

## RRA Quarterly Report, July 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. With Vermont's restrictions ended in the past quarter the future business environment should be more positive.
  - 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. The overall marketing initiative has now been re-initiated with LIFT Marketing developing new lead generation and follow-up procedures to more effectively connect with the existing leads that have been collected.
  - 3. RRA staff and Board Chairman continue to serve on a Zoning By-law Advisory Committee assisting the RPC and Zoning Administrator to develop additional Bylaw language and process for a comprehensive rewrite expected to have a working draft completed by October 2021.
  - 4. RRA continues working to facilitate the disposition and redevelopment of several underutilized industrial or commercial sites.
  - 5. RRA continues to facilitate redevelopment at the Berwick Site (27 Wales Street). With new ownership in place renovations of that site are underway to house future tenants, with one recipient of a BIAP grant in operation currently. The new owner has filed a BRELLA application with the State and also announced receiving some EPA cleanup funding for the site.
  - 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. With the transfer of ownership from the College of St. Joseph to HFCU the RRA and other stakeholders have worked to facilitate a future redevelopment plan for the campus. The RRA worked with other City stakeholders on the successful acquisition of the former Athletic

Center and surrounding lands from HFCU. The RRA continues to administer a \$350,000 grant from the Northern Borders Regional Commission that helped fund acquisition. RRA ED assisted with pre-purchase planning, including due-diligence work related to ACT 64 General Permit 3-9050 (three acre rule) and filing an accepted BRELLA application with the State. The City closed on the purchase of the Lot A on March 30 with Rec and Park Dept. summer programming now fully operational.

8. The RRA and other regional ED partners have been involved in ongoing discussions with a prospective senior housing developer, Heartland Development, who have been engaged for the past 20 months in the planning process for redevelopment of the remaining portion of the CSJ campus. Project is currently seeking funding and a timeline for implementation is still undetermined.
  9. The RRA and other regional ED partners have been involved in ongoing discussions with the VFFC leadership on ways to redevelop and enhance their current campus.
  10. The RRA, in collaboration with DRP, RRPC and other City stakeholders has successfully implemented a 2021 enhanced Center Street modification project to again allow expanded outdoor seating for restaurants and bars and enhance pedestrian activity and commerce downtown. Changes to the street include limiting lane width and parking modifications, creating multiple “parklet” dining areas, and enhancing streetscape aesthetics with new plants and street painting. The RRA continues to administer the Better Places grant, which brought \$19,275 in funding to the initiative. Construction and installation of the dining Parklets, by Naylor and Breen Construction, was completed on time prior to the Memorial Day weekend. Several City entities were involved in this collaborative project including the Rec and Parks Dept and DPW.
  11. In an effort to pursue a permanent implementation plan for the Center Street enhancement the City/RRA was awarded a \$28,800 scoping study grant through VTrans and has hired Dubois & King as the consulting engineer. Kick-off of the scoping study process began in June and is expected to be completed by early 2022.
  12. The RRA and DRP are working together on the Downtown Pedestrian Wayfinding Sign initiative. In the past quarter the vendor, Wood & Wood Sign Design, has been working with RRA and DRP staff on planning and finalizing design work. Signs are now expected to be installed and project completed during Fall of 2021.
  13. City/RRA was successfully awarded CARES Act funding of \$25,000 for BROCC Community Action food refrigeration capacity expansion and continues to help facilitate that project and administer the grant.
  14. RRA reviewed and recommended one BIAP grant to Delicious Tamales which opened for business at 56 Strongs Ave in June.
  15. BIAP ELP loan re-payment administration by the RRA and City Treasurer was successful with most loans due being repaid or re-scheduled.
- 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. The Rutland County Parent Child Center has moved to the final stages of grant award by VCDP and is planning for renovations this summer.
2. 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. There were no new properties considered in the past quarter.
3. RRA continues to oversee the City's Vacant/Blighted Residential Property Tax Stabilization program. There were no applicants in the past quarter.
4. City/RRA was 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). Grant is currently in the final approval for requisition stages.
5. RRA ED has been involved in a regional Ad-hoc housing committee discussing strategies for improving housing stock. Discussion about improving market rate rental housing in the region has been a primary topic with this subject coming to the BOA C&ED Committee in the past quarter and future discussion with NWWVT planned.
6. RRA ED working to facilitate discussion with Brixmor Property Group around possible improvement to the Rutland Plaza site.
7. RRA ED working to facilitate City discussion about creating a future TIF District for the City. A BOA C&ED Committee meeting is being planned for August to publicly discuss this topic.