



Rensselaer City Newsletter Rensselaer City Newsletter

VOLUME 3 EDITION 1

JANUARY 2025

Office of the Mayor



Mayor Mike Stammel
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Highlights in this month's issue



Planning Updates



Christmas in the City



Senior Center Opens

The Fight Against the Dunn Landfill Isn't Over

I hear you! Like many of you, I was deeply disappointed to learn of the renewal of the Dunn Landfill's permit. This decision does not reflect the community's well-documented concerns about its impact on our environment, health, and quality of life. Let me be clear: the fight isn't over.

The City of Rensselaer has taken significant steps over the years to oppose this landfill and protect our community. Working alongside residents and advocates, we have:

- **Submitted comprehensive comments** to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), highlighting the health, environmental, and traffic concerns posed by the landfill.
- **Partnered with experts** to provide detailed reports on the landfill's impacts, particularly its proximity to schools, homes, and waterways.
- **Supported grassroots efforts**, amplifying the voices of residents who have tirelessly raised awareness about this issue.
- **Pushed for legislative change**, working with local representatives to advocate for stricter regulations on facilities like Dunn.
- **Monitored compliance**, ensuring the landfill operators adhere to existing environmental laws and filing complaints when violations occur.

These actions have not gone unnoticed. While the DEC is tasked with regulating landfills and recently granted the renewal, we will continue to hold them accountable. Our advocacy is far from over, and we are exploring all available avenues—legal, legislative, and regulatory—to challenge this decision and push for a better outcome.

Our Commitment:

This is our home, and I assure you that we will not stop until we achieve a solution that protects the health and well-being of our community. Together, we will continue to push for accountability, justice, and a brighter future for Rensselaer.

I am inspired daily by your passion, persistence, and dedication. Let us stand united in this fight, knowing that our collective voice is stronger than any challenge we face. Thank you for being a vital part of this effort. Together, we can ensure a brighter, cleaner, and healthier future for all of us.

Mayor Michael Stammel

Planning Department Pursues Grants to Drive Development

The City Planning Department is proud to share updates on its ongoing efforts to secure funding through various grants that will enhance infrastructure, community services, and environmental stewardship. These initiatives are a testament to our commitment to sustainable growth and quality of life improvements for our residents.

Current Grant Applications and Projects:

1. RAISE Grant from USDOT

- **Amount:** Approximately \$10,000,000
- **Purpose:** To improve waterfront connectivity in the north end of the city, making the area more accessible and fostering economic growth and recreational opportunities.

2. Occupational Health & Safety Training Grant from NYS DOL

- **Purpose:** To provide essential safety training for City Planning staff, ensuring a safer, more efficient workplace while meeting regulatory standards.

3. Local Government Efficiency Grant & County Infrastructure Grant from NYS

- **Purpose:** To fund critical water infrastructure improvements. This effort requires collaboration with the County and other local governments, emphasizing the importance of regional partnerships to tackle shared challenges.

4. Capital Improvement Grant from NYSCA

- **Purpose:** To support upgrades to the city's History Museum, in partnership with the City Historian. Since this grant must be submitted by a 501(c)(3), we are actively collaborating with a nonprofit organization to bring this vision to life.

5. Hudson River Estuary Program Technical Assistance

- **Purpose:** To update conservation overlay zoning, protecting valuable natural resources and fostering sustainable development along the Hudson River.

Why This Matters:

Each of these grants represents a unique opportunity to invest in our community's future. Whether improving infrastructure, supporting cultural heritage, or advancing environmental conservation, these projects aim to build a city that is more connected, resilient, and vibrant.

We are grateful for the partnerships and teamwork involved in these grant applications. Together, we're shaping a brighter future for our city and its residents.

Stay tuned for updates as we progress through the grant application process. For more information or to get involved, please contact the City Planning Department.

Public Comment Period Open

The Rensselaer City Planning Department is pleased to announce that our Draft ADA Self-Analysis and Transition Plan is now available for public review and comment through **February 19, 2025**

To review the draft plan on the Planning Department's website go to www.rensselaerplanning.com

This plan, funded by the Capital Region Transportation Council and supported in part by a grant from the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, aims to enhance the accessibility of pedestrian facilities in the public right-of-way throughout the City of Rensselaer.

