mural workshops related to the exhibition. For more information and a full list of programs visit the Museum's website at [mattmuseum.org/calendar](http://mattmuseum.org/calendar).

Opening on July 8, *In the Wake of 9/11: Robert Carley's American Journey* commemorates the 20-year anniversary. Inspired by the human stories of how this tragedy touched the lives of so many, Robert Carley set off across the country to capture the American spirit by photographing the American flag in as many forms as possible. Twenty years later, he continues to travel, photographing houses, trucks, and even hot air balloons, all adorned with the Stars and Stripes. The Museum has also announced that an exhibition of works from the Norman Rockwell Museum will be coming at the end of September and will be on view through the end of the year. Norman Rockwell: Behind the Camera features more than 70 work-

ing photos, paintings, and tear sheets by the artist allowing the viewer to gain an understanding of the working methods of America's best-known illustrator. These pieces offer insight into how Rockwell chose to create his unique composites and the finished work, the "Rockwell moments", which have become symbolic of American culture.

The Mattatuck Museum is located on the Green in Waterbury, CT at 144 West Main Street. The Museum is open for timed admission, Monday-Saturday from 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. with additional hours on Thursday nights until 7:00 p.m. Admission tickets can be purchased online at [mattmuseum.org](http://mattmuseum.org). A limited number of tickets are available each hour for walk-in visitors. The website outlines the Museum's updated guidelines for visitors, including what to expect on your visit, cleaning and safety protocols, and frequently asked questions.

## Downtown Has A New Look! Economic Vitality Plays A Major Role In Downtown Revitalization



**Zach Keith**  
*Economic Vitality  
Committee Chairperson*

One of the roles of Main Street Waterbury is involvement in preserving the historic character and cultural diversity of the City of Waterbury. The Economic Vitality Committee has a goal of strengthening the economic base in Downtown by promoting existing businesses, recruiting new businesses, and converting unused space into productive property. In addition, marketing, advertising, and promoting long-standing and new businesses, as well as, current available properties downtown that are for sale or lease.

The Economic Vitality Committee has continued to update the available properties list. Main Street Waterbury recently incorporated the Freight Street district into its corridor to align with the City of Waterbury's Central Business District. Main Street Waterbury has also been running a YouTube series called the Heart of Waterbury. This series interviews and spotlights different downtown businesses each episode.

The City of Waterbury has focused on downtown revitalization and grow-

ing the grand list through economic development initiatives and projects. After completing the repaving of the City's Train Station parking lot, and in conjunction with over \$120M in Waterbury rail line upgrades, the City's train station will be better-equipped to welcome visitors, old and new alike, to our downtown district. Visitors will be drawn to the downtown by the significant revitalization efforts in the area to date. In 2020, the East Main Street water main replacement project was completed. This year East Main Street will be repaved with new sidewalks, lights, signals, benches, and rapid flashing beacons. The former Prospect Street ramp garage that was demolished will be turned into a brand new surface parking lot this year.

Several upcoming initiatives are planned in the downtown district. Waterbury Development Corporation's board recently contracted with "Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner," a consultant that will organize food truck events downtown, spurring the local economy and inviting local restaurants to participate. Additionally, the City has continued economic health, emphasizing their AA- bond rating. We look forward to a healthy vibrant future downtown.



# A Message from the Waterbury Chief of Police



**Fernando Spagnolo**  
*Chief of Police*

**"To protect with vigilance  
and serve with impartiality, while  
engaging in a strong  
partnership with the  
community"**

Over the course of the last year, the Waterbury Police Department has worked hard to continue to engage and collaborate with our community. All of us have seen the changes brought on due to the Covid pandemic; however, none of the men and women in blue have let that interfere with police services or our love for the City of Waterbury. We have remained dynamic, seamlessly changing in the face of adversity to continue to provide services to our community. Many things have happened within the Waterbury Police Department to include but certainly not limited to personnel movements, a recruitment drive, increasing capacity of our Real Time Crime Pandemic Center, testifying before the U.S. Senate on Gun Control, participating in DEA's Drug Take Back Day, mentor program at PAL with

our officers and youth, and furthering research into the feasibility of Body Worn Cameras and In car Cameras to further promote transparency in the police services provided.

