

Background Information on RW's Bricks & Mortar Projects

Railroad Station

The Central Vermont Railroad Station sits in the center of Waterbury Village, at the head of Rusty Parker Memorial Park. Built in 1875, the station was the centerpiece of the downtown through the first half of the 20th century but had deteriorated over the ensuing years. While structurally sound, the station building had lost all of its Italianate Victorian architectural detailing and ornamentation that is so common to the streetscape of Waterbury. The interior had been totally reconfigured and partitioned into two separate spaces. The run-down condition did not present Waterbury's best face to local citizens and visitors.

Revitalizing Waterbury began planning the restoration of the station in 1997. In 1999 a \$25,000 grant from the Great American Station Foundation was awarded and a \$369,560 Vermont Agency of Transportation Enhancement Grant was received in 2000. Compared to these successes, negotiating a long-term lease with various railroad companies was much more difficult and took years. These negotiations received a serious setback following the events of September 11, 2001 when railway liability insurance increased ten-fold. However, in November 2003, the Village of Waterbury, by public vote, agreed to become the lessee and the lease was finally signed on August 2, 2004. The Village immediately sublet the property to Revitalizing Waterbury, Inc. In early 2005 Green Mountain Coffee Roasters Foundation awarded RW a \$450,000 grant that was to be matched by other funds. A capital fundraising campaign was established and successfully met the goal of \$1,200,000 through donations from the private sector and people from all walks of life.

Green Mountain Coffee (GMC) agreed to lease the station from RW after completion of the restoration. In October 2006 GMC signed a 10-year lease for the building.

The architectural firm of Arnold and Scangas of Colchester, VT was chosen with Laz Scangas as lead architect. K.R. Adams of Milton, VT was hired as the general contractor.

The scope of the restoration is amazing. The building has been transformed back to its original 1875 glory from a shell of its former self. First, corrective structural work was done on the trackside wall and canopy and water drainage problems had to be addressed. The baggage building on the eastside of the station that had been removed many years ago was rebuilt, as was the beautiful bell-shaped cupola on top of the central tower, the defining architectural element of the building. Interior work included exposing the 18 foot high original vaulted ceiling, creating the original space as a one room feeling and plumbing and electrical systems were brought up to code.

The station is an AMTRAK stop and passengers are now welcomed to Waterbury, Stowe and the Mad River Valley with a safe, clean and hospitable venue in which to arrive and depart as they travel by rail.

Green Mountain Coffee has created a visitor's center and café that has become a first

class attraction and provided an economic boost to the downtown. Thousands of visitors from around the world have passed through the doors since it opened in October 2006. Visitors now view exhibit space featuring Waterbury history, area information and the GMC story of social responsibility and fair trade.

Revitalizing Waterbury board members have volunteered thousands of hours over the past 10 years to make this project a success. RW pledged to see the project through to completion and in late 2008, after more negotiating with the railroads, purchased the station. This restoration project has been an example of successful collaboration among non-profit, governmental and business sectors.

The project was first and foremost conceived to serve local citizens and travelers to the Waterbury region by providing a focal point for the downtown historic district, a transfer point to other forms of transportation and as a gateway to Pilgrim Park, Waterbury's leading business district. Waterbury is home to several large employers as well as major tourist attractions such as Ben & Jerry's and Cold Hollow Cider Mill. Vermonters and tourists had not previously considered our downtown as a "destination." The restoration of the Waterbury Railroad Station and Revitalizing Waterbury's continued commitment to revitalizing downtown Waterbury and historic preservation has changed that forever.

The Stimson & Graves Block

Two dilapidated downtown buildings dodged the wrecking ball on December 10, 1992 when Governor Howard Dean formally announced that Waterbury Village would receive the \$550,000 it had requested to rehabilitate the historic Stimson and Graves buildings, then called the Knights of Columbus Block. The movement to rehabilitate the building and the downtown was dubbed "Miracles Happen."

Located at the very center of the Village, at the corner of Main and Stowe streets, the two cavernous three-story buildings had stood vacant for more than a year while village officials and members of Revitalizing Waterbury, scrambled to come up with the money needed to buy and renovate them. Earlier, in August 1991, a handful of Waterbury citizens contributed \$1000 apiece to ensure that the chance to rebuild this center of town would not be lost. On November 14, 1991, RW purchased the buildings for \$196,300.

The decision to take on the project grew from townspeople committed to a vibrant community. Town planner Valerie Capels and Village President Jeff Kilgore were significant forces behind the idea, which was bolstered by the involvement of Toni Gold, a Waterbury homeowner and housing consultant. With the Community Development Block Grant in place, and the Village's commitment of Revolving Loan Fund money, Revitalizing Waterbury people came to believe their vision could become a miracle for Waterbury as a whole.

Revitalizing Waterbury partnered with Burlington-based Housing Vermont, Inc., a statewide nonprofit that works with communities and the private sector to create

affordable rental housing. Housing Vermont's Vaughn Collins and Amy Johnston were instrumental in putting together a financial structure to cover the \$1.7 million rehabilitation costs and were able to oversee the very complicated rehab as well.

Construction began in 1991 and ended in 1994. When the project began in 1991, numerous town fathers gave public testimony seriously discouraging the Village from supporting the rehab that was key to the health of Waterbury's downtown. The members of Revitalizing Waterbury had a different vision for the downtown - a center that could become the focal point of the community and provide an identity, a sense of place, a visual community center for this changing town. The Miracle Happened.