

# RRA QUARTERLY REPORT

April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023

## Important Dates

### Evolve Rutland

July 13

HUB CoWorks

5:30-7:30 pm

### Downtown Designation

July 24

HUB CoWorks

Noon – 4 pm

### Placemaking Event

August 11

Friday Night LIVE

5 pm

### VCDP Application Due

Sept. 9

East Creek Commons

### RRA Contract Negotiations

FY25-FY29

October 2023

## Welcome New Executive Director!

In June, the RRA Board approved hiring Ed Bove as the Executive Director for the organization. Ed comes from the Regional Planning Commission and is looking forward to taking on the projects that will benefit his “hometown.” He officially starts the first full week of September. In addition, Barbara Spaulding was promoted to Director of Grants and Outreach and she looks forward to continuing to support the creation and expansion of small businesses through the Business Incentive Assistance Program (BIAP). She was also nominated as one of 11 honorees to receive the 2023 Women’s Leadership award from EVOLVE Rutland. Barbara will be accepting the award on July 13 and she is looking forward to working with Ed to make a difference in the promotion and redevelopment of Rutland City.



The RRA’s Strategic Plan is now in draft form. The Board will be reviewing the draft and soliciting feedback from the new executive director. Melissa Levy of Community Roots LLC, the consultant hired to assist the RRA with the strategic planning, will continue to work on the external and internal goals for the organization.

## Grant News

The City was awarded a VCDP grant in the amount of \$900,000 toward the rehabilitation of Hospital Heights, a 22-unit family



Hospital Heights 101 Mahoney Avenue Rutland VT



Tacitly Inc.

development located at 101 Mahoney Avenue in Rutland. The apartments were originally built in 1977 and have never had a comprehensive rehabilitation. The rehab is scheduled to begin in late 2023 and be completed in 2024. The total project will cost \$6,303,104 to complete. The remaining funding will come from tax credit equity, energy incentives, CRRP funding and a \$75,000 loan from the Maples Revolving Loan Fund. The Aldermen approved the loan on June 5 and this demonstrated the City's commitment to the project, which helped make the application more competitive, and resulted in an award.

The Reimagine Depot Park crowdfunding campaign was very successful and raised in excess of the \$10,000 required as part of the Better Places Grant of \$20,000. Funds will be used to implement several amenities into the park with Come Alive Outside preparing for the unveiling in September during the Whoopie Pie celebration.



Mad Rose

The RRA assisted the City and Susan Schreiber in applying for funding from the 2023 VTrans Bike/Pedestrian Program. If awarded, the funds will be used to cover a gap in the amount needed to complete Segment 3 of the Rutland Creek Path. Construction of the segment, which includes a bridge over East Creek, will complete the path from the end of Earl Street to River Street. Award announcements are expected in August.



Loose Loona Tea House & Gifts

The Rutland Housing I Initiative, 120 Maple Street, received its Environmental Review Release of Funds letter. This will allow the City to sign the \$650,900 VCDP grant agreement and the project to break ground. It is the hope of Hale Resources, project administrator, to begin work in late July.

Brandy Saxton of PlaceSense has been working with the City Planning Commission to create walking tours throughout the City that will showcase the changes proposed in Rutland's Zoning Bylaws. Her work is funded through the Bylaws Modernization grant.

Lisa Glover, Placemaking Fellow, hosted a workshop on June 1 to discuss the findings from her Rutland interviews. The workshop was largely attended and the group toured the Downtown areas of concern with the goal to create "lighter, quicker, cheaper" projects to enhance those areas. Next steps in the process will be to test those projects and get community feedback at the August 11 Friday Night Live event.



Rutland Creek Path

## Grand List and Job Development

The RRA assisted three applicants through the BIAP process and the Aldermen approved the following grants/loans:

- \$5,000 grant to Tacitly for expansion
- \$10,000 loan Mad Rose
- \$10,000 loan Loose Loona Tea House & Gifts



Barbara is working with three potential BIAP applicants for the next quarter: Ally Bradley who plans to open a nail salon and spa, Casey Alberico who is expanding her photography business and The Sanctuary, a restaurant at 81 Center Street. The BIAP is in committee with the Board of Aldermen and soon it will be necessary to discuss adding funding to this program.



| BIAP Awards   | Businesses Created/Expanded     | #Jobs Created |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| \$5,000       | Tacitly Inc. Expansion          | 1             |
| \$10,000      | Mad Rose                        | 3             |
| \$10,000      | Loose Loona Tea House & Gifts   | 3             |
| \$10,000      | Speakeasy Café Expansion        | 4             |
| \$10,000      | Euphoric Hair Experience LLC    | 10            |
| \$5,000       | DownValley Bikes                | 2             |
| \$10,000      | Taco Fresco                     | 6             |
| \$10,000      | Autism Awareness & Intervention | 4-10          |
| \$5,000       | Giuseppe's Italian Market       | 4             |
| \$5,000       | LT's Little Dog Camp            | 2             |
| <b>80,000</b> | <b>10</b>                       | <b>39-45</b>  |

The Special Benefits District RLF changes and new policy were approved by the Board of Aldermen on May 15. The application and policy are available on both the RRA and Downtown Partnership websites. The policy and application were forwarded to three Downtown property owners and there is currently an application being prepared by one.

The TIF working group continues to meet monthly to gather information on potential projects with infrastructure needs to strengthen the City's TIF application. There has been a great deal of discussion regarding tax stabilization vs. tax increment financing. Barbara will be working with the City Assessor on how the City's Residential and Commercial tax stabilization operates and how this tool can be utilized for City projects.

### Housing Initiatives and Blighted Properties

NeighborWorks of Western Vermont assisted the City in applying for the 10% for Vermont loan to bolster the Rutland Rental Housing RLF. The City had dedicated \$400,000 from ARPA funds to the RLF for which NWWVT created the policy and application. Heather Starzynski will be discussing the loan fund at a July RRA meeting.

The RRA will be assisting the City in applying for VCDP funds for East Creek Commons. The scope of work includes rehabilitation of 9 units of housing and an additional 13 units of new housing for a total of 22 units. This project is located in the City's newly designated Neighborhood Development Area. The application is due in September. The blighted building to be acquired, as part of this project, was abandoned in 2016.

**Moving Forward**

## Next Steps

- July 12 – Meeting with Keith Moore re: 48 Church Street and tax stabilization
- July 13 - Evolve Rutland Women in Leadership Event
- July 20 – “At the Ready” proposal due for Rutland Station Improvements project
- July 24 – Host VT Downtown Board and Rutland City’s Downtown Designation presentation
- July – Work with Jeff Nick on 34 North Main Street potential purchaser and tax stabilization
- July – Finalize grant agreement for 120 Maple Street and set up grant administration plan
- August 11 – Assist at Placemaking booth during Friday Nigh Live
- August – Prepare for monitoring visit by VCDP staff at RCPCC
- August – Grant administration for VCDP award for Hospital Heights
- Sept 12 – Submit VCDP application for East Creek Commons
- July – September – Onboarding with Ed Bove
- July – September – Continue to work on creating ways to market the RRA’s processes for BIAP grants/loans, SBD RLF, tax stabiliation policies and Maples RLF
- July – September – Work on researching a movie theater and setting up meetings
- September – Prepare Equitable & Inclusive Communities grant application.