

RRA Quarterly Report, July 2020

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 has been working in collaboration with all other stakeholders to facilitate information and provide resources for Rutland City small businesses being negatively affected by this crisis. In March the RRA developed an emergency loan program utilizing BIAP funding and a review and recommendation process for applicants. With BOA approval the BIAP ELP provided loans to 21 struggling small businesses for a total of \$130,000.
 - 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 the marketing initiative has been put on hold in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - 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 by-laws initiative has remained in the draft stage for many months. A successful grant application to complete this initiative was submitted and awarded in December and a consultant has been hired to move this process forward.
 - 4. RRA continues working to facilitate the disposition and redevelopment of several underutilized industrial or commercial sites.
 - 5. RRA continues to work towards a productive re-use of the Berwick site. The prospective hotel developer, DEW Construction, announced in March that they were withdrawing from the project due to the COVID-19 impact on financial markets and hospitality investment. The RRA is currently working to determine if there is a way forward for possible site acquisition as a next step in trying to facilitate a future hotel development.
 - 6. RRA continues working to promote and support the federal economic development program Opportunity Zones created as part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Three of Rutland's four census tracts are approved by the Treasury Department. State and local EDO's are working on developing strategies for leveraging this new program, but, due to the COVID-19 crisis there has been little progress on a statewide marketing initiative.

7. RRA and DRP have been facilitating an updated Downtown Strategic Plan initiative. The Vendor, Camoin Associates, completed and presented the updated study to the community on June 23rd. Recommendations and implementation steps will be evaluated moving forward.
8. RRA and City of Rutland have submitted an application for a Northern Borders Regional Commission grant to help fund acquisition of the CSJ Community Center. Grant award notification is expected in August.
9. RRA and DRP have formed a joint steering committee to focus on downtown investment and redevelopment. Currently the committee will be overseeing the upcoming Downtown Strategic Plan process as its key focus.
10. 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. RRA has also been involved in ongoing discussions with a prospective senior housing developer who has expressed interest in a portion of the 118 acre campus.
11. The annual maintenance of existing gateway bump-outs has been determined with RRA working to facilitate an agreement between the Rec and Parks Dept. and a local landscaping company to maintain these areas for the 2020 season. These areas have been well maintained through the early part of the summer.
12. In April the RRA, in collaboration with DRP, RRPC and other City stakeholders, began working on planning and implementing a Center Street modification pilot project to allow expanded outdoor seating for restaurants and bars and enhance pedestrian activity and commerce downtown. At the end of June this initiative has been substantially completed with street width and parking modifications, multiple “parklet” dining areas established, and enhanced streetscape aesthetics with new plants, trees, and street painting. This “pilot” initiative will be evaluated at the end of September and decisions will be made as to its success and the City’s willingness to seek and commit resources to plan and engineer a more permanent modification to Center Street.

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 seeking funding through USDA Rural Development with a feasibility study being required before a loan will be offered.

2. RRA continues working with RRPC on brownfield remediation initiatives with the RRA director serving on the brownfield steering committee.
3. 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.
4. RRA continues to oversee the City's Vacant/Blighted Residential Property Tax Stabilization program. There were no applicants in the past quarter.
5. RRA worked with the RPC to update the 2015 Rutland City Master Plan. An updated version was adopted by the BOA on June 15th and subsequently confirmed by the RRPC on June 16th.