

RRA Quarterly Report, October 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. With BOA approval the BIAP ELP provided loans to 21 struggling small businesses for a total of \$130,000 with several of the loans being re-paid early during the past quarter.
 - 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 a comprehensive update to the City's zoning bylaws. During the past quarter the RRA was a catalyst for initiating an Amendment to Zoning Bylaws process. This interim measure has been successful in creating a new Campus Development District to accommodate redevelopment of the CSJ campus lands.
 - 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 bankruptcy proceedings with the goal of facilitating a future re-use of the Berwick 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. 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 applied for, and has been awarded, a \$350,000 grant from the Northern Borders Regional Commission to help fund acquisition of the CSJ Community Center. RRA Director is assisting with pre-purchase planning as the Rutland City voters are asked to approve a bond for the balance of the acquisition cost on November 3rd. The RRA 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 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 throughout the summer.
10. 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 for future implementation. The RRA and RRPC worked together to apply for a \$36,000 scoping study grant through VTrans with award notification expected in November.
11. The RRA and DRP are working together on a Downtown Pedestrian Wayfinding Sign initiative. In the past quarter an RFP was developed and vendor bids solicited for the project. Vendor selection is expected in October with implementation of the new signage expected in spring 2021.

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 Chairman 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, confirmed by the RRPC on June 16th, and a final copy finalized and printed in September.