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This is the City of Bridgeport Black Rock NRZ, Inc. annual report for 2011 submitted in accordance with the NRZ Bylaws Section 6.08.

**Organization**

At the June 2011 organizational meeting the following personnel were elected as officers of the executive board:

President:	Joseph Ianniello
Vice President:	Frank Basler
Treasurer:	John Marshall Lee
Secretary	Jackie Heneage

The Board of Directors and their terms of office after the June organizational meeting are listed in Appendix A.

The following members of the Board of Directors serve on the Nominating Standing Committee:

John Marshall Lee (Chairperson)  
Frank Basler  
Laura Hurwitz

In addition to the Nominating Standing Committee, the bylaws define six Standing Committees that drive the implementation process. The Standing Committees and their chairpersons are:



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Standing Committee Number	Name	Chairperson
1	Business & Economic Development	Joseph Ianniello
2	Education	Laura Hurwitz
3	Arts, Entertainment & Culture	Bruce Williams (Liaison)
4	Land Use, Development, & Historic Preservation	Gerry Manning
5	Outreach and Communications	Frank Basler
6	Quality of Life, Environment, & Public Safety	Christopher Adams

The Black Rock NRZ, Inc. has worked with members of the City of Bridgeport's administration. The following city employees have worked on projects with the Black Rock NRZ in 2011:

- ❖ Tom Coble, director of the Neighborhood Revitalization and Anti Blight
- ❖ Angie Staltaro, a member of the Neighborhood Revitalization Department
- ❖ Sam Shaw, a member of the Planning Department
- ❖ Keith Rodgerson, a member of the Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED) department

**Operations**

There were five meetings of the Black Rock NRZ Board of Directors in 2011.

As part of the bylaws the NRZ supports other Black Rock groups. In 2011 the NRZ worked with the following groups:

- ❖ Ash Creek Conservation Association (ACCA)
- ❖ Black Rock Business Association (BRBA)



- ❖ Black Rock Community Council (BRCC)
- ❖ Black Rock Families for Excellence (BRFE)
- ❖ Black Rock Garden Club (BRGC)
- ❖ Black Rock Homeowners Association (BRHA)
- ❖ Bridgeport NRZ Leadership Committee (BNLC)
- ❖ Burroughs Community Center (BCC)
- ❖ Friends of the Bridgeport Public Library (FBPL)
- ❖ Mayor's Beautification Awards Program

Highlights of the 2011 activities of the NRZ are summarized in the following paragraphs. The status of the tasks listed in the Strategic Plan is given in Appendix B.

### **Communications and Fund Raising**

- ❖ Raising funds is necessary for some of the NRZ critical tasks such as developing a Village District. The Black Rock NRZ, Inc. received their designation as a 501 (c) 3 organization in 2011 to facilitate fundraising.
- ❖ There was special meeting of the Black Rock NRZ Board of Directors with Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch that was held in the mayor's conference room. This meeting was requested by Mayor Bill Finch as a review of the activities of the Black Rock NRZ.

Members of the Mayor's staff also attended the meeting. The NRZ presented its structure, tasks, and plans. The Mayor stated he was impressed with the presentation and offered to assign a City Attorney specializing in land use to aid us in addressing those tasks.

- ❖ The Bridgeport NRZ Leadership Committee (BNLC) was officially formed in 2011 with the writing and approval of their bylaws. This committee consists of the existing six Bridgeport NRZs. Members of two NRZs that are in the planning stage are also invited to attend the meetings. Members of the Mayor's staff attended several meetings to report the status of existing projects in the city and to develop project plans for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds allocated in 2011 and help define projects for 2012 CDBG funding requests.

A major BNLC activity was to oppose the building of a 120-bed prison halfway house across from Went Field Park. This halfway house was twice the size of any others in the State. (The City administration also opposed this development). It was felt that the location was not appropriate. The BNLC hired an attorney and the petition to the Zoning Board was rejected.



The developers appealed the Zoning Board ruling and the BNLC attorney filed as an intervener with the court. The court has not yet ruled on the appeal.

### **Standing Committee 1: Business and Economic Development**

- ❖ The concept, approach, and status of the Village District to revitalize the business and entertainment area of Black Rock was presented to Donald Eversley, Director of the City's Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED) and members of this staff. The Black Rock Village District is modeled after the City's Downtown Village District (DVD). As a result of this meeting, funding was authorized for January 2012 to hire a consultant for Village District planning.
- ❖ The Black Rock NRZ board endorsed the City of Bridgeport Housing Association's (BHA) Albion Street project to construct a medical facility and low income housing a block away from the Village District. The building will consist of medical facilities on the ground floor and four stories of housing. This will be a major asset to the community, the Village District, and the City. HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding was applied for to do streetscape improvements on Albion Street between the new facility and the Village District. This money has been approved and streetscapes will be done in early 2012. Also, the Black Rock NRZ will ask that an abandoned and blighted building on Albion Street be condemned and demolished.
- ❖ The committee is in the process of doing a parking study for the Village District. The opening of a new train station within walking distance of a Black Rock residential area is a concern. Also, a pedestrian bridge may be built from the residential area to the train station. The density of the older neighborhood requires residents to park their vehicles on the street. There may be a problem if commuters park in the residential neighborhoods.
- ❖ The City's OPED department has funding for reimbursable grants up to \$1900 per business for storefront improvements. The committee worked with a member of OPED and met with business owners along Fairfield Avenue to discuss the grant. Several business owners took applications.