There has been a lot of movement within the Waterbury Police Department to include promotion of a new Deputy Chief of Operations. As typically occurs the cycle of retiring police officers has brought about many personnel changes to also include assigning a new Aide to the Chief, Officer in Charge of the Juvenile

Division, Vice and Intelligence, Gang Task Force, Crime Prevention Unit, Supervisor in the Detective Bureau, Internal Affairs, Inspectional Services, and staffing in the Real Time Crime Pandemic Center. Additionally, in the upcoming months there will be promotional tests given. Subsequently, further changes in staffing will occur. With these changes, there will be fresh ideas and incentive for our officers to continue to strive to be the best they can for the citizens we serve. Recruiting the finest for our department is underway. Members of the department have been going to

community organizations, career fairs, and in collaboration with Human Resources put on a community event at City Hall for community members to come forward to let the us know how best to recruit those who are reflective of the communities served. Unfortunately, we have not had many individuals wanting a law enforcement career. However, this has not lessened our department's drive to show the benefits of being part of our team. My testimony before the U.S. Senate was a humbling and invigorating experience



where I proudly represented my department, the City of Waterbury, and State of Connecticut. Part of my testimony discussed common

sense gun laws that the State of Connecticut passed over the years, but also touched upon what we have done in Waterbury. The Waterbury Police Department has invested in community solutions to prevent gun violence, and partner with local leaders, institutions, and nonprofits to help remove the root causes of violence. This includes youth violence prevention programs, including one-on-one mentoring for high-risk

youth, and providing mental health and substance abuse recovery services to members of our community. It also includes an annual gun buyback program, which we are currently planning for June in collaboration with our faith based community members. Our gun buyback program gets about 100 firearms off the street each year assisting with keeping those firearms off of our streets, and because violence has no borders—the streets of other communities.

I continue to lead my department with a philosophy of community oriented policing with an all-inclusive approach. The City of Waterbury is truly a melting pot of cultures, races, and religions for which we are lucky to have. The Waterbury Police Department appreciates all of the richness that each brings to the table, and continues to work with every one by bringing our very best to the table each day. I welcome members of the community to reach out to my staff and I, and bring ideas on how we can better protect and serve together. And I thank those in the community that have reached out. The Waterbury Police Department cannot do this alone, it truly takes each and every one of you to assist us with our mission "to protect with vigilance and serve with impartiality, while engaging in a strong partnership with the community".

# Downtown Waterbury Update



**Joseph McGrath**  
*Director of Economic Development*

Restructure Plan throughout 2020 and the challenges presented by COVID-9. Strong leadership, careful planning, input from residents, businesses, students, and elected officials enabled us to make positive strides in many of the projects within the Waterbury Next Strategy. Waterbury is committed to sustaining and renewing its legacy of manufacturing and innovation while continuing to produce a highly skilled workforce. Mayor O'Leary is focused on career preparation in City schools and forging strong relationships with our higher learning institutions; Naugatuck Valley Community College, Post University, and the University of Connecticut all of which contribute to developing a qualified, successful workforce. The revitalization, of downtown, along with education, housing, and transportation opportunities continues to play a significant role in attracting new business and retaining existing business. There are many exciting developments

happening downtown and throughout the entire Central Business District. Mattatuck Museum recently completed their smartly designed \$8 million renovation which includes a new entrance, moveable walls for added flexibility, new hardwood floors, dedicated museum shop, café, and a roof top restaurant with a magnificent view overlooking the newly renovated green. The train station parking lot was completely redesigned with improved lighting, increased parking capacity, landscaping and significant pedestrian improvements in anticipation of Governor Lamont's planned investment in, and announcement of, increased daily train service from Waterbury to Bridgeport. This announcement has had an immediate positive impact on Economic Development by increasing ridership and attracting more commuters while adding flexibility to those working in Fairfield County and New York City.

Upon completion of Phase I TIGER Grant funded infrastructure and streets-

cape upgrades to Freight Street the city moved quickly into Phase II of TIGER funded improvements, recently completed, which included opening up Jackson Street from Bank Street to West Main Street and improvements to Meadow Street and the Father McGivney Island. Renovations at Library Park, East Main Street improvements, a new surface parking lot on North Main Street are anticipated to be completed by year end.

