



RENSSELAER CITY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2024

Downtown Revitalization Initiative Update

Office of the Mayor



Mayor Mike Stammel
518-426-9511

mike.stammel@rensselaerny.gov

Highlights in this month's issue



Parks Now Open



Senior Center Update



Dunn Landfill Update



Over the past two months the City of Rensselaer has been compiling materials to submit a competitive Downtown Revitalization Initiative application to New York State. If the application is successful, New York State will provide the city with \$10 Million to support projects that will revitalize and transform the “downtown.”

In an effort to develop a successful application the city has been engaging the public to receive input on what is needed and what projects would be a catalyst for positive change in our community. Early on public engagement included a survey and meetings to get ideas about Rensselaer’s assets and what would bring more people and businesses to our community. Outreach events also took place at the Rensselaer Public Library and the Riverfront Market.

At the same time that we were seeking ideas from the public there was an Open Call for Transformative Project ideas that was published in the local newspaper and posted on our website. This resulted in an incredible mix of projects from private property owners and developers and community agencies as well as several public improvement projects. In total, 18 transformative projects valued at over \$310 Million will be included in our Downtown Revitalization Initiative application. These projects are requesting \$16 Million in funding which is in line with what New York State expects to see in an application.

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Downtown Revitalization Initiative A Success

Continued from front page:

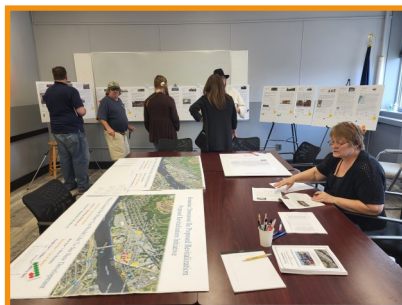
The projects include new construction and building renovations along the Broadway corridor, and to capitalize on two key community assets, additional development along the waterfront and around the Amtrak train station. Along the waterfront a Multi-Use Trail network will connect the existing downtown to the soon to be rebuilt Livingston Avenue Bridge and mixed-use developments along the path all the way to the Barnet Mills which are currently being renovated into 72 apartments and 20,000 square feet of commercial space. The Esplanade will also be enhanced with additional parking and an outdoor Fitness Court Studio.

Around the Amtrak train station, in addition to a 100-room hotel with two refurbished Pullman Cars for a restaurant, plans include a second parking structure that will have new mixed-use development on the top deck that is level to the East Street and Herrick Street intersection. As plans move forward, we expect to see a new grocery store, coffee shop, event space and an artist studio with exhibition space.

The revitalized and new projects will be integrated through a trail network and wayfinding street signs that will help motorists, pedestrians and anyone using their own bicycle or one available for rent through the CDTA CDPHP Cycle! Program. A self-guided history walk, as well as renderings and stories of events that happened in Rensselaer, will add cultural and artistic elements to be enjoyed along the way. There are even plans to support the Yankee Doodle Band so that they can continue to perform in the area and promote Rensselaer's Heritage throughout the region.

Most recently, the public has been engaged to help us prioritize the projects we are including in our application. The City of Rensselaer is very grateful to the public for all the input provided and to our DRI Application Steering Committee consisting of Norris Pearson, Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Linda VonDerHeide Rensselaer County Economic Development & Planning, Brian Williams, Capital Region Workforce Development Board, Tia Nunziato, Commission on Economic Opportunity, Tracy Pitcher, St. Paul's Center, Josh McCoy, Rensselaer Housing Authority, Joseph Kardash, Rensselaer Schools, Mike Stammel, Mayor, Jim Van Vorst, Common Council Ward Leader, Sharon Martin, Assessor, Tim Lippert, Building Department, and Amy Lolik and Tom Hulihan, Planning Department.

None of this would have been possible without the ideas we received from the public and the leadership of the Steering Committee. We will be submitting our application to New York State by the October 18, 2024 deadline and hoping for the best.



Downtown Revitalization Initiative Project Highlights



Proposed outdoor fitness studio community wellness hub at DeLaet's Landing along the esplanade.



Proposed grocery store, parking structure and housing / office space on East Street to the North of the Amtrak Rensselaer Rail Station as well as on Amtrak's current surface parking lot.

