

## RRA Quarterly Report, April 2019

The following report will serve as the quarterly status update as stipulated in the Agreement for Services between the City of Rutland and the Rutland Redevelopment Authority. In accordance with the Agreement these status updates will be made to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen following the conclusion of each quarter of the year and will provide an update on the RRA's progress in regards to: A) Grant Administration, B) Grand List and Job Development, C) Housing Initiatives and Blighted Properties.

- A) Grant Administration – Please see the attached spreadsheet for details on completed, current, and future grant administration projects.
  
- B) Grand List and Job Development – The RRA is participating in several current projects which could lead to improvement to the Grand List and increased jobs within the City.
  1. RRA continues efforts to promote Rutland City as a business destination and to market the BIAP program with a WWRI award made to Roots the Restaurant in December and a WWRI and BIAP loan award made to Taso Restaurant in February.
  2. The RRA continues working in collaboration with RRCC, REDC, DRP and other regional stakeholders on managing the ongoing Regional Marketing initiative. RRA ED continues to serve on a steering committee providing guidance for the overall initiative. Currently an RFP for a new vendor is out with submissions due April 12<sup>th</sup>. Fundraising for the year three budget to sustain the marketing initiative remains a concern.
  3. RRA members continue to serve on a committee assisting the RPC and Zoning Administrator on an update to the City's zoning bylaws. The revised bylaws initiative appears to have stalled in the draft stage and has been dormant for several months.
  4. RRA continues working to facilitate the disposition and redevelopment of several underutilized industrial or commercial sites.
  5. RRA continues to facilitate a productive re-use of the Berwick site and is currently working with a developer team on a downtown hotel project at that site. RRA is working in collaboration with the developer on a request for New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) which are critical to making the project financially viable. The award decision for the NMTC allocation, which was expected in the first quarter of 2019, has been delayed due to a delay at the federal level. A current timeline on when federal allocations and VRV decisions will be made is currently unclear.
  6. RRA is working collaboratively with REDC, RRCC, and other regional and City ED stakeholders towards the planning and facilitation of several regionally focused economic development initiatives supporting entrepreneurship, marketing, and recruitment.
  7. RRA is working to promote and support a newly enacted federal economic development program called Opportunity Zones created as part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Three of Rutland's four census tracts have been approved by the Treasury Department. State and local EDO's are working on developing strategies for leveraging this new program.
  8. The City has been awarded a Downtown Transportation Fund grant to help fund improvements to the West Street gateway into downtown. Engineering contractor, VHB,

has completed design plans and construction bids were solicited in February. Currently working to bridge a funding gap for construction so that bid award can occur.

9. RRA submission of VCDP planning grant application for a Downtown Strategic Plan update in collaboration with the DRP was unsuccessful. RRA submitted a similar funding request to the National Life Group - Main Street Project and was awarded \$15,000. Currently planning to resubmit to VCDP for the additional \$15,000 with application due April 16<sup>th</sup>.
  10. RRA application to the Better Connections Program to fund a planning initiative focused on enhancing multi-use trail connections between Killington and downtown Rutland. Outreach to Rutland Town, Mendon, and Killington to develop a regional collaboration in support of the initiative was successful. Unfortunately the project was not funded. RRA is planning to submit a similar planning project to the Norther Borders Regional Commission program for required grant funding.
  11. RRA ED has been working with a prospective housing developer to identify potential building sites within the City.
  12. RRA and DRP have formed a joint steering committee to focus on downtown investment and redevelopment. Committee has met several times and is working on an available space map and other retail focused initiatives.
- C) Housing Initiatives and Blighted Properties – The following progress has been made towards the remediation of Rutland City’s vacant and blighted properties and focus on improving City housing.

1. NW Neighborhood revitalization progress continues.

The final property at 117 Park Ave is complete and sale closed on Jan 18th. A grant extension has been approved by VCDP to allow the final property to transfer and a final requisition and close out paperwork are underway with a deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup>.

2. RRA continues to work with the Rutland County Parent Child Center as they strive to overcome environmental contamination issues determined on site before beginning their planned implementation rehab work at 16 Chaplin Ave. REDC has completed a required title transfer, site remediation has occurred, and property is to be transferred back to RCPCS. Currently awaiting notification from RCPCS on their ability to provide the required matching funds for the VCDP implementation grant so that the grant agreement can be executed.
3. Phase 3 of the Hickory Street Project is complete with an additional and stand alone initiative to develop two single family homes on that site underway by Housing VT/Rutland Housing Authority. Phase 3 close-out is imminent.
4. RRA is working with RRPC on brownfield remediation initiatives.
5. RRA continues to facilitate the city owned property disposition process with ongoing review and recommendations and the RRA ED and Board President serving on the steering committee reviewing and recommending applications for the purchase of city owned

properties. There are ongoing discussions occurring between RRA and HFHI and Stafford Technical Center on potential projects.

6. RRA continues working to support the redevelopment and significant investment proposed at 37 North Main Street. Currently the property is being redeveloped as planned to house a Starbucks restaurant and additional retail tenants with a demolition phase scheduled for the second quarter and redevelopment beginning this summer.
7. RRA has re-engaged I Squared Community Development Consulting to conduct an updated Housing Needs Assessment for the City. Work is underway to develop an employer and employee survey and to interview City housing stakeholders as well as general data compilation. The updated study will also focus attention on current status of rental housing in the City.
8. RRA was successful in seeking partial funding to conduct an updated Downtown Strategic Plan and is re-applying for additional grant funds to allow this initiative to proceed. It is anticipated that a portion of this study will focus on potential for re-use of upper level downtown space for housing.