

## **RRA Quarterly Report, January 2021**

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. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the RRA continues working in collaboration with all other stakeholders to facilitate information and provide resources for Rutland City small businesses being negatively affected by this crisis.
  - 2. The RRA continues working in collaboration with CEDRR, RRPC, 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 the marketing initiative has been re-initiated, despite some concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, with LIFT Marketing developing new lead generation and follow-up procedures to more effectively connect with the existing leads that have been collected. Once current travel protocols are lifted additional outreach is planned for 2021.
  - 3. RRA members continue to serve on a committee assisting the RPC and Zoning Administrator on a comprehensive update to the City's zoning bylaws. During the past quarter the new Zoning bylaws were adopted by the BOA and ongoing work continues with a Zoning By-law Advisory Committee meeting regularly to develop additional Bylaw language and process.
  - 4. RRA continues working to facilitate the disposition and redevelopment of several underutilized industrial or commercial sites.
  - 5. RRA continues to monitor the Herald Association Chapter 7 Bankruptcy proceedings with the goal of facilitating a future re-use of the Berwick site. At the end of 2020 the property has officially transferred to Center & Wales, LLC with a Trustee's Report of Sale filed on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. City of Rutland will receive approximately \$110,000 in delinquent taxes and fees as part of the sale. RRPC is working with the new owner on a BRELLA application and RRA has reached out to assist with future redevelopment planning.
  - 6. RRA continues working to promote and support the federal economic development program around Opportunity Zones. State and local EDO's had been working on developing strategies for leveraging the program, but, due to the COVID-19 crisis there has been little progress on a statewide marketing initiative.
  - 7. The updated Downtown Strategic Plan has been successfully completed with the Vendor, Camoin Associates, finalizing the planning document which is now posted for review. The

Downtown Steering Committee group is currently reviewing recommendations for future implementation steps.

8. With the transfer of ownership from the College of St. Joseph to HFCU the RRA and other stakeholders are working to facilitate a future plan for the campus. The RRA has been working with other City stakeholders on an acquisition plan for the City to purchase the former Athletic Center and surrounding lands from current owner HFCU. The City/RRA has been awarded a \$350,000 grant from the Northern Borders Regional Commission to help fund acquisition of the CSJ Community Center and is currently administering that grant. RRA ED is assisting with pre-purchase planning, including due-diligence work related to ACT 64 General Permit 3-9050 (three acre rule), following the Rutland City voters approving a bond for the balance of the acquisition cost on November 3rd. The RRA, CEDRR, and RRPC has also been involved in ongoing discussions with a prospective senior housing developer who has begun the planning process for redevelopment of the remaining portion of the campus.
  9. The RRA, in collaboration with DRP, RRPC and other City stakeholders developed a successful Center Street modification “pilot project” to allow expanded outdoor seating for restaurants and bars and enhance pedestrian activity and commerce downtown. Changes to the street included limiting lane width and parking modifications, creating multiple “parklet” dining areas, and enhancing streetscape aesthetics with new plants, trees, and street painting. The pilot initiative was evaluated in September and the BOA made the decision to seek grant funds and commit resources to further planning and future implementation. In November the City/RRA was awarded a \$28,800 scoping study grant through VTrans and an award agreement is currently underway. An RFP for vendor services will follow in early 2021.
  10. The RRA and DRP are working together on a Downtown Pedestrian Wayfinding Sign initiative. In the past quarter a vendor, Wood & Wood Sign Design was selected and initial planning and design work is underway. Project is expected to be completed during Summer 2021.
  11. City/RRA successfully awarded CARES Act funding of \$25,000 for BROCC Community Action food refrigeration capacity expansion.
  12. RRA reviewed and recommended one BIAP grant award to HoloTypeHealth, LLC to assist with a new production facility at 89 State Street. BOA approved grant at their December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- 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. RRA continues to work with the Rutland County Parent Child Center as they strive to overcome issues before beginning their planned implementation rehab work at 16 Chaplin

- Ave. Project is currently awaiting a funding decision through USDA Rural Development for a loan.
2. RRA continues working with RRPC on brownfield remediation initiatives with the RRA director serving on the brownfield steering committee.
  3. RRA continues to help facilitate the city owned property disposition process with ongoing review and recommendations and the RRA ED and Board Chairman serving on the steering committee. During the last quarter properties at 32 and 34 Griswold Drive were marketed and sold and properties at 119 Park Ave and 30 Lincoln Ave were reviewed and recommended to the BOF for future disposition.
  4. RRA continues to oversee the City's Vacant/Blighted Residential Property Tax Stabilization program. There were no applicants in the past quarter.
  5. City/RRA were awarded \$498,000 grant from VCDP to pass through to the Housing Trust of Rutland County for their acquisition and redevelopment of Lincoln Place (IHM Property).