



RENSSELAER CITY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 2024

From the Desk of Mayor Stammel

Office of the Mayor



Mayor Mike Stammel
518-426-9511

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Highlights in this month's issue



Historic Grand Slam



Summer Internships



Park Equipment Updates

This past month has been particularly eventful as we attempted to pass a balanced budget. A key issue arose when the council opted to hire an outside company to perform tasks that should have been handled by them and it cost you, the taxpayer \$25,000. This decision not only increased the budget but also diverted essential funds away from public safety departments.

What's frustrating is that the council never consulted with me or any of the City department heads to understand why these funds were necessary. And not once did they reach out to me to discuss the needs of our departments.

The City Hall staff and I are dedicated to restoring the city's finances, but we continue to face significant hurdles put in place by the Council. You may think we are just complaining but if you had walls put in front of you every time you tried to help your family stand on its feet then you surely can understand our circumstances.

Despite our best efforts to maintain bare bone but balanced budgets, the common council has been amending these plans year over year, leading to increased deficits. Moreover, the council has declined multiple invitations each year from the mayor to engage in face-to-face discussions with city staff about the budget.

It might be time to require justifications from the Council for any budget changes they or their Outside Company makes so that we ensure transparency and accountability in these decisions. Stay tuned for updates as we navigate these challenges together.

A Letter from Rensselaer Environmental Coalition

Thank you to all those who signed REC's petition to close the landfill. If you haven't signed the petition yet, please go to <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/close-dunn-cd-landfill-next-to-our-school/>

We are at over 300 signatures on the petition online and on paper. We can hit 1000 signatures, but we need your help. Please continue to share the petition and discuss this issue with your neighbors. Members of the REC will be doing outreach for physical signatures at local events in addition to those online. Look for our purple t-shirts!

In addition to the petition letter, the REC has been working on three big initiatives this summer:

- Three new, updated resolutions demanding immediate closure of the landfill were introduced and successfully passed through these local governments: Rensselaer County Legislature, East Greenbush Town Board, and Rensselaer Common Council. All three resolutions passed with overwhelming support. They will be sent to Governor Hochul and DEC along with the petition letter. Thanks to our local reps!
- Thanks to REC outreach, researchers from SUNY Albany specializing in air quality and pollution have agreed to include the area surrounding the school in their co-study with the EPA titled: Residential Indoor and Outdoor Air Quality Exposure. Additionally, doctors from Albany Med specializing in pediatric respiratory health have offered free resources to the Rensselaer School Board and Superintendent to understand specific health impacts on students. The REC has found the scientific and medical communities quickly took an interest in the Dunn Landfill for independent study. Why do our elected officials and New York State agencies refuse to take more of an interest? Despite what's been implied by DEC and Waste Connections over the years, a landfill touching a K - 12 school is **abnormal, unprecedented, and potentially very harmful**.
- REC met with NYSDEC and DOH on August 13 after requesting **State Assemblyman John T. McDonald III** and **Senator Jake Ashby** to get an explanation of DEC's air quality data from their monitor on top of the school. As a result of the meeting, REC has requested expanded testing of air quality at the fence line of the landfill to determine what is in the air coming out of the landfill. REC has indicted much more needs to be done to address community concerns at the school since it is defined as a "sensitive receptor" site by DEC. REC wants all parties to host a public meeting to explain air quality findings and the additional steps they plan to take directly with our community, and most importantly, allow the public to ask questions! Feel free to reach out to these representatives about their takeaways from this August 13th meeting, and how they plan to address the community's concerns, and their commitment to protecting the public. There has been overwhelming opposition to the renewal of the operating permit for the Dunn Landfill and REC would like our state representatives to join with the community in that opposition.

SAVE THE DATE - The REC will be hosting a community meeting at Rensselaer Public Library (676 East St, Rensselaer, NY 12144) September 25th from 6:30-7:30pm. FREE T-SHIRTS!