The study evaluated all pedestrian infrastructure, including curb ramps, sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and accessible transit stops. The goal of the ADA Self-Analysis and Transition Plan is to ensure our pedestrian facilities are fully accessible to everyone, including individuals with disabilities.

Federal standards for pedestrian facilities, originally proposed in 2011, became effective in September 2023, were adopted by the U.S. Department of Transportation in December 2024, and will soon be fully enforceable upon adoption by the U.S. Department of Justice.

We invite your feedback on this critical plan! Comments may be sent to Amy Lolik, ADA Coordinator in the Planning Department, at amy.lolik@rensselaer.ny.gov or by calling **518-462-4839**, op-



Rensselaer In Search of Home Renovation and Rehab Contractors

Do you know some good Contractors that may be interested in submitting a Proposal for home renovation and rehabilitation projects?

The City of Rensselaer Planning & Development Agency seeks renovation and rehabilitation contractors for its **HOME2023 Proud Neighborhood Initiative**, funded by NYS Homes and Community Renewal (Project SHARS #20233086).

The City has received \$548,000 to complete approximately 10 single-family home renovation projects over the next two years. Typical work includes:

- Window and door replacement
- Roof and foundation repair
- Heating system upgrades
- Porch, step, electrical, and plumbing updates

Preferred Contractor Pool

To streamline projects, the City will establish a preferred contractor pool through a competitive bidding process. Interested contractors must submit unit pricing for the sample scope of work provided.

Bid Submission Details (See link) <https://www.renselaerplanning.com/rfq-s>

- **Deadline:** 11:00 AM, Tuesday, January 21, 2025
- **Location:** Planning & Development Office, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 62 Washington St., Rensselaer, NY

Submission: Email or in-person Bids will be reviewed, and selected contractors notified within two weeks.

Requirements

- Proof of liability insurance, workers' compensation, and disability coverage (or exemption)
- EPA Lead Certification for contractors or subcontractors handling lead-related work
- MWBE, SDVOB, and Section 3 contractors are encouraged to apply

Contact

For more information, contact:
Rick Van Vorst, Rehabilitation Specialist
518-462-4839
rick.vanvorst@renselaerny.gov

Help us improve homes in Rensselaer while supporting a strong community!

Enchanting Holiday Magic: City Hall's Festive Splendor

As the holiday season unfolded, the City and City Hall transformed into a spectacle of festive enchantment courtesy of the hard work by City Staff. The radiant decorations, carefully curated for the occasion by the Department of Public Works (DPW) staff, illuminated the cityscape and captured the spirit of joy that permeates this time of year.

A notable highlight was the captivating nativity scene adorning the front of City Hall, adding a touch of traditional charm to the heart of the community. The nativity, with its intricate details and warm lighting, served as a poignant reminder of the season's deeper significance.

Stepping inside City Hall, visitors were greeted by Christmas trees adorned with a symphony of colors and ornaments. This year, as in the past, the mastermind behind this enchanting display was none other than Gloria Fonda. Known for her unwavering dedication to creating holiday magic, Gloria once again showcased her artistic prowess in transforming the Christmas trees into veritable works of art.

Gloria Fonda's touch is nothing short of magical, as she skillfully weaves together themes and colors to evoke a sense of wonder and delight. Each ornament and the careful arrangement of lights added a warm

glow to the surroundings. City Hall became a haven of holiday cheer, inviting residents and visitors alike to immerse themselves in the festive spirit.

Beyond the aesthetic appeal, Gloria's work is a testament to the community's cherished holiday traditions. Her commitment to bringing joy to the city through her artistic talents has become a cherished part of the holiday experience for many. The beautifully decorated Christmas trees stand as symbol of her dedication and the enduring spirit of celebration that defines this special time of year.

As residents and visitors alike marveled at the festive décor, it became clear that the holiday spirit was alive and well in the heart of the city, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the DPW staff and the creative touch of Gloria Fonda.