Mayor O'Leary and the Office of Economic Development continue to encourage private and public investors who are excited to build on the positive forward momentum we've established, and are convinced that Waterbury with its central location between Boston and New York, historic building stock, improved rail and bus lines, student housing, and affordable cost of living is a prime location for future opportunities. Be on the lookout for updates in the Republican American, social media and Mayor O'Leary's monthly radio show on WATR.

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# With the Worst Behind Us, Let's Keep Our Main Street Momentum Going



**Christine Schilke**

*Connecticut Main Street Center  
Marketing & Development Director*

It's hard to believe it's been over a year since we all first heard the terms coronavirus and social-distancing, yet here we are in a "new normal" where people are excited to get shots in their arms but dread getting dressed up in work clothes. It's been a strange year in so many ways.

Yet, while many people may be reluctant to go back into the office, almost everyone has a new appreciation for their home and hometown Main Street. While probably none of us want to repeat the experience, the pandemic became an unexpected time of downtown experimentation and creativity with insights and results that many of us enjoyed, including:

- Expanded outdoor dining options
  - Increased online shopping opportunities at our favorite small businesses
  - Renewed focus on the importance of local businesses and downtowns in general, and the idea that money spent downtown, stays downtown
  - A reimagined work-life balance that includes more time spent in our homes and neighborhoods
- In Old Saybrook, this meant an effort to support take-away restaurant businesses and enforce social distancing by adding colorful chairs to their Town Green was an instant hit with residents insisting they stay through the fall and

spring. At the state level, it meant temporary changes that allowed for outdoor dining were so popular that Governor Lamont recently said he may make the changes permanent. Many businesses also gained new social media marketing and sales skills that they will likely keep going forward. Those that still want to learn can visit CMSC's Small Business Resource Library, which was created to help small businesses safely navigate the pandemic through e-commerce, social media marketing and Covid safety protocols.

As the state's leading downtown resource, the Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) has been very active supporting downtowns and Main Streets in a variety of ways. Our Recovery & Resiliency webinar series brought national and local expertise to our members, sharing best practices on everything from how to activate outdoor space for safe gatherings that support local restaurants and arts & culture venues, to utilizing interior design to help market vacant storefronts. We also recently formed a strategic partnership with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) which will result in new educational programming for town officials seeking municipal certification, increased communication between the organizations' constituencies, and strengthened advocacy on behalf of CMSC's statewide membership of downtown organizations. CMSC was also named to a 10-member statewide private-public advisory committee being led by CCM to help municipalities allocate, disburse, and account for federal funding from the \$1.9 trillion American



Rescue Plan. CMSC has also been very active on the legislative Downtown Working Group, bringing awareness to the needs and benefits of Connecticut's commercial corridors and historic Main Streets, in addition to communicating the critical work members like Main Street Waterbury do on the ground. Although it thankfully appears we're through the worst of the pandemic, we still have a ways to go before our local shops and merchants are fully recovered. That's why the work of downtown organizations like Main Street Waterbury remain so critical in helping maintain our local economies and communal spirit. Main Street Waterbury has worked tirelessly to support its downtown businesses through efforts such as their Heart of Waterbury video series that gives viewers an inside look at local businesses, including what sets them apart and how they're implementing safety protocols to ensure patrons feel safe and

welcome. Like many of us, Main Street Waterbury is also looking forward to getting back to planning and producing events that bring people back downtown. They do a terrific job working with local shopkeepers, keeping the downtown activated and attractive, and highlighting economic development opportunities. Like most downtown organizations, they do all this with a limited budget and could always use additional support and donations. With so many wonderful initiatives borne out of the coronavirus pandemic, now is the time to keep this momentum going to restore our downtowns as the social hearts of our communities and ensure their place as the invaluable economic drivers that they are. We must continue to collaborate at the local, state and national level to support our downtowns and Main Streets so that we can all return stronger than ever.