A Letter from Rensselaer Environmental Coalition

The DEC operating permit for the Waste Connection's-owned Dunn C&D Landfill expired in 2022. Residents may not have noticed since 100 trucks a day still rumble through while the landfill continues operations. NYS law allows facilities to stay open without a permit if certain conditions are being met. The DEC has used these two years for an enhanced permit renewal process meant to evaluate the impact of the landfill on Rensselaer per the 2020 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) passed in NYS. The CLCPA provides the City of Rensselaer with protection from over-concentrated pollution since historically pollution is concentrated in low-income areas. Given the number of brownfields within Rensselaer already, it is welcome news that DEC has a special focus on protection from further health and environmental harm here. However, exactly when DEC will reach their final decision on the landfill's permit is unknown.

As a result, this year has seen a resurgence in demand for the landfill's immediate closure. Led by the Rensselaer Environmental Coalition (REC), advocates from Rensselaer and East Greenbush came together in May and September to share information and bring attention to the landfill. A common topic was around the 2023 update to DEC's internal landfill siting policy which bans any new landfill from placement within 1,000 feet of a school. Though it's easily within 1,000 feet of the Rensselaer City school, this update still allows for the Dunn Landfill as a pre-existing facility. However, it's an indicator of DEC's obvious and avoidable permitting mistake.

Additional outcomes of the community meetings included a new petition letter released in June demanding the landfill's immediate closure. Three new, updated legislative resolutions in support of the petition letter were passed through the Rensselaer County Legislature, East Greenbush Town Board, and Rensselaer Common Council. Together they will be packaged for Governor Hochul and the DEC permit office along with the petition letter. The REC was also able to connect with researchers at SUNY Albany who agreed to include the school in their co-study with the EPA. Pediatric respiratory health specialists at Albany Med have also offered free resources to the Rensselaer School Board to understand health impacts on students.

At the state level, the REC pushed DEC and DOH to meet with State Assemblyman John T. McDonald III and Senator Jake Ashby to explain DEC's air quality data from the school's air monitor. Afterward, Senator Ashby released a statement advising the DEC to not renew the landfill's permit. However, Assemblyman McDonald asserted that the burden of proof of harm to the school had not yet been met. When questioned by a community member as to why the burden of proof lay with children to prove their own harm, instead of the billion-dollar corporation who chose to place a landfill next to them to prove it's safe, he had no answer.

Despite overwhelming community opposition, lack of accountability and corporate platitudes still cloud the Dunn Landfill. What is clear is Waste Connection's reported net worth of \$45 billion in October 2024. Certainly, such a well-resourced expert on waste disposal could have foreseen concerns about their choice to open a landfill in the middle of a city touching a school. However, the extent of Waste Connection's only acknowledgement of the school continues to be their annual \$125,000 donation. While Waste Connections continues to reap profits, residents continue to wonder when common sense will meet political courage in Rensselaer and East Greenbush.

Moving forward, the REC continues to push DEC and DOH for additional testing including for airborne PFAs, and to host a public meeting to directly explain its air quality findings and thought processes with the community. Most importantly we want the community to be able to ask questions. Stay on the lookout for more community meetings and follow the status of the landfill yourself here:

Follow DEC updates on the Dunn Landfill here: dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/waste-management/solid-waste-program/dunn-landfill

Follow REC updates here: Facebook.com/DunnLandfill

New Playgrounds Now Open!

We are pleased to share the exciting news regarding the much-anticipated opening of the Playgrounds at Riverfront, Tracy Street, 1st Street and Plum Street Parks. Grant funding for the playground upgrades were sponsored through the NYS Office of Housing and Community Renewal. The City would like to thank the community for their patience, as we eagerly awaited the correct installation parts to arrive through supply chain issues. Installers worked around the clock in September to ensure all playground equipment was properly installed in the four parks. Also completed in September under our Neighborhood Safe Parks was paving of park pathways to give access from adjacent roadways and sidewalks to our updated playgrounds and new amenities which include: picnic tables (6ft & ADA 8ft), benches, handwashing and bottle filling stations. Two basketball courts have also been freshly paved and will be striped soon.



We encourage the City of Rensselaer children to visit each of the four playgrounds, as each park contains unique features. Here are some highlights at each park:

Riverfront Park - the largest of our playsets, this park features a Mega Tower with descending tunnel slides and, as a nod to our rich river and railroad history, a Giant Orange Fish and a train-themed climbing set. All Aboard!

Tracy Street- at this park you will find giant sails over a colorful set of slides, twisted side climbers and stacked multiple climbing features. There is also an interactive musical play station with a giant white umbrella providing shade under the sun, as you create musical notes.