Christmas in the City 2024

On December 14, over 190 children and their families attended our annual *Christmas in the City* celebration! The Rensselaer Boys and Girls Club was transformed into a Christmas wonderland filled with treats, gifts from Santa and Mrs. Claus, music by the Yankee Doodle and Rensselaer High School Bands, ice cream, and warm chili provided by the Police and Fire Departments. The event also featured exciting presents that brought smiles to the faces of our youngest residents.

Each child received a large goody bag filled with holiday crafts, a cocoa mug topped with a small stuffed reindeer, and a Christmas ornament for their tree. The Rensselaer Kiwanis sponsored a hat and mitten tree, allowing children to select items to help keep them warm during the winter months.

A standout highlight for both children and adults was the horse-drawn wagon ride provided by Vance Acres of Gansevoort, adding a magical touch to the evening.

This wonderful event was made possible through the generous donations of community businesses and organizations. Many city officials, council members, residents, staff from the Boys and Girls Club, and Rensselaer High School Key Club members volunteered their time during the busy holiday season to help set up and run the event. Special thanks go to the City Clerk's Office, which tirelessly organizes this festive celebration each year.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to making this event such a success. Wishing you all a safe and prosperous New Year!



Mayor and City Clerk's Office Lead Heartwarming Holiday Initiative



Once again this holiday season the Mayor and the City Clerk's Office, with the generosity of City Hall departments, spearheaded a heartwarming effort to adopt 3 families from the Rensselaer City School District. Everyone came together to provide presents for the children ages 18 months to 15 years old, ensuring these families experienced the joy and magic of the holidays.

The inspiring generosity of those involved brought smiles and happiness to children and families in need. Through thoughtful contributions and heartfelt donations, this collaborative effort reflected the true spirit of giving that strengthens our community.

A special thank you to everyone who participated in making this initiative such a meaningful success. Your kindness and support made a difference for these families and exemplify the compassion that defines our city.

Orange Crush Girls Flag Football Team Hosts Pancake

In December, the Orange Crush Girls Flag Football team hosted a delightful Pancake Breakfast fundraiser at the Rensselaer Volunteer Ambulance Hall. The event brought together community members, supporters, and fans to enjoy a morning of good food and great company, all in support of the team's journey to the national competition in Florida.

It was wonderful to spend time with these talented athletes and witness the outpouring of community support for their efforts. The team's hard work and dedication have earned them this exciting opportunity, and the event was a testament to the pride and encouragement they inspire in Rensselaer.

We wished the Orange Crush Girls Flag Football team the best of luck as they geared up for nationals. The entire community is cheering them on!



News from the Assessor's Office

Renewal Applications Mailed

Renewal applications for the Senior Aged, Persons with Disabilities and Limited Income, and Non-Profit Exemptions have been mailed.

Enhanced STAR Exemption

If you're turning 65 in 2025 and have a household income under \$107,300, you may qualify for the Enhanced STAR Exemption. Visit the City website or stop by the Assessor's Office to pick up the necessary forms.

Important Deadline

All exemption applications and renewals must be submitted to the Assessor's Office by **March 1, 2025**.

Don't miss out—act today to secure your exemptions! If you have questions, please email sharon.martin@rensselaer.ny.gov or call the Assessment office at (518) 462-5421.

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@rensselaer.ny.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://rensselaer.ny.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!

Help Maintain Neighborhood Catch Basins

What is a Catch Basin? It is simply an underground box that helps reduce flooding damage by directing the water through a drainage pipe underground. These Basins require regular cleaning and maintenance and should be cleaned and pumped out at least once a year but sometimes more. If you see that a Catch Basin in your neighborhood needs some maintenance, please contact the Rensselaer City Water Department at 518-462-6466 for assistance.



Brush 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:

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY MONDAY 1/20/25 NO BRUSH PICK UP

Trash Pick Up Day will remain as normally scheduled, there will be no brush pick up

Cold Weather Safety

Do not plug space heaters into power strips or extension cords. Plug space heaters directly into the wall outlet. Power strips are not designed to handle the high current flow required by a space heater and can overheat causing a fire. Remember to check your neighbors and make sure they are warm and safe during the winter months.



