

New London's new attitude, direction

New London's new attitude, direction

Published on 6/20/2008 in [Home](#) » [Editorial](#) » [Editorial](#)

There's more sizzle in downtown New London and it's not just the weather that is heating up.

In recent weeks, at least six new businesses have opened, and several others are at various stages in their downtown development plans. The city's Storefront Initiative has also perked up some of the empty and dilapidated Bank and State street storefront windows, making the central business district more attractive.

And there's more good news. City boosters are planning the first annual "Preview New London," which will bring together representatives of the city's cultural, economic, education, civic, business and government operations to share ideas and plans and see if as a group they can nudge New London toward the vibrant, urban, historic small-business district that many believe it can be.

It sure looks as though New London is on the verge of re-establishing itself as a place where people want to be. The downtown restaurant trade is healthy, and more businesses, galleries and retail shops are opening up.

The "Preview New London" event at the Garde Arts Center on July 1 will be a summit of sorts on the future of New London.

"It may not be perfect, but it's a start," said City Councilor Michael Buscetto III, one of the organizers.

The idea is to "preview" plans and perspectives of various groups in the city and foster collaboration and networking. And that is what will be required to move New London forward. A single agenda and group effort. Key players have to agree on the end goal and work as a team to achieve it.

For too long well-intended people have had conflicting ideas and worked against one another regarding New London, and more specifically, its downtown. Now is the time to end the personal agendas and attacks. And "Preview New London" might be the vehicle to accomplish that.

The "preview" is open to the public and residents should come and participate. There will be a speaking program with representatives of all kinds of organizations briefly explaining who they are and what they are doing to improve New London.

Municipal leaders will be joined by representatives from schools and colleges, the arts and attractions, civic and historical groups, and businesses and developers, to brainstorm and work toward consensus.

In the Garde's lobby, there will be a mini-exhibition hosted by local businesses and organizations who will tout who they are and what they have to offer.

It is an ambitious undertaking and it is generating great enthusiasm. It is the kind of fresh, new-approach-thinking that could be the impetus to move New London a few steps forward.

Change will not happen overnight. But change is occurring in New London. And more people are discovering that there is a lot to do and see in the city.

Compromise and prioritizing will be required to make New London what it can and should be. It's time to stop complaining about what New London is not and make it what it can be.

New London