City Tax Bills Mailed Out Friday, September 6th

Due to recent budget delays, city tax bills will be mailed out on Friday, September 6th. Residents should start receiving their tax bills the following week. Please note the following important dates:

- Warrant Date: September 11th
- Due Date: October 11th (after which penalties will apply)

You can make your payment through various methods: by mail, online, in person, or using the drop box located on the side of the building. Please be aware that the Treasurer's Office does not accept credit card payments over the phone.

We apologize for any inconvenience this delay may cause and appreciate your understanding.

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).

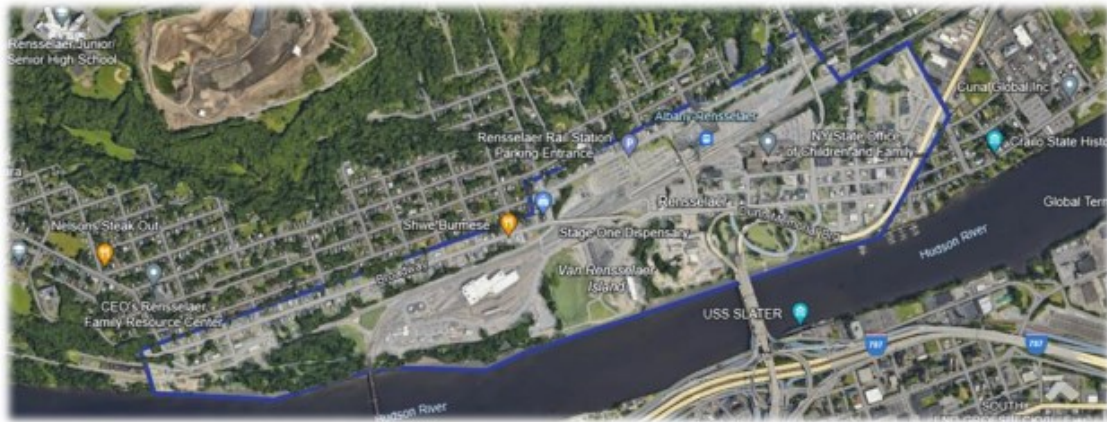
Agendas are posted on the City's website at <https://rensselaerny.gov/meeting-agendas-and-minutes> each Monday prior to the Workshops. Your attendance and input are important and your community needs your support. We hope to see you there!

Cat Found on Third Ave

A gorgeous all-black cat was picked up from the middle of the road around 8:45 p.m. Aug. 22. It was picked up on Third Avenue near Plum Street just east of the traffic light at Adams Street. It's believed to be female around 4-5 years old. The cat is affectionate and domesticated with a great personality. If no one claims it, then it will be up for adoption. This cat deserves a forever home. Please call Jim at 518-312-6688.

City of Rensselaer

Downtown Revitalization Initiative Survey



The City of Rensselaer is applying to the NYS Department of State for \$10 Million Dollars to expand and improve our downtown. Our plan extends our downtown area along the full length of Broadway from the Hudson River to East Street.

The area is zoned Downtown Mixed use and Waterfront Mixed Use and already includes many established businesses. The area has great potential for new businesses and community amenities (improved streets, public art, community services, events, etc.).

We are seeking input from the public on the things you would like to see in Rensselaer. You can use the QR Code below to complete the survey on your phone or the link below to complete the survey on your computer or you can fill out the paper survey and return it to the Planning Department at Rensselaer City Hall (62 Washington Street, Rensselaer, NY) or to the Rensselaer Public Library (676 East Street Rensselaer, NY).