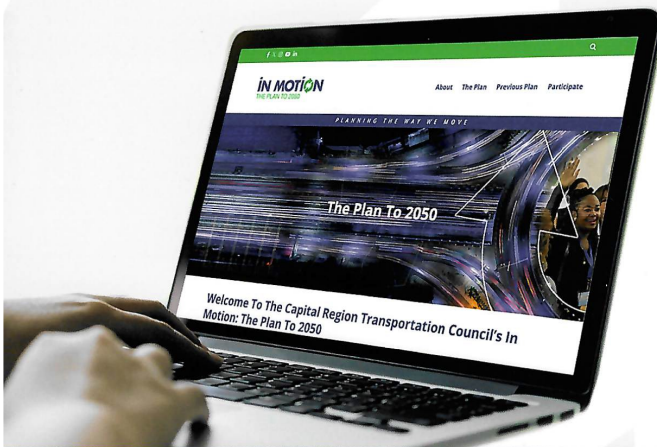
HAPPY WITH THIS REGION'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM?



Ever wonder how it gets planned?
With your input, we develop the region's plan
for your transportation system called...

IN MOTION

THE PLAN TO 2050



BE PART OF THE PLAN

Help shape the way we move
in the Capital Region.



inmotionplan.org
518.458.2161



Rensselaer Seniors Spotlight



Spotlight into events
at Rensselaer
Senior Center

Our new Senior Center is open and waiting for you to join us. As of December 20th, the Schodack Senior Center will be getting a brand new facelift and we are pleased to host the seniors from there. We serve lunch Monday - Friday at 12:00 noon. We do ask for a reservation by calling 518-487-4427 so we are prepared for you. The suggested contribution is \$3.00. Activities will be available starting in January and yes we will be having Bingo every fourth

Tuesday of the month. We will try to incorporate the Schodack classes with ours so you won't miss out on anything. We are also in need of gently used quality clothing for our Boutique. At this time, we are accepting all clothing, shoes, pocketbooks and jewelry emphasizing spring and summer. You can donate from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM Monday - Friday. We hope to see you soon at our new center located at 6 Ridge Road in Rensselaer.

Hands on Tech Drop In - Thursday January 23rd

Join Michelle St Louis In Person. Ms. St Louis can guide you through getting to know your device and answer any basic technology you may have. You can get help with resetting your password for an account connecting to Wi-Fi, Backing Up Files, Using Social Media, adjusting device settings for your needs and basic skills such as sending emails or using the internet and more. Must bring your own devices we cannot repair a broken device. Availability is on a first come first serve basis. We require you to set a reservation to set an appointment with the staff.

Counting Breaths Meditation Meeting of Interest - January 9th 10:30

This Program May Relieve Anxiety, Stress, Mind Wandering, Chronic Pain, Addictions, Anger, Phobias, Relationship Problems and more. Extensive reviews at sites.google.com/counting-breaths come see if this is something you may be interested in. Try in you may like it.

Christmas at the Center

We Had a Wonderful Time celebrating Christmas Thursday December 19th. Pete And Friends did a great Job with entertainment our menu was wonderful and our kitchen staff was outstanding. We welcomed many new people and were delighted to do so. Everyone 60 years or older is welcome to your new center. We do request a reservation for lunch which is the most important program offered.

Playing Live at the Center

Join us on January 16th and dance, dance, dance to the music of The Young Winchesters enjoy and even better company.

Look Who's Turning 101 Years Young!

Join us on January 8th as we celebrate Flo Clifford's 101st Birthday. She is an amazing lady and we can't wait to show her how much she means to us. Music by Bobby Trefilletti.

Sign up for our email newsletter!

JANUARY 2025



RENSSELAER PUBLIC LIBRARY

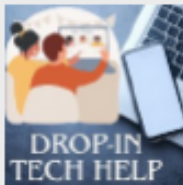


The Library will be **CLOSED**
January 20

Drop-in Computer help:

Wednesday, January 8
from 2-3 PM.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County's Digital Literacy Educator is ready to answer your technology questions. No sign up needed, bring your device if possible.



Drop-in tech help
every Thursday at 11 AM.