1st Street - If you enjoy slides this park is for you! There are four slides in total. One is a funnel slide that twists around a tower and if that slide is in-use, there are three alternative slides available. Bongo stepping stones will lead you across to the center of unique climbing poles.

Plum Street - Get ready to explore life-size Jax's in blue, orange and red bright colors leading you up to a platform with multiple sliding options. A merry-go-round with space enough for ten riders can hop-on for a fun spin ride!

All parks feature new swing sets for both infants and older children. Adult supervision is always encouraged for any age child on playground equipment.

The City would like to thank our outstanding DPW Department, Commissioner Jim Brady, Deputy Gene Hilstro and special recognition to Brent Tomlinson and his construction crew, who worked tirelessly throughout the course of this grant to safeguard its success. A ribbon cutting ceremony is planned in the coming weeks.



Economic Development Loan Program

The city's Economic Development Loan Program is designed to offer below-market rate prime fixed at closing loans to eligible City businesses to encourage economic growth. Money has been appropriated through the City's Community Development Block Grant/Small Cities Program, as well as through the repayment of previous loans.

For more information on the loan program, check out the City's website at:

<https://rensselaerny.gov/economic-development-loan-program>

City of Rensselaer Industrial Development Agency

The City of Rensselaer Industrial Development Agency (CRIDA) is a not-for-profit public benefit agency established by an act of the New York State Legislature under Article 18-A Title 2 Section 903-c of the General Municipal Law. The CRIDA can help qualified businesses and not-for-profit organizations relocate, expand, and build in the City of Rensselaer.

Using tax abatement incentives, the CRIDA can help eligible companies cut the cost of acquiring, equipping, and constructing industrial, commercial, manufacturing and civic projects.

The CRIDA can also assist new and expanding businesses with site selection. To learn more visit www.cityofrensselaerida.com

Meetings of the CRIDA take place at 4:15 pm on the fourth Monday of each month in the Main Conference Room at Rensselaer City Hall, Medias are also broadcast live on the CRIDA's Facebook page at: facebook.com/cityofrensselaerida

The Public is welcome to attend all meetings.

City Newsletter - Subscription & Article Submission

The Rensselaer Newsletter began its first launch this past January. Since then it has become the place City Residents look to for news and facts about what's going on in the City. The Newsletter is produced and designed by volunteers Dave Ellis and Madeline Rizzo with content provided by City Hall employees and residents.

Inquires regarding articles, submission of articles or to be added to the Newsletter distribution list please send an email to Info@rensselaerny.gov

We look forward to hearing from you!

Common Council Workshops & Meetings

Are you interested in what's happening in Rensselaer? Then please consider attending the Common Council Workshops & Meetings to get the real scoop on what's happening in your City. The Workshops are held every 1st and 3rd Monday of each month and the Council Meeting are held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays both at 6:30 PM at City Hall (see attached Calendar for dates for this month at the end of this Newsletter).

Agendas are posted on the City's website at <https://rensselaerny.gov/meeting-agendas-and-minutes> each Monday prior to the Workshops. Your attendance and input are important and your community needs your support. We hope to see you there!

Fall Cleanup & Preparation of Yard Waste

BRUSH: LEAVES / GRASS CLIPPINGS MUST BE IN PAPER BIODEGRADABLE BAGS. WE WILL NOT PICK UP LEAVES / CLIPPINGS IN PLASTIC BAGS. ALL BRUSH / BRACHES, TWIGS SHALL BE NO LONGER THAN 4 FT (NOT OVER 40 LBS) AND MUST BE TIED TOGETHER. CUT DOWN TREES / LIMBS OR EXTREME LARGE PILES WILL BE CHARGED BASED ON SIZE.

YARD WASTE PICK UP SCHEDULE: *MONDAY MORNINGS (EXCLUDING HOLIDAYS)*

BRUSH / TWIGS, LEAVES, GRASS CLIPPINGS, CHRISTMAS TREES (PLACE CURBSIDE SUNDAY NIGHT)

HOLIDAY PICK UP SCHEDULE CHANGE:

| | | | |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|
| COLUMBUS DAY | MONDAY | 10/14/24 | NO BRUSH PICK UP |
| VETERAN'S DAY | MONDAY | 11/11/24 | NO BRUSH PICK UP |
| THANKSGIVING DAY | THURSDAY | 11/28/24 | CHANGE OF PICK UP DAY |

Normal Tuesday Pick Up is Monday, Normal Wednesday Pick Up is Tuesday, Normal Thursday & Friday Pick Up is Wednesday