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# Restaurant Guide Goes Virtual With New Features



**Paula Massey**

*Chairperson, Promotion Committee*

**Marya DiPerna**

*Promotion Committee volunteer*

As one of the four Main Street Waterbury committees, the Promotions Committee is responsible for marketing, branding, and creating events that showcase Downtown Waterbury. This past year has impacted us all in one way or another and now that the restrictions are loosening, and vaccines are being administered, we want to encourage you to visit Downtown Waterbury and patronize the businesses and restaurants. We are so excited to launch a QR code to link directly to our award-winning Downtown Restaurant Guide. There are a couple of people that were very instrumental in putting this edition of the restaurant guide together, Brandon Monti of Post University and Anabela Maia, marketing assistant at Main St. Waterbury. Despite the challenges of being remote, they did a fantastic job with the layout, design, and photos. We also want to thank those who took advertising space in the restaurant guide and appreciate the support from continued and new sponsors. The restaurant guide has been transformed to be totally digital, a plus for Main St in lower printing cost but more importantly to the user. Anabela has taken the time to link each restaurant listing, advertiser, and business listed in the guide to their direct website so you get the most up to date information

from each downtown location. It will also allow us to update the restaurant guide on a more frequent basis. The restaurant guide is still equipped with a comprehensive map noting where to park as well as all the listed downtown locations. Also, there are additional points of interest like the library, Mattatuck Museum, YMCA and more. Whether you are a frequent visitor of downtown or it is your first time, use the QR code to see all the great things Downtown Waterbury has to offer! Some other things that the Promotions Committee have been working on is revamping of the pole banner sponsorship program with updated banners as well as soliciting new support. Thank you to those who have supported us thus far. We look to continue the Music @ Exchange program next summer, but in the meantime, we are working on an event that will occur monthly, more details to come. We are looking to have Wine on Main St take flight again this fall as it has become an annual event filled with wines throughout the world and a savory/sweet bite to pair with the selected wines; more details to come on that as well. As the night life in Downtown Waterbury begins to ramp back up, we would encourage you to visit our Vibesafterfive.com website.

If any of these events/projects sound interesting to you or you have a new idea, we encourage you to join the Promotion's Committee; we meet on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 4:30pm.

Please visit the Main St. Waterbury website for more information on all that we do to make Downtown Waterbury a place to live, work and play.



## Downtown Waterbury's **RESTAURANT GUIDE**



## **DOWNTOWN WATERBURY RESTAURANT GUIDE**



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# Getting the Show(s) Back Out On the Road



**Sheree Marcucci**

**Marketing and Public Relations  
Officer, Palace Theater**

It has now been more than a year since the Palace Theater in downtown Waterbury, has been virtually shuttered. The vibrancy and excitement that accompanied opening nights is a thing of memory that we long for and miss. The live entertainment industry will be the last segment of commerce to fully resume activity from the Pandemic. The absence of that activity not only impacts the industry itself but all the other businesses that rely on venues like the Palace. Think of downtown Waterbury when there is a show at the Palace, with over 150,000 visitors annually, area hotels, restaurants, retail, trades people, to name a few, all benefit from increased activity and business when a show is in town. The economic impact and return, as well as the overall perception of the city is enhanced. Hence, the most frequently asked question is when, when will we return to presenting the national tours of Broadway shows and headline music acts the Palace Theater has become known for? If only there were a simple answer. The truth is, that is a complex question, with an answer just as complex. As this is being written, the scenario we are hoping will come to fruition is that the nationally touring Broadway shows will be back out on the road in time for Fall re-openings of venues across the country. For this to happen by that time, many pieces need to be in alignment, the most important of which is the safety of our patrons, performers, and personnel. Before the producers of any tour will fully commit to going out on a year-long national tour, they must be assured there is a very high level of safety for the casts and crews that

