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## **City assisting developers through its permitting process: Bringing in new jobs and residents - by Donald Grebien**

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Mayor of Pawtucket

The City of Pawtucket, together with the City Council, the Pawtucket Redevelopment Agency, and the Pawtucket Business Development Corporation continue to roll out the red carpet to assist developers through the city's regulatory permitting process. Once these projects are completed they will bring new jobs and residents to the community. Here is a sampling of these projects:

Mill owners Wayne Rosenberg, of the former Vitrus Building at 881 Main St., and Len Lavoie, of 545 Pawtucket Ave., received assistance on earning Mill Building Reuse District (MBRD) designations, which is making it easier for these developers to bring new tenants to the mill. The MBRD program allows for the redevelopment of interior mill spaces without having to go back to the city for each approval.

The Amalgamated Financial Group, which has received City Council zoning approvals to redevelop the Narragansett Park Plaza from a traditional commercial plaza into \$78 million "lifestyle center," including a mix of commercial, restaurant and office space, as well as 72 residential units.

Developer Ken Zuckerman, who is building 125 market-rate units on a seven-acre property between Freight St. and Industrial Highway received Planning Commission and City Council approval for his project.

Wildflour, a café at 727 East Ave., has expanded into an adjoining space previously occupied by Dunkin' Donuts. Every weekend over 500 patrons come to buy delicious pastry and coffee.

Pawtucket Credit Union is expanding into a new three-story office building across the street from its existing headquarters on Central Ave.

Churchill & Banks, has received assistance from city regulatory officials to redevelop the 4.3-acre mill property at 1110 Central Ave. The company plans to use the city's MBRD approved by the designations to permit the mixed-use redevelopment of underutilized mill building structures that are no longer conducive to modern industrial use. The company intends to develop 21 market-rate

residential units and bring in destination retail tenants. Churchill and Banks is also receiving low-interest financing through the Pawtucket Redevelopment Agency's Brownfield loan program.

First National Development, which has redeveloped the former NULCO mill into 112 loft apartments, has recently purchased the former New England Paper Tube Company building at Weeden and Barton St. to construct 100 loft apartments.

The city helped locate the Lorraine Fabrics property for developer Jonathan Savage to purchase at 583 Mineral Spring Ave. The developer is seeking city approval to maintain light manufacturing operations, upgrade fire safety systems and convert the upper floors to approximately 50 lofts.

The city also assisted Rhode Island Spirits, a craft distiller of gin and vodka, with finding a location at 65 Blackstone Ave., provided a working capital loan, and through the permitting process. The company will open soon. Now open, Smug Brewing Company, operating at the former Bucket Brewery space, was also assisted through the permitting process.

Finally, Shri Yoga is planning to relocate from the Pawtucket Armory to 390 Pine St. City officials located the property for the nonprofit and are currently assisting the owner through the permitting process. Shri is planning to redevelop a building in the city's new Conant Thread Transit Oriented Development District into a mixed residential-commercial project.

Donald Grebien is mayor of the City of Pawtucket.

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