

Bristol PLANNING BOARD Overview

July 18, 2025

Building Group 3 - Unity Park 500 Wood Street, Bristol RI

The continued success of Unity Park as a magnet for new high tech businesses, and the need to meet the space requirements of the new Tenants at Building Group 3 has been a challenge. New construction both within and external to the existing buildings at Building Group 3 is necessary to meet these needs. In addition to the new structures, parking expansion to cover the needs of hundreds of new employees is required. Below is a summary/overview of the proposed new work.

1. KVH Industries Inc.

KVH Industries is committed to leasing the first floor space in Unit 320 (former Zeller Condominium) including a new 12,330 square foot addition with an additional 2,516 square foot second floor. The addition is to include executive offices, high tech equipment, shipping and warehouse space. The addition includes a glass link to the existing building, transitioning to the new pre-engineered metal panel structure, including the new loading docks. The location on site meets the setback and height requirements based on the PUD zoning.

2. Parking Garage (future)

As noted, in addition to Building Group 3, the current businesses (retail, restaurants, and offices) located in the fully occupied Building Groups 1 & 2, place a significant burden in providing the required parking at Unity Park to accommodate new employees. Due to leasehold obligations to provide adequate employee parking, it is important that the refuse mound be removed and graded to provide approximately 55 additional parking spaces. This non-contributing “landscape feature,” which has grown in size as building refuse added over the decades as the uses of the mill complex changed, will be removed pursuant to DEM requirements and paved and appropriately landscaped to achieve the critical surface parking. As Unity Park continues to grow as a regional blue economy employment hub, future parking needs may be addressed with the construction of a new 3-story structured parking garage to be located in the subject area to the south of Building Group 3.

Summary:

Unity Park, with the build-out of Group 3, establishes both a community and regional destination, positively impacting the local economy and quality of life for the Town of Bristol and the State of Rhode Island. With the inclusion of the new high tech businesses/industries in Group 3 to the vibrant restaurants and venues presently operating within Building Groups 1 & 2, Bristol has evolved into a premiere New England destination with a promising future, particularly as a regional hub for innovative blue economy enterprises.