will be going from venue to venue across the country. This is quite a bit different than getting Broadway itself back up and running. The logistics of mapping out a safe and profitable tour schedule across the country is complicated, given the different protocols and mandates each state has employed in response to the Pandemic. In addition, a show's producers must also feel assured that there is a high level of safety in place at the venues for the patrons as well. And the patrons themselves will need to feel a sense of safety assurances before they decide to purchase tickets and return to attending live theater. And finally, there needs to be an assurance that capacity limits will allow the producers to meet the financial obligations of putting a show on tour. So how do those three things fall into alignment? The connecting thread is the vaccine. One of the cornerstones, if not the single most important factor for the nationally touring Broadway shows to go back out on the road, is to achieve a certain level of the public who are fully vaccinated. All the health experts agree to get back to some sense of normalcy the public needs to be vaccinated to reach herd immunity. If you are among those already vaccinated, great you have done your part. As we patiently await the release of reopening guidelines, the Palace team is in the early stages of planning for our milestone 100th anniversary year (January 2022) of providing quality entertainment and being an historic and magnificent community gathering place. We are hopeful that by early summer we will have a more definitive answer to our reopening "when". We like you, who love live entertainment and are missing the opportunity not only to be entertained, but to gather and socialize, are looking optimistically ahead to the day we can welcome you back to the Palace and downtown.



*When the Palace Theater was called Loew's Poli Theater, marquee displays the movie Dragon Seed starring Katherine Hepburn and Walter Huston, 1944*



*Elaborate chandeliers hang in the Palace Theater*



Vintage photo of Poli's Palace Theater on E. Main Street ca. 1920's



Concert poster showing the band Steely Dan scheduled to perform at the Palace April 25, 1974

# Looking Forward with Your Help

  
**Anabela Maia**  
*Chairperson*  
*Design Committee*

The Design Committee is one of the four volunteer-led committees and its primary mission and goal is to improve the appearance of Downtown and create a refreshed reality of a clean, safe and friendly neighborhood community, that is rich in cultural diversity and historical significance.

It's not always an easy task within a city center but together, in partnership, with the City of Waterbury, the residents, business & building owners the Design committee volunteers continuously rise to the occasion. The committee is excited to welcome the Waterbury Garden Club and invites others to join and serve in the capacity of volunteering their time and talent to lead programs and develop relationships with other individuals and organizations, fostering an engaged community.

**What's ahead?**  
Look for new projects underway from

this committee that address empty storefront windows while they await to be leased, and rebranded pole banners. The committee also plays an advisory role in the West Main Street Corridor Study, a project led by the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, in joint efforts by the City of Waterbury and the CT Department of Transportation. The purpose of the study is to propose solutions that would improve the transportation safety of all by understanding the challenges and opportunities that are within the stretch of road from Route 8 to the Green. The committee recently provided valuable concerns over lighting and parking stations, and has encouraged business owners to play a more active role in this west side region of the downtown district. You'll also see and hear more about a promotional programming that involves food trucks, music and fun markets downtown through Main Street Waterbury's collaboration with the Waterbury Development Corporation. If you are interested in volunteering a few hours a month or have ideas, the committee would love to hear from you, please send an email to [mainstwtwt-by1@gmail.com](mailto:mainstwtwt-by1@gmail.com).



# Post University To Be Vanguard for Next Generation of Nursing Students



25,000 vaccines distributed



**Joan Huwiler**  
Director of University  
Communications/Theater

The demand for well-educated healthcare professionals has long been indisputable, with the global pandemic further exposing the need gap. In the spring of 2021, Post University established its fourth school – American Sentinel College of Nursing & Health Sciences – through the acquisition of American Sentinel University and a related entity, Sentinel U®, which licenses highly innovative simulated healthcare learning experiences to other colleges, universities, and healthcare institutions. This merger brought together two universities, each with a strong online presence while expanding programs dedicated to nursing health sciences.



opportunities in the sector are abundant. Advanced simulation technologies combined with Post's online program means students will graduate with the knowledge and training to enter the healthcare industry confidently.

## Responding During the Pandemic

Recognizing that COVID-19 vaccinations were a critical part of getting the greater Waterbury community back to normal, the University partnered with Waterbury Health, at the start of the year, to open a drive-thru vaccination clinic on the Country Club Road campus.

So far, more than 25,000 vaccines have been administered. Each vaccination given plays an important role in helping citizens in the community resume the activities they missed during the pandemic. Additionally, in the spring of 2020, when

Main Campus operations went online, the University opened up residence halls to provide housing to first responders and healthcare workers who were unable to go home for fear of infecting their families with COVID. The University is thankful for the associates dedicated to our students and the community. The University was recognized as one of the 2021 Top Workplaces by Energage.



