

Revival News & Notes



The Newsletter of Revitalizing Waterbury, Inc.

Summer 2004

No. 1

Welcome

to our inaugural issue of *Revival News & Notes!* With a growing membership base, and our latest project getting closer to fruition, we want to keep the information flowing, and this newsletter will be one way of keeping the lines of communication open.

In future issues, we will write an article or two about our upcoming projects, and we hope you will give us some feedback – not only on this newsletter, but what you would like to see Revitalizing Waterbury tackle. It is important to us to know what your thoughts are, so we hope you will share them.

We are entering a new phase of growth, and we believe that with your participation, and your continued support, we can

remain the voice of conscientious growth in Waterbury, with an eye toward keeping our downtown historically and economically viable.

If you are ever interested in joining us at a board meeting, the schedule is listed with the names of the Board of Directors on the back. Never hesitate to contact any of us.

Thanks again for your support, and please enjoy the news. Needless to say, we will be very busy this summer. We'll let you know how it's going!

Laura Parette
President, Revitalizing Waterbury

Railroad Station Renovation Chugs Ahead

According to the attorneys working both for Revitalizing Waterbury and the Village, we are THIS CLOSE to signing the leases with the railroad companies, and taking control of the Railroad Station!

After a nearly seven year struggle to come to agreement with CN and CV Properties, Rail America and Amtrak, copies of the lease were distributed this spring among the companies to sign and deliver to the Village of Waterbury, who will in turn sign a sub-lease with RW for the station. Upon signing the leases, RW will finally begin the long-awaited renovation of the station.

As of the deadline for this newsletter, RW is negotiating what we hope will be one final aspect of the lease with one of the rail companies. If this detail can be worked out, we expect the last remaining signature to soon grace the lease and allow us to take control of the station. Commenting on the delay, Laura Parette, president of RW, said “we have been patient this long, and the issue is not a deal-killer, so we hope they will finish negotiations in good faith very soon and sign the lease.”

RW will begin their next phase of fundraising this summer and fall to raise the funds needed to complete Phase I of the station restoration. Funds allocated to RW by the Agency of Transportation will be released, and bids will be requested for the work. RW is also considering hiring a professional fundraiser to help us raise the funds needed to complete the whole project. “It may be easier, once the lease is secured, to go ahead and make a major push to raise the funds needed,” said Parette, “and if we do all the construction in one project, we won’t be interrupting any businesses that we may lease the station to.”

Jack Carter, past president of RW and proprietor of Stowe Street Emporium, has worked closely with Richard Darby, who represented RW in the negotiations. “I’m excited and relieved at the potential of this deal finally being done,” he said. “It couldn’t have been done without the help of many, including Senator



Architectural rendering of the station as it appeared in 1875.

Jeffords’ and Senator Leahy’s offices, who were instrumental in contacting the railroad companies and urging them to help us on this project.” Parette echoed Carter’s sentiments, and added, “The restoration of the railroad station has long been a goal of ours, and we can’t wait to get it done.” When finished, RW plans to rent the station to commercial businesses. The Flower Depot currently leases a part of the building.

Darby Receives Outstanding Contribution Award

Rick Darby received the Outstanding Contribution award at the recent Annual Meeting, held on March 12, 2004 at the Thatcher Brook Inn. Rick, partner at Darby, Stearns, Thorndike, Kolter and Ware has put in numerous hours on behalf of RW in negotiations with the various railroad companies. His diligence, dedication and patience has kept this project alive during this long period of disappointment and now jubilation. Rick has long worked to keep the downtown vital, from helping build the Dascomb Rowe Athletic Fields, to working with the Rotary on the summer concerts in the park. RW was proud to present Rick with an award acknowledging his contributions to RW and Waterbury.

Wells Randall House Sells at Auction

The Wells House/Gateway property at 73 S. Main Street, long a centerpiece of early 19th century architecture, was sold at auction on April 29 to Irving Saffran of Barre Realty for \$520,000, far above the expected price.

The Village of Waterbury and Housing Vermont partnered as a bidder, with the Village loaning Housing Vermont up to \$328,000 to purchase the building and pay the outstanding tax lien. Housing Vermont contributed \$100,000 to that amount, and participated in the bidding.

It was quick and furious, and passed the \$400,000 mark within minutes of starting. Saffran outbid the Martin family of Williston.

If the building had been won by HV and the Village, it was RW's intent to work with Housing Vermont in requesting the grants and loans necessary to rehabilitate the property. Housing Vermont had proposed tearing down the existing motel units and reconstructing new affordable housing. A study would have been done on the viability of restoring the Wells House, and converting it to a mixed use building of commercial use and housing.

While we are disappointed in not having a local owner to the building, we are hopeful the new owner will strive to improve the property, and we will remain a watchdog for the best interests of our downtown's historic and economic viability.

Revitalizing Waterbury Inc. is committed to the rebirth of an economically viable downtown. This is our vision:

- ◆ A clean and safe downtown which has architecturally and esthetically complimentary buildings and spaces with designs and detail that acknowledge their Waterbury, Vermont history when ever economically possible.
- ◆ We aim to support changes in the downtown which enhance our own authentic, small-town identity.
- ◆ A healthy market mix of retail and service stores will, because of their intrinsic functions and visual appeal, draw motorists from their cars into this downtown center that is designed for pedestrians.
- ◆ Parking areas conveniently located for retail stores, services and housing, all of which we value in the downtown.

We believe that our downtown can continue to be a viable economic and social center for the Town of Waterbury. Revitalizing Waterbury, Inc. encourages new directions for change, supports economic, cultural, and religious activity in the downtown that unifies and uplifts the community.

Please help us make Waterbury a better place to live and work! Join Revitalizing Waterbury and become involved in our efforts to restore, beautify and revitalize our downtown. Please contact us for more information ■■■▶

PLEASE JOIN US!

**RW meets the
2nd Tuesday
of each month at
5:30 pm in the
conference room of
the Chittenden Bank.**

Future meeting dates:

August 10
September 14
October 12
November 9
December 14

Revitalizing Waterbury Board of Directors 2004

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Bob McLeod
Joyce Rogan
PO Box 473
Waterbury, VT 05676
802.244.5321
rwaterbury@adelphia.net

Waterbury, VT 05676
PO Box 473

