

RRA Quarterly Report, July 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 BIAP award made to Red Lotus Wellness, Acupuncture, and Herbal Medicine, LLC. in April.
 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 a new vendor, LIFT, has been hired to lead the year three campaign. Fundraising 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. Discussion about RRA seeking additional planning grant funds to complete the zoning re-write is underway.
 4. RRA continues working to facilitate the disposition and redevelopment of several underutilized industrial or commercial sites. The former Hearthside Restaurant at 37 N. Main Street has been demolished and site preparation is underway for redevelopment of that site. Starbucks has signed a lease as the anchor tenant for this location.
 5. RRA continues to facilitate a productive re-use of the Berwick site and is currently working with a developer team, DEW Construction Corp. on a downtown hotel project at that site. In this past quarter movement has occurred on several fronts. The NMTC funders have indicated available allocation for this year and have met in Rutland with the developer and community stakeholders. DEW Construction has held a preliminary review of the hotel site concept with the DRB and ARC. Currently DEW is seeking a hotel operator which is the critical missing piece of the development.
 6. RRA is working collaboratively with REDC, RRCC, DRP 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 and a project to develop a Rutland City Opportunity Zone prospectus is underway following an ACCD sponsored Opportunity Zone seminar in late June.

8. The City has been awarded a Downtown Transportation Fund grant to help fund improvements to the West Street gateway into downtown. Contractor Parker Excavation has been hired for the construction work and a funding gap has been closed. Construction is slated to begin July 15th and should be completed by September.
 9. RRA second submission of VCDP planning grant application for a Downtown Strategic Plan update in collaboration with the DRP was successful. RRA submitted a similar funding request to the National Life Group - Main Street Project and was awarded \$15,000. With funding secured, an RFP for the Strategic Plan will be developed and submitted within the next two months.
 10. RRA and other stakeholders continue to pursue an 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. A funding request to the Northern Borders Regional Commission program for required grant funding has been submitted with a response expected by mid-August.
 11. RRA and DRP have formed a joint steering committee to focus on downtown investment and redevelopment. Currently an available space map has been developed and the committee continues to discuss future retail focused initiatives specific to downtown. The upcoming Downtown Strategic Plan process will be a major focus of this committee.
 12. With the loss of accreditation at College of St. Joseph RRA and other stakeholders are working with CSJ leadership to facilitate a future plan for the college and campus.
- 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. Final presentation has occurred and grant closeout is underway.
 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. 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. RCPC is working with USDA Rural Development on a loan that would provide them funding to proceed. A loan decision is now expected in August.
 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 has re-engaged I Squared Community Development Consulting to conduct an updated Housing Needs Assessment for the City. The updated study will be presented to stakeholders in mid-July.
7. A Residential Tax Stabilization Agreement (RTSA) for vacant/blighted residential property at 375 West Street and 4 Royce Street was reviewed by RRA and awarded by the BOA in May.