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# OLLI at UConn: Where Learning Never Retires



**BY FIONA de MERELL**  
*Director, Osher Lifelong Learning  
 Institute (OLLI) at the  
 University of Connecticut*

It's now been a year since UConn Waterbury's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) began offering online classes. OLLI offers a wide variety of academic and experiential learning and social events to anyone aged 50 or above. All classes are held via Zoom, with free sessions for those who want to know how to learn online.

As life gradually becomes safer for us all (especially those of us who are OLLI-age), OLLI hopes to welcome its members back to their home at UConn Waterbury in 2022. Until then, members and staff are finding

creative ways to stay connected online, and even in-person as the weather improves. Photography, Reiki, Italian, and Book clubs are meeting virtually, and the OLLI Community Garden at Fulton Park (funded in part by the Connecticut Community Foundation) is in full swing, with generous support from the City of Waterbury. The Garden – run by volunteers – donates all its fresh produce to local food pantries in the Waterbury area.

After a year of online learning, OLLI members are now seasoned users of new technology. Whether 55 or 95, more people are trying something new at OLLI, even learning to play the ukulele online! OLLI's partnership with the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra (WSO) has also allowed members to enjoy special classes with WSO Cultural Ambassador, Dr. Vincent

de Luise, and Music Director and Conductor, Leif Bjaland. Lifelong learning has been a lifeline to many in our community during this time of fear and isolation. OLLI President, Mila Limson, said, "Learning and social life are the pillars of OLLI. This year we've shown that our community extends beyond bricks and mortar, and is truly in the hearts and minds of all who are involved. We work and stand together, even in the hardest of times. A year ago, I said that if we remain flexible, focused, and involved, this pandemic experience will strengthen the OLLI community and lifelong learning. I couldn't be more proud to say that we have made that prediction a reality." OLLI Director, Fiona de Merell, said, "This year has been a reminder of why we're here: to bring all the benefits of lifelong

learning to our region's older adults, which in turn improves the quality of life for everyone. Even when we're back together on campus, we'll keep using online learning so we can reach more older adults across Connecticut. I'm so grateful to every member who has taken classes, volunteered, provided leadership, and kept us all going. And of course, Waterbury is a remarkable community, and we're proud to have continued partnering with many other local organizations, as we support each other, and grow stronger!"

This year, OLLI's summer session runs from June 4th – July 2nd. The fall 2021 session runs from September 7th – November 12th. For more information about OLLI, or to register for classes, call 475-222-6232 or go to [www.oli.uconn.edu](http://www.oli.uconn.edu)

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# Brass City Brew and Que Slated To Be A Crowd Pleaser



**Carl Rosa**

**CEO**

*Main Street Waterbury*

Well, the best laid plans have been delayed yet again. When I left off with you in October of 2020, I explained about how Main Street Waterbury was unable to have our 15th annual Brass City Brew and Que fest due to COVID. As you are aware, this fest is a significant funding event enabling us to raise critical funds for our mission to make downtown Waterbury clean, safe, and friendly.

We instead introduced for sale, our BCB&Q Tour Book which is a book of vouchers to 26 Connecticut breweries/distilleries. Our thought was that since we couldn't have our traditional event, why not drive our fest audiences to the brewers who have been so supportive of us over the years. I'm pleased to say that tour book sales have thus far been very good. So many folks seem to love the idea and consider the book to be a great gift idea for their family and friends who really appreciate good craft beer.

In addition, we thought that by June of 2021, we would be able to resume having our traditional festival. However, although the situation with Covid has gotten increasingly better as more vaccines are administered and positive cases go down, June may have been an ambitious goal. We polled our brewers, monitored State of CT mandates and protocols for re-opening, and asked our loyal patrons. Most felt that late September was a better time to schedule the event.

Our brewers and brewer reps feel more comfortable to support us by early fall rather than late spring.



To that end, I'm pleased to say that our BCB&Q planning committee has set a date for this year's event to be held on Saturday September 25th on Grand Street at Library Park.

