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Anderson opens Plant City X Warwick in Apponaug Village - by Frank Picozzi

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Frank Picozzi

As you may know, Warwick's historic Apponaug Village is the seat of our local government, home to the National Register of Historic Places' Warwick Civic Center Historic District, which encompasses City Hall, the Kentish Artillery Company Armory, and the Henry Warner Budlong Memorial Library. The Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce is located just across the street from City Hall, and the headquarters of our police and fire departments are also located in the heart of the village. The historic "sawtooth" mill building will soon be home for municipal departments now scattered throughout the city, and there's a diversity of small businesses in and adjacent to the village. Last month, we welcomed a wonderful new addition to the village – Plant City X Warwick – which will help our continued efforts to revitalize the area.

The plant-based restaurant, which will employ upwards of 35 people, is housed in a beautifully renovated building that for more than three decades was a fast food restaurant and most recently had been vacant for several years. Its location and the building's potential were a draw for Kim Anderson, who was determined to bring her latest venture to our community after hearing pleas from West Bay-based customers for a location in this part of the state. Kim is the co-founder and owner of Plant City, touted as the world's first plant-based vegan food hall and marketplace, which opened in Providence in 2019, followed by Plant City X in Middletown last year. Like the Middletown location, Plant City X Warwick offers a bright, airy space to dine in as well as drive-thru service. Kim has partnered with Matthew Kenney, a globally-renowned chef who's at the forefront of plant-based cuisine and owns restaurants on four continents, to bring food that's plant-based, fresh, and healthy to their patrons.

Kim is passionate about the environment, sustainability, and the health benefits of a plant-based diet, and her enthusiasm and knowledge are evident after just a few minutes of conversation. Kim and Matthew have incorporated these values into all of the Plant City locations. No animal products are used, and all materials – take out-containers, straws, napkins, utensils and the like – are compostable and considered green waste that will break down into plant matter, water, and carbon dioxide. Recycling and composting are offered on site at all Plant City locations, and compost is collected and processed by a local company.

Further, Plant City carefully sources local ingredients whenever possible to help keep emissions from their vehicles and refrigeration systems low and to keep menu items as minimally processed as possible. And while you'll find a great variety of meals to choose from – delicious parfaits, breakfast sandwiches, nachos, chik'n sandwiches, burgers, salads and more – you won't find plastic bottled water or anything containing palm oil anywhere in Plant City. The company cites the deforestation that results from palm oil production as a reason for this decision.

Plant City is also about education. The Providence location offers The Cellar, a community space where a variety of activities, including meditation, yoga, plant-based cooking classes, and Plant Doc Jumpstart programs, are held. The Plant Doc program was established by three physicians who want to help people begin healthy habits through learning about, and enjoying, plant-based, whole-food nutrition. The month-long program includes cooking demos, consultation with the

physicians and nutritionists and four evenings of nutrition education. An initial assessment includes weight and blood pressure measurements as well as bloodwork.

At the program's conclusion – which is celebrated with a potluck dinner – repeat blood work and another consultation are scheduled. Program founders say in the nine sessions they've run so far they have seen lower cholesterol levels, better control of blood pressure and glucose issues and some participants who have been able to stop taking diabetic medication.

Great food, promotion of healthy habits, sustainability and protecting the environment – Plant City X Warwick offers it all for our community. We're pleased to welcome them here and wish them great success in the years to come.

Frank Picozzi is the mayor of the city of Warwick, R.I.

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