

National Coast Guard Museum construction could start this summer

NEW LONDON, Conn. (WNTH) — The first phase of construction for the National Coast Guard Museum could begin this summer at New London’s City Pier Plaza after Mayor Michael Passero said the city received “absolutely great news.”

This comes after years of development and concerns about fundraising efforts not happening quickly enough.

Wes Pulver, a retired captain and the president of the National Coast Guard Museum Association, told the city council that \$81 million of the \$150 million fundraising goal has been achieved. In addition to that, U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) announced \$50 million for the museum would be included in the Omnibus Appropriations Bill.

Pulver said construction for the museum could begin at City Pier as early as July with some demolition work, which would have to happen before the museum is built.

“If the appropriation gets signed, we go to construction this summer,” Pulver said.

Murphy tweeted Wednesday, writing, “Big news. If the budget being debated right now in the House becomes law, the Coast Guard Museum will be built in New London, creating thousands of jobs and drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors to southeastern Connecticut.”

“A lot of the buildings are being renovated, storefronts and being filled, and it’s all... a lot of it is in anticipation of this national tourist attraction being created here,” the Democratic mayor said. “This will put us on the map as having a major tourist attraction right here in downtown New London.”

“I feel it’s a great idea,” Dave Scott, the owner of Neon Chicken said. “I love the museum. I love the whole concept.”

He would like to see the 80,000 square foot, a five-story museum in New London but feels Fort Trumbull could offer more parking than downtown.

This project would also include a \$20 million raised pedestrian walkway that would go right over Water Street, connecting the Water Street garage to the museum. There would also be touchdown towers, which would give people access to both sides of the railroad tracks and ferries.

“It will really enhance this intermodal transportation center,” Passero said.

“We’ve been doing this since 1790, so to be able to tell that story over a period of time is exciting,” Pulver said.

The project would also overhaul City Pier itself where the Barque Eagle would be docked.