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DTQBR8>

Please contact the City of Rensselaer Planning Department with any questions or concerns.
Phone: 518-462-4839 Email: thomas.hulihan@rensselaerny.gov

Downtown Revitalization Survey

1. What are Rensselaer's Greatest Assets?

2. What are Rensselaer's Greatest Challenges?

3. How would you like to describe Rensselaer's Downtown in 5-10 years?

4. What are the things that Rensselaer really needs (circle all that apply)?

Grocery Store	Restaurants	Cafes	Shops/Boutiques	Fast Food
Brewery	Music Venue	Bakery	Art Studio	Theatre
Gym/Yoga Studio	Cocktail Bar	Bank	Pharmacy	Convenience Store
Pet Grooming	Hardware Store	Video Game Store	Art and History Displays	
Other (please specify) _____				

5. What would you like to see on the Rensselaer waterfront?

6. What would you like to see near the Train Station?

7. Do you live and/or work in Rensselaer?

8. Please describe yourself (age, race, sex, etc.).

9. If you want to know more, please provide contact information (name, phone, email, address, etc.).

Please complete and return it to the Planning Department at Rensselaer City Hall (62 Washington Street, Rensselaer, NY) or to the Rensselaer Public Library (676 East Street Rensselaer, NY).

You Are Invited
To Share Your Ideas



**Downtown
Revitalization
Initiative**

**About: Rensselaer Rising and the
Downtown Revitalization Initiative**

SHARE IDEAS ABOUT WHAT RENSSELAER NEEDS

➤ September 19, 2024 from 4:00PM to 7:00PM
at Rensselaer Farmers Market in Riverfront Park

HELP US PRIORITIZE OUR PROJECTS

➤ October 1, 2024 from 3:00PM to 6:00PM
at Rensselaer City Hall (62 Washington Avenue)

➤ October 2, 2024 from 3:00PM to 4:00PM
at Rensselaer Public Library (676 East Street)



For the past year the City of Rensselaer has been working with LaBella Associates to engage the community in a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Study that we are calling “Rensselaer Rising.” Based on significant input from various stakeholders, including public meetings and surveys, Draft Visions and Goals as well as Preliminary Concept Plans for new development in the BOA area have been developed.

Partly informed by the BOA Study, the City of Rensselaer is applying to New York State for \$10 Million Dollars to expand and improve our downtown. Our Downtown Revitalization Initiative extends the downtown along the full length of Broadway from the Hudson River to East Street. This includes our waterfront and the area around the train station. We want to share more information and hear your ideas about what is needed.

Members of the community are invited to learn more about these efforts and to share ideas about what is needed in Rensselaer. This can be done by attending the meetings and by completing our survey.

Take Our Survey by 10/4/24
on your Phone or Computer



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DTQBR85>

For more information visit <https://www.rensselaerplanning.com/> or call 518-462-4839. Thank you.

Historic Grand Slam in Rensselaer



A historic moment in baseball history was commemorated once again as a state historic plaque marking the location where the first-ever grand slam was hit was recently unveiled. The plaque, dedicated by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation, honors Roger Connor of the National League's Troy Trojans, who achieved the feat on this site in 1881.

Connor's grand slam, a home run that drives in all runners on base, is a significant milestone in the sport's history. The National League, which Connor played for, eventually became Major League Baseball in 1903.

"This is a momentous occasion for the City of Rensselaer," said Mayor Mike Stammel. "The first grand slam in baseball history is a testament to our city's rich sporting heritage. We are proud to honor Roger Connor and his achievement."

The plaque is located at Riverfront Park, a popular destination for residents and visitors alike. The city hopes that the marker will draw more attention to the site and its historical significance.

Rensselaer County Summer Youth Employment



The City of Rensselaer was fortunate to have three youth work for us this summer through the Rensselaer County Summer Youth Employment Program. These youth were among many that were screened, hired and paid by Rensselaer County to gain valuable job experience at various locations throughout the county. They each worked up to 25 hours per week for 5 weeks over the summer.

In the City of Rensselaer, the three youth that were based in the Planning Department were 17 year-old Adrianna, 16 year-old Sierra and 15 year-old Ryan. They performed work for the Planning Department and for other departments throughout the city. Adrianna and Sierra assisted with routine offices tasks (copying, mailing, filing, scheduling, etc.) as well as with several more complex activities. The complex tasks involved inventorying and cataloguing several important assets within the City of Rensselaer.