As we ease back into our "new" normal, this year's event will be a VIP session type of event with only a limited quantity of tickets sold. The VIP (Very Intimate Preview) ticket holder will get increased value with not only the chance to sample dynamic craft beers brewed by some of the new brewery stars in CT and beyond, but also have access to other surprise items, good live music, games, barbeque food trucks and more. It will have the street festival vibe with a reminiscence of the first year we held the brew fest. Patrons were talking about that event throughout the winter longing for its return the following year as it took on a life of its own and became a premier Waterbury happening.

As we navigate through the new normal, craft beer and great barbeque are hear to stay and we'd like to think, "So is the Brass City Brew and Que".

Look us up. Early Bird special ticket pricing expires on July 25th. Visit [brasscitybrewandque.com](http://brasscitybrewandque.com) for more info.



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# Main Street Waterbury Needs You!



**Jeffrey Rouleau**  
Chairperson  
Organization Committee

Since 2004, volunteers for Main Street Waterbury have contributed well over 30,000 hours of effort toward the goal of revitalizing Waterbury's downtown district without sacrificing its character or heritage. Each and every volunteer has a vested interest in creating a vibrant downtown that attracts new business, patrons, and residence. This is done through improving the physical appearance of downtown Waterbury, promoting its architectural and cultural assets, organizing volunteer initiatives, sponsoring events, and fostering public/private partnerships. These efforts are aligned with the mission of Main Street Waterbury which is to "Advocate, educate and collaborate for downtown revitalization to enhance downtown through the Main Street four point program focus of Economic Vitality Committee, promotion, organization and design." While there are certain components and strategies of the Main Street model that we follow, the organization is primarily a grassroots effort which allows volunteers to develop and implement their own ideas. This has led to many Main Street projects such as the creation of a database for available commercial space, the downtown dining guide, an inventory of available park-

ing and the development of the associated web site, just to name a few. Volunteering for Main Street Waterbury doesn't mean you have to join a committee or make any long term commitment. While that's appreciated, we encourage any activity that contributes to our goals for downtown and new ideas are always welcome. Maybe you've been thinking about a project or program that will benefit downtown Waterbury and thought, "Why doesn't someone do that"? Main Street offers a mechanism for volunteers to present new ideas. Main Street Waterbury consists of four committees that allow volunteers to pursue an opportunity that they are most interested in working with. These four committees are Design, Economic Vitality Committee, Organization and Promotion. They all meet monthly at different times and locations downtown.

- The Design Committee works to improve the appearance of Downtown so that it is perceived as clean, safe and friendly while preserving its historic appeal. The Design Committee meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 4:30pm at the Waterbury Regional Chamber offices located at 83 Bank Street.

- The Promotion Committee is to market Downtown's unique characteristics to shoppers, investors, new businesses, tourists, and others while promoting retail events, special events and ongoing programs. The Promotion Committee meets on the third Wednesday of each month at

4:30pm at the Waterbury Regional Chamber located at 83 Bank Street.

- The Economic Vitality Committee works to strengthen the economic base in Downtown by helping existing businesses to expand, recruiting new businesses for a balanced mix, and converting unused space into productive property. The Economic Vitality Committee meets on the third Thursday of each month at 4:30pm at the Waterbury Regional Chamber located at 83 Bank Street.

- The Organization Committee is to communicate the vision, philosophy and activities of the Main Street organization to the community through membership and partnership development and a communications program. The Committee meets on the third Tuesday of each month at noon at Shamrock Bar & Grill located at 210 Meadow Street.

Peter Drucker once said, "Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes... but no plans." The time spent volunteering for Main Street Waterbury may not result in direct financial support however according to the Independent-Sector.org the value of one hour of volunteering at \$28.54. This has translated into over \$882,000 in contribution to downtown by Main Street Waterbury volunteers. If you would like more information about any of Main Street Waterbury's four committees or to find out how you can get involved, please email Carl Rosa, Chief Executive Officer, at [croso@mainstreetwaterbury.com](mailto:croso@mainstreetwaterbury.com) or call him at 203-575-0701. If one of the four committees seems like a good fit with your skills and talents, we can put you in contact with the Chairperson of that committee. We look forward to volunteering with you.

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