Stop in with a question or problem and our staff member Amber will help!

Friends of the Library

Meeting Thursday, January 16 at 6 PM. Looking for new members! Zoom meeting connection available- ask for an invite!



Weather closure policy:

We will be closed if the Rensselaer School District is closed for bad weather. On non-school days, the Director will decide based on conditions.

Teen Group meeting

Thursday January 30, 6-7 PM. Join TAG, the Teen Advisory Group, to get community service hours and help plan fun events for teens at the library! New members are welcome.



Take Your Child to the Library Day

is Saturday, February 1. Bring your child in for a scavenger hunt between 11-2, or join in our **Preschool Music Time** at 11 AM with Miss Lisa!

Interested in a book group? We are exploring options such as a daytime group, an online discussion group, or a volunteer led group. Let us know what you would like to see.

For information or to sign up for events, call **518-462-1193** or go online at rensselaerlibrary.org

Library Board will meet the first Monday of the month



Like us on Facebook for updates and city info.

Rensselaer Public Library
676 East Street
Rensselaer NY 12144
(518) 462-1193

RensselaerLibrary.org

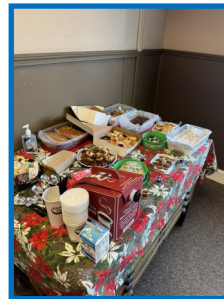
HOURS:

MON 12-5
TUE 10-5
WED/THU 10-8
FRI 10-5
SAT 10-3
SUN- CLOSED

Building & Planning's 2nd Annual Holiday Luncheon

The Building and Planning departments recently hosted their second annual holiday luncheon, a heartwarming celebration of the season and a year of teamwork. The event brought colleagues together in a festive atmosphere filled with laughter, cheerful decorations, and a delicious array of food and drinks.

This special gathering was made possible through the dedication of volunteers and the generous contributions of staff, who went above and beyond to create a memorable experience. The departments expressed heartfelt gratitude to everyone who helped make the luncheon a joyous success, embodying the true spirit of the season.





H.O.P.E. Food Pantry
85 Aiken Ave., Rensselaer, NY
OPEN to the General Public
email greaterhope20@gmail.com



Regional Food Bank
OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

Our Sponsors

Rens. County Youth & Office of Family & Childrens Services

Jan. 5 2025
12:00-12:30

FOOD Distribution

FREE Meat, Fruit, and Vegetables
FREE Groceries by Hannaford
FREE Bread by Panera

FOOD Distribution

FREE Meat, Fruit, and Vegetables
FREE Groceries by Hannaford
FREE Bread by Panera

Jan. 12, 2025
12:00-12:30

Jan. 19, 2025
12:00-12:30

FOOD Distribution

FREE Meat, Fruit, and Vegetables
FREE Groceries by Hannaford
FREE Bread by Panera

FOOD Distribution

FREE Meat, Fruit, and Vegetables
FREE Groceries by Hannaford
FREE Bread by Panera

Jan. 26 2025
12:00-12:30

An IMPACT ministry of The:
Greater Hope Family Life Center

City of Rensselaer Events and Meetings

JANUARY 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31 City Hall Offices Close @ 1 PM	1 	2	3	4
5	6 Planning Commission Meeting 6:30 @ City Hall	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 Common Council Workshop 6:30 @ City Hall	14	15 Common Council Meeting AND PUBLIC HEARING 6:30 @ City Hall	16	17	18 Drive Thru Pantry 9:30 @ Boys & Girls Club Street Soldiers 10:00 am @ Riverfront Bridge
19	20 Planning Applica- tions Due 	21	22	23	24	25
26 Food Pantry @ 12 85 Aiken Ave	27 IDA Regular Meeting City Hall @ 4:15 ZBA Meeting City Hall @ 6:00 pm	28	29	30	31	

DIRECTORY

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CITY COURT CLERK	518-453-4680		
CITY CLERK	518-462-4266	nancy.hardt@rensselaer.ny.gov	NANCY HARDT
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
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POLICE CHIEF	518-462-7453	warren.famiglietti@rensselaerpolice.org	WARREN FAMIGLIETTI
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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