

Your Local Information Source...

The Town Common

LARGEST DISTRIBUTION ACROSS THE NORTH SHORE OF MA & COASTAL NH

www.thetowncommon.com

January 23 - 29, 2019 Vol. 15, No. 13

FREE

CI Works' Building Purchase Benefits Manufacturers

By Stewart Lytle, Reporter

AMESBURY – After five years of leasing a 50,000-square-foot building from ARC Technologies (now Hexcel Corp.), CI Works is buying the 110-plus year old mill building with plans of turning it into a modern, energy efficient structure for the benefit of its tenants.

Its goal is to turn the usual love-hate relationship between landlords and tenants into one that could better be described as a love-love connection.

CI Works announced last week that with financing through Enterprise Bank it has purchased the brick mill building at 11 Chestnut St., which for the last five years it has been leasing out to a wide assortment of young manufacturing companies.

It also has an option to purchase another 50,000 square feet, the remainder of its leased space.

Owning the building allows CI Works to offer more flexibility in lease terms, the company said. And for its young manufacturers, flexibility is a key factor.

The purchase allows CI Works to upgrade old lighting systems to modern quality and energy efficiencies and pass along the savings in reduced rent and improved work environments.

"Now we can work solely on behalf of our tenants," said CEO Robert O'Brien. "I know that sounds like apple



From left, Bob O'Brien, Barewolf Brewing owner Steve Bareford and Mark Friery.

Photo by Stewart Lytle

pie, but it's true. If our tenants succeed, we succeed. Our product line is our tenants' success."

Most owners of commercial buildings are looking to sign a few large companies to long-term leases. They believe that reduces the building owners' risk.

Not O'Brien and Mark Friery, his partner at CI Works. They maintain it is less risky to have multiple tenants in businesses as diverse as woodworking and sports equipment to homebuilding and brewing beer. If one business fails or an industry

goes into decline, their old mill building will still be humming.

CI Works currently manages 68 leases for companies that employ 225 people. The building is 93 percent leased, which has made CI Works look for additional space. It is also leasing 90,000 square feet of space in the IndusPAD building, formerly owned by Polartec, on the Methuen-Lawrence border.

For many of its manufacturers, CI Works functions as a second stage incubator where each business is encouraged to innovate and

collaborate with one another to overcome challenges faced by most young companies.

When O'Brien and Friery began working together in 2010 as the CleanTech Center in Newburyport's Industrial Park, there were no models for them to learn from. "Where there was an environment with no models, we created one," O'Brien said.

The company moved to Amesbury in 2014 and created the Chestnut Innovation Center – now CI Works. Friery and O'Brien credited Mayor Kenneth Gray and City Councilor at Large Christian

Scorzoni for providing a welcoming atmosphere for the company's growth, including streamlining the permitting process.

In addition to the lighting upgrades, CI Works plans to have Summit Solar install solar panels on the roof to produce 200 kilowatts of power, enough to provide electricity to the building. It also plans to install two electric vehicle charging stations for employees to power up their cars for free, while at work.

One tenant, Blackburn Energy's CEO Peter Russo said, "We appreciate the flexibility and support CI Works provided this year. A startup has very few stable, reliable elements to its business. Blackburn appreciates the fact that CI Works provides some of those elements."

Blackburn, which manufactures a system that captures kinetic energy generated by trucks and stores the electricity in a battery pack, leases a working manufacturing shop, office, large group meeting space and parking of its test truck.

CI Works celebrated its purchase of the building last week by hosting a party at one of its tenants, Barewolf Brewing, which recently expanded its lease to accommodate larger-than-expected customers at its tap room.

For more information, visit www.ciworksamesbury.us.

You'll "flip" over the digital edition at TheTownCommon.com



Spend the first 24 hours after orthopedic surgery with us.

Treating you better.



ANNA JQUES HOSPITAL

Find an orthopedic surgeon or learn more at ajh.org/orthopedics

SIGNS BY DOUG

L.E.D. SIGNS
AWNINGS • BANNERS
CARVED SIGNS
BOAT/TRUCK LETTERING

(978) 463-2222