Continued on page 8 —>

This included everything from evaluating the condition of murals in the Art Park area of Riverfront Park, Street Trees along Broadway and organizing and cataloguing maps, plans and other documents. They also served as an important voice for youth during planning meetings with community organizations. In addition to weekly interdepartmental staff meetings, this included meetings pertaining to our Road and Traffic Safety and a community redevelopment program called “Rensselaer Rising.” They shared meaningful insights to the large groups that included representatives from various community agencies.

Ryan primarily worked within our maintenance operations. His duties included keeping various locations clean. This included City Hall, the Police Station, the Public Library and several City Parks. He also helped with assuring that the landscaping in front of city hall was watered and free of weeds. All the youth were always cooperative, energetic and efficient.

The conclusion of their employment was celebrated with a party and they were each provided with letters of recommendation that they could use as they advance their education and career.

New Amenities Improve City Parks



The much-anticipated park improvement project in Rensselaer is nearing its final stages, transforming local green spaces into vibrant community hubs. Thanks to a generous Community Development Block Grant through the NYS Office of Homes & Community Renewal, the city has been able to install new benches, picnic tables, grills, water filling stations, and playgrounds in four neighborhood parks.

Community members have expressed their excitement and gratitude for these enhancements. "It's wonderful to see our parks revitalized. "These new amenities provide a great place for families and friends to gather and enjoy the outdoors."

The project, which began in late summer 2023, has already had a positive impact on the community. Children have been eager to explore the new Tracy Street Playground, while adults have appreciated the added seating and grilling options at Riverfront Park.

Sign up for our email newsletter!

SEPTEMBER 2024



RENSSELAER PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Library will be CLOSED
August 31 and September 2.



Friends of the Library

meeting September 19, 6 PM.

New members welcome!



Drop-in Computer help:

Wednesday, September 4
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.

NEW! drop-in tech help
every Thursday at 11 AM.

Stop in with a question or problem and our staff member Amber will help! We can also make appointments for one-on-one assistance.

TAG meeting Thursday September 26, 6 PM

Our Teen Advisory Group will meet, have snacks, and compare created levels from Mario Maker 2. Community service hours are given to TAG participants, ask for details. New members welcome, ages 12-18.



Saving Seeds

Saturday September 21, 1 PM. Learn how to gather and preserve seeds from your garden. If you have seeds to share, bring them for our new seed library!



*Pictures from
our summer!*



Library Board will meet September 9 at 4 PM due to holiday.



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



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF SOUTHERN RENSSELAER
COUNTY**

HELP SUPPORT OUR LOCAL YOUTH

**5th annual Christian Dabney
Memorial Fundraiser**

**Kid
Friendly**

Full Buffet

When: Sunday Sept 29th 2024

Where: Bourbon Street Grill

2209 Central Ave.

**Silent
Auction**

**Face
Painting**

BIG PRIZES!!!

& MORE!!!



This memorial fund was created in order to honor and remember our beloved Christian. 100% of all proceeds raised will go to Rensselaer's Boys And Girls Club. This Boys And Girls Club was a special part of Christian's childhood. That is where he spent time laughing, playing basketball and smiling.



We are a 501(C)3 Organization.

Ways to donate:

checks payable to: Christian Dabney Memorial Fund

**Venmo: @Marc-DeRusso - memo: CMD Memorial
Fund**

Trade Days at Crailo State Historic Site

Free Event

TRADE DAYS

AT CRAILO STATE HISTORIC SITE

Saturday, Sept. 21, and Sunday, Sept. 22, 2024

from 11 am to 4 pm, rain or shine.

9 1/2 Riverside Avenue, Rensselaer

518 - 463 - 8738

Fun for Everyone!

*17th & 18th century interpreters
African and Haudenosaunee storytelling
Weaponry & Brewing demonstrations
Music, Dance, Toys, Games, & activities
Museum open house*



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

W.J. Lyons & Co.

TIMES-UNION

City of Rensselaer Events and Meetings

P A G E

SEPTEMBER 2024

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

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CITY CLERK	518-462-4266	nancy.hardt@rensselaer.ny.gov	NANCY HARDT
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