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|----------|-----------------------|
| DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING | FRIDAY | 11/29/24 | CHANGE OF PICK UP DAY |
|-------------------------------|--------|----------|-----------------------|

Normal Tuesday Pick Up is Monday, Normal Wednesday Pick Up is Tuesday, Normal Thursday & Friday Pick Up is Wednesday

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|
| CHRISTMAS DAY | WEDNESDAY | 12/25/24 | CHANGE OF PICK UP DAY |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|

Normal Tuesday Pick Up is Monday, Normal Wednesday Pick Up is Tuesday, Normal Thursday Pick Up is Thursday and Normal Friday Pick Up is Friday



Library Corner

For any of our events requiring sign-up, please call the Library at 518-462-1193.



Get To Know Your Smartphone:

Thursday October 24, 3 PM.

Did you get a new phone or are you frustrated trying to make the features work on your old phone? Do you know someone who needs help? Learn tips and tricks to navigate your phone.

Teens After Dark:

Friday October 25 5-7 PM.

Teens ages 13-18 are invited to stay after hours at the library, when the doors are locked and the lights are out- if they dare! We'll have snacks, video games, board games and spooky stories.



Painting Pumpkins:

Saturday October 26th, 1 PM.

Paint pumpkins! Either paint a funny face or create something unique!

Halloween at the Library:

Thursday, October 31st, 2-8 PM.

Trick-or-treaters can stop in to the library for a non-food treat!



Notary services and computer help are available with appointment, contact the Library directly for details. (Please make appointment to ensure someone is available.)

(518) 462-1193

MAVENS OF MAYHEM & RENSSELAER PUBLIC
LIBRARY PRESENT

MEET THE AUTHORS

Six local mystery & crime writers discuss how they started in the writing & publishing business, what inspires them, and more. Followed by an audience Q & A and book signing.



FRANKIE Y. BAILEY



JACQUELINE BOULDEN



S.A. KAZLO



ELEANOR KUHNS



TERRENCE MCCAULEY



AMY PATRICIA MEADE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND 1-3PM
RENSSELAER PUBLIC LIBRARY
676 EAST ST, RENSSELAER NY

East Greenbush - Rensselaer Senior Center Update



A brand-new senior center is set to open its doors in East Greenbush, offering a modern, accessible, and safe space for local seniors. The Rensselaer County East Greenbush - Rensselaer Senior Center, located at 6 Ridge Rd in Rensselaer, is expected to be completed in late November with a grand opening in early December.

This new facility is part of County Executive Steve McLaughlin's ongoing efforts to modernize Rensselaer County facilities. Similar to the Troy and Hoosick Falls county senior centers, the East Greenbush - Rensselaer center will feature state-of-the-art technology and equipment, including a high-end, professional-grade kitchen with expanded capacity. The center will also provide ample parking for visitors.

The new senior center is designed to provide a welcoming and comfortable environment for seniors to socialize, participate in activities, and access essential services. It will offer a variety of programs and amenities, including:

- **Social activities:** Games, card clubs, and other social gatherings
- **Educational programs:** Classes and workshops on various topics
- **Health and wellness programs:** Exercise classes, health screenings, and nutrition counseling
- **Meals and refreshments:** Daily meals and snacks
- **Transportation services:** Transportation to and from the center

The East Greenbush - Rensselaer Senior Center is a significant investment in the local community and will provide invaluable resources for seniors in the area.

DOCUMENT SHREDDING DAY

THE CITY OF RENSSELAER, TOWN OF EAST GREENBUSH AND TOWN OF SCHODACK ARE TEAMING UP TO BRING YOU DOCUMENT SHREDDER DAY IN THE CITY OF RENSSELAER ON

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2024, FROM 9AM – 12PM



DO YOU HAVE CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS THAT NEED TO BE SHREDDED?

BRING THEM TO THE VISITOR'S PARKING LOT ACROSS THE STREET FROM CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON ST., RENSSELAER AND THE FRIENDLY FOLKS FROM RENSSELAER, EAST GREENBUSH AND SCHODACK PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENTS WILL UNLOAD YOUR PAPER AND THE DOCUMENT SHREDDER WILL DESTROY YOUR DOCUMENTS SAFELY AND SECURELY. THEY WILL BE THERE TO DIRECT YOU TO THE PARKING LOT AS WELL.

