



RUTLAND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
CITY OF RUTLAND  
1 Strongs Avenue  
RUTLAND, VERMONT 05701

Regular Meeting / October 8, 2024  
Minutes

**Attendance:** Edward Clark, Israel Mac, Dick Courcelle, Chris Etori and Mary Markowski

**Also attending:** Ed Bove, Kent Belden, Carley Perry, Katie Langlois and Barbara Spaulding

**Absent:** Michael Talbott and Stephanie Romeo

- I. Edward called the meeting to order at 8:05 am.
- II. Additions/Deletions – Edward moved the discussion of the Belden project after the warrant.
- III. Chris moved to approve the minutes of September 24, 2024. Dick seconded. Motion was approved 5-0.
- IV. Public Comment – None.
- V. Warrant – Israel moved to direct the Chair to sign the warrant for 800 expenses totaling \$23,080.07 and recommend to the Board of Finance payment of Fund 150 expenses in the amount of \$120.00. Chris seconded. Edward asked why the RRA was paying to use meeting space at the Hub for a TIF related event. Ed said he believes the invoice was actually for the Housing Developers showcase. Motion was approved 5-0.
- VI. New Business – Belden Project

Edward introduced Kent Belden and Carley Perry who discussed plans to build a 4-story hotel on the corner of Center and Wales Street. The hotel will have 99 rooms, 26 market-rate apartments and takes up the whole footprint of the lot. The developer plans to break ground in the spring of 2025. Copies of the plans were presented. Mary asked how the parking deck would be accessed. Kent said the parking deck is an integral part of the plans and he is in talks to secure 200 long-term parking spaces within the deck. Access to the parking deck will be on grade with the lobby. There will also be a service entrance to the basement level with minimal parking for the apartments. Kent added that the hotel would be U shaped with a courtyard in the center on the first level, 100% electric with heat pumps and no fossil fuels. The entrance will include a handicap ramp and there will be an on-site restaurant. No decision has been made regarding parking in front of the hotel, but he anticipates it will be mostly for drop-off.

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Edward discussed advocating for one way traffic on Center Street with the ability to close off the street for events. Ed said that the RFP for the above ground work on Center Street is with DPW who are researching funding sources like the TIF for all three Center Street projects.

Kent discussed the challenges with the site saying that a fully-funded remediation plan has been created for the contamination from a former dry cleaner, asbestos from the former hotel and two other chemicals. Israel asked about sealing the site. Kent said the basement floor of the foundation will provide the cap. He also discussed the need to deal with the water/wastewater at the site. Kent said another challenge will be moving the powerlines during construction.

The Cambria Hotel will be managed by a professional hotel operator, Choice Hotels. There will be 3 handicap accessible rooms on each floor. The apartments will be 20 one-bedroom and 6 two-bedroom apartments on the top two floors. Dick asked about the market for the apartments. Carley said 3 market studies were done. Kent said the apartments will be marketed to retirees with means and young professionals. He added that there will be a rooftop bar and food component with outdoor seating, the first of its kind in Vermont. Financing for the project continues while the cleanup funds have been committed. Discussion followed regarding how the project will benefit the downtown, collaborations with the Paramount and other local amenities, and making the City a destination.

VII. Grant and Outreach updates – Barbara provided the following updates:

Rutland Housing Initiative 120 Maple Street – The next requisition will be processed for the Oct. 18 deadline.

East Creek Commons/HTRC and NWWVT Merger – Barbara is waiting for response from HTRC regarding the award conditions and the Merger's Certification of Exempt Activities and Request for Release of Funds was received on 9/30/2024.

Hospital Heights – The amendment was approved and the first requisition was processed with funds received on 10/3. A progress report through Sept. 30 for this project is due Oct. 30.

RCPC 2Gen Whole Family Education Center – The Environmental Review conditions were reviewed and approved, as well as, the submission of the final report materials. As of 9/25, the grant has been forwarded in the closeout process.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (BRIC grant) – A progress report is due Oct. 15. Barbara will be working with Bill Lovett to complete.

Rutland Creek Path Segment 3 – The ribbon cutting has been scheduled for Friday Oct. 18 at 11 am at Meadow Street Park. Bicyclists can meet at Giorgetti park at 10:30 am to ride to the celebration.

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BIAP Update – Walter Manny decided not to submit a BIAP application. Barbara is meeting with Sherri Prouty on Thursday Oct. 10 to discuss a potential BIAP application. Barbara will follow up with Kismet Kitchen and Nail'd It for their past due annual reports. Laurel Rice of Kismet Kitchen has discussed the possibility of closing the restaurant. She was asked to include her decision in the annual report. The annual reports for Head Over Heels and Bueno Burrito are due Nov. 1.

The C&ED Committee meeting to discuss changes to the BIAP and creation of an emergency assistance policy is scheduled for Oct. 22 at 5:30 pm. Also on the agenda will be discussion of the BIAP loan to Paige Carrara. Barbara sent the agenda to Paige, certified mail (return receipt requested) and a response was received.

On Sept. 24 Barbara participated on a panel of Business mentors for the HFCU New Business Mentor Roundtable. Although lightly attended, there was some interest in the BIAP from both a manufacturing company and a person interested in opening a ceramics studio.

Part-time Office Support Position – Barbara, Ed and Stephanie interviewed a potential candidate on Sept. 27. Ed will be contacting references. The hope is to have someone hired and onboarding in early November.

Mary discussed adding that the City's rooms and meals tax be integrated into the BIAP process with the expectation that businesses will follow the City ordinance.

VIII. Project Updates – Ed distributed copies of the project updates to the Board.

Ed said the TIF working group is meeting Oct. 17 and the letter of intent will go before the Aldermen on Oct. 21. He discussed how tax stabilization and TIF are a balancing act and that someone from the RRA should help negotiate the developer agreement. Katie asked if Stephanie (from White & Burke) would be providing the present value. Ed explained that Stephanie will provide the value to the City based on different scenarios. Mary said it did not sound like the hotel project and TIF were on the same trajectory. Ed said the hotel can proceed with remediation and the City still receive benefit from the TIF down the road. Ed added that the tax stabilization request from the Beldens will come to the RRA Board first and negotiation may be required. He added that the focus now is setting the district.

IX. BOA Update – None

X. Old Business - BIAP Application Make It Sew

Dick moved to recommend to the Aldermen approval of a \$10,000 BIAP Forgivable Loan for expansion of Make It Sew. Chris seconded. Motion was approved 5-0.

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XI. New Business – Walmart relocation

Ed asked the Board if a committee should be formed to discuss next steps regarding the relocation of Walmart. Dick discussed not taking a position on a private business. The Board consensus was to offer assistance to BRIXMOR in finding a suitable replacement for the space.

XII. All items on the agenda were discussed. The meeting ended at 9:18 am. The next regular meeting will be held October 22 at 8 am.

These minutes approved this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

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Mary A. Markowski, Secretary