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Rhode Island's The Public's Radio gives Pawtucket air time - by Donald Grebien

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Donald Grebien,
Mayor of Pawtucket

Last month Rhode Island's The Public's Radio devoted an entire week to its award-winning, in-depth reporting series, "One Square Mile." During this week, the reporters generated a variety of stories, taking a look at the City of Pawtucket through a diversity of angles from politics, education, health care, the arts, and economy to its diverse character and history.

On the segment focusing on the economy, commerce director Jeanne Boyle and Colin Kane, founding partner of the Rumford-based Peregrine Group, were asked about the recent blows and future opportunities for future development in the city.

"Pawtucket has many strengths. In addition to its current economic base, it has tremendous leadership, and beyond that the bones of the place are remarkable," said Kane. "We're on a rail line, and a train station is coming. We're at the top of the Bay and right on I-95 North and South. So, we have unique geographic strengths in Pawtucket, and there's property that can be developed. All of these strengths are easy to sell not just at a regional basis, but nationally as well."

When asked about the PawSox leaving our city, Boyle said, "I don't think the loss of the PawSox has made a change in our development strategy. The PawSox certainly are an important part of the identity of Pawtucket, but it's really not going to change us that dramatically. I really don't think people realize that the growth of the Pawtucket economy is taking place within buildings," noting that the city's mills have been repurposed and filled with many technology companies and manufacturers, as well as artistic and creative businesses.

On another segment, Herb Weiss, Pawtucket's Economic & Cultural Affairs officer, discussed the economic impact of promoting the arts in the city. "Pawtucket works to bring traditional manufacturers into our mills but also reaches out to artists and creative sector companies, too," said Weiss. "They go hand in hand, both sectors, manufacturing and art." Weiss also discussed the ongoing redevelopment in the mills. "Currently, we have five mills that are in the process of being redeveloped into lofts, and the project costs are estimated to be over \$73 million. That's economic development."

Now is Pawtucket's time. Join the evolution.

For details about the City of Pawtucket's economic development incentives, contact commerce director Jeanne Boyle at jboyle@pawtucketri.com.

Donald Grebien is mayor of the City of Pawtucket.

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