PLEASE LIMIT YOUR DOCUMENTS TO NO MORE THAN 3 BOXES

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL NANCY HARDT AT THE RENSSELAER CITY CLERK'S OFFICE : 518-462-4266 OR EMAIL NANCY.HARDT@RENSSELAERNY.GOV



NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE-BACK DAY



Turn in your unused or expired medication for safe disposal
Saturday October 26, 2024 from 10am to 2pm.

**Rensselaer Fire Department North End Firehouse
2 St. Francis Pl.
Rensselaer, NY**

Sponsored by the Rensselaer Police Department

Proper disposal of unused prescription and over-the-counter medications is important to protect both people and the environment. Unused prescription and over-the-counter medications that remain in the home can cause serious harm to people if they are taken accidentally, intentionally misused or inappropriately given to someone else. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including the home medicine cabinet. Unused medications that are flushed down the toilet or poured down the sink can enter the water supply, harming fish and other wildlife and posing a potential risk to people.

Do not bring hazardous wastes, sharps such as used needles, or illegal drugs.

For more information or for additional collections sites go to:

www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback

Any questions can be directed to Deputy Chief John Mooney at
john.mooney@rensselaerpolice.org

City of Rensselaer Events and Meetings

OCTOBER 2024



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|---|--|--|--|-----|-----|
| | Common Council Workshop @ 6:30 City Hall | 1 | 2 Common Council Meeting AND PUBLIC HEARING 6:30 @ City Hall | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 ZBA Applications Due Planning Commission Meeting 6:30 @ City Hall | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 City Hall Closed Columbus Day | 15 Planning Commission Applications Due Common Council Workshop @ 6:30 City Hall | 16 Common Council Meeting AND PUBLIC HEARING 6:30 @ City Hall | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 ZBA Meeting 6:00 @ City Hall | 29 | 30 | 31  | | |

D I R E C T O R Y

| | | | |
|--|--------------|---|---------------------------------|
| ASSESSOR | 518-462-5421 | sharon.martin@rensselaer.ny.gov | SHARON MARTIN |
| BUILDING & ZONING ADMINISTRATOR | 518-465-1693 | tim.lippert@rensselaer.ny.gov | TIM LIPPERT |
| CITY COURT CLERK | 518-453-4680 | | |
| CITY CLERK | 518-462-4266 | nancy.hardt@rensselaer.ny.gov | NANCY HARDT |
| DIR. OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | 518-462-4839 | jack.bonesteel@rensselaer.ny.gov | JACK BONESTEEL |
| ENGINEER | 518-694-3968 | bill.smart@rensselaer.ny.gov | BILL SMART |
| FIRE HOUSE, NORTH | 518-463-2883 | | |
| FIRE HOUSE, BROADWAY | 518-465-3243 | bill.brooking@rensselaer.ny.gov | BILL BROOKING JR. FIRE CHIEF |
| HISTORIAN | 518-694-3126 | victor.batorsky@rensselaer.ny.gov | VICTOR BATORSKY |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 518-462-0419 | irene.sorriento@rensselaer.ny.gov | IRENE SORRIENTO |
| LIBRARIAN | 518-462-1193 | jane.chirgwin@rensselaer.ny.gov | JANE CHIRGWIN |
| MAYOR | 518-462-9511 | mike.stammel@rensselaer.ny.gov | MIKE STAMMEL |
| PLANNING DIRECTOR | 518-462-4839 | thomas.hulihan@rensselaer.ny.gov | THOMAS HULIHAN |
| POLICE DISPATCHER | 518-462-7453 | | |
| POLICE CHIEF | 518-462-7453 | warren.famiglietti@rensselaerpolice.org | WARREN FAMIGLIETTI |
| PROCESS SERVER | 518-720-7106 | steve.smith@rensselaer.ny.gov | STEVE SMITH |
| PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSIONER | 518-462-9617 | jim.brady@rensselaer.ny.gov | JIM BRADY |
| CITY GARAGE / DPW | 518-462-5512 | gene.hilstro@rensselaer.ny.gov | GENE HILSTRO |
| PURCHASING AGENT | 518-462-2251 | rich.berhaupt@rensselaer.ny.gov | RICH BERHAUPT |
| TREASURER | 518-462-6424 | michael.mizener@rensselaer.ny.gov | MIKE MIZENER |
| WATER / SEWER DEPUTY COMMISS. | 518-462-6466 | fran.welsh@rensselaer.ny.gov | FRAN WELSH |
| YOUTH DIRECTOR | 518-462-5488 | youth@rensselaer.ny.gov | JIM KONSTANTAKIS |