### **Standing Committee 2: Education**

- ❖ The expansion of Black Rock School to include grades 7 and 8 has started under State funding. Contamination was found in the soil in the area of the expansion and in a playground that is part of the school property. The City quickly addressed the problem and has ensured the contaminants are not of sufficient level to be dangerous. The playground was cordoned off as an



additional safety precaution. The NRZ plans to request CDBG funding in 2012 to relocate the playground.

- ❖ The education committee was also concerned about the students crossing Fairfield Avenue because there appears to be insufficient traffic signaling to aid pedestrians. This issue was referred to the BRCC Public Safety committee and they are addressing it with the Police Department.

### **Standing Committee 3: Arts, Entertainment, and Culture**

- ❖ The first annual "City by the Sea Art Fair" (CSAF) was held on May 14 and 15, 2011 at Captains Cove Marina in Black Rock. The Arts Fair was sponsored by the NRZ, BRCC, and Captains Cove Marina.

The committee was encouraged by the attendance given that this was the first of what is expected to be an annual event and the weather was poor. An estimated 200 to 300 people attended on Saturday and about 150 people attended on Sunday, even though it rained.

Next year's City by the Sea Art Fair will be held in June or July in the hope of having better weather than in 2011.

### **Standing Committee 4: Land Use, Development, & Historic Preservation**

- ❖ It was felt that a decision by the Bridgeport Historic District Commission (HDC) to enable the construction of condominiums on property that has an historic house on Brewster Street would have a negative impact on Black Rock's historic district. A suit was filed in superior court and the HDC's ruling was reversed.

In the meantime the house has deteriorated to the point where an attached three car garage collapsed. The subcommittee must address this issue in 2012.

### **Standing Committee 5: Outreach and Communications**

- ❖ The function of this committee is to find people to serve on the other committees and do a special outreach to people in the area between Ellsworth Street and Bostwick Avenue that was added to the traditional Black Rock area during the NRZ process. In 2011 the committee was instrumental in appointing board members from these new areas. Also, the committee



was instrumental in finding new chairpersons for Standing Committees 4 and 6.

**Standing Committee 6: Quality of Life, Environment, & Public Safety**

- ❖ The bike path through Black Rock was completed in 2012. This bike path will eventually connect to bike paths in the West Side and South End NRZs and will continue through towns North of Bridgeport up to and including Monroe, Connecticut.
- ❖ Saint Mary’s Park in Black Rock has sidewalks that provide safe access and recreation around the waterfront. These sidewalks were extended in 2011 to include access to Ash Creek and to assure the safety of people walking from the area designated as part of the Village District.
- ❖ The Black Rock Community Council (BRCC) continued to build their active and extensive Black Rock Block Watch program under their Public Safety Committee. In 2011 the Police Department established three City Sectors which resulted in a Police Captain who oversees Black Rock as part of his territory. The Captain attends the Safety Council meetings and has been very responsive to Black Rock needs. The NRZ maintains close contact with this organization.
- ❖ The Burroughs Community Center (BCC) completed reorganizing its operation to adjust for the completion of the Wakeman Boys and Girls Club adjacent to it. The BCC now concentrates on adult programs with the children’s programs being done by the Wakeman Boys and Girls Club. Both these organizations are a great asset to Black Rock. The NRZ participated in defining the transition.

Respectfully submitted;

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Joseph W. Ianniello  
President, Black Rock NRZ, Inc.

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Date



**Appendix A: Black Rock NRZ, Inc. Board Members**

<b>Regular Members</b>	<b>Term Expires (2011 Update)</b>
Frank Basler	June 2014
John Hernandez	June 2014
Peter Holecz	June 2014
Laura Hurwitz	June 2014
John Marshall Lee	June 2014
John Soltis	June 2014
Kraig Steffen	June 2014
Bruce Williams	June 2014
Christopher Adams	June 2013
Phil Blagys	June 2013
Bishop John Diamond	June 2013
Miguel Tomasio	June 2013
Felicia Stovall Upchurch	June 2013
Katherine Woodhead	June 2013
Luther Blackwell	June 2012
David Barbour	June 2012
Jackie Heneage	June 2012
Joe Ianniello	June 2012
Gerry Manning	June 2012
Kathy Van Renesse	June 2012

**Total number of Directors** **20**  
**Maximum authorized** **21**  
**Minimum number** **14**

**Ex Officio Members**

Susan Brannelly	Black Rock City Council Member
Martin McCarthy	Black Rock City Council Member
Angie Staltaro	Member of the City's Neighborhood Revitalization and Ant blight Department



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**Appendix B: Status of Strategic Plan Tasks**

The table on page 9 is from the Black Rock NRZ Strategic Plan page 33 and contains the summary of strategic tasks.

The status of each task is listed in the tables on pages 10 through 12.





## IX. NRZ Strategy

As a result of careful planning, analysis, and stakeholder input, the consultants recommend the following 39 components to create a successful revitalization strategy for Black Rock. An implementation timeframe is also indicated, with immediate implementation (■) occurring within one year, short-term implementation (□) in one to five years, and long-term implementation (Ⓜ) in six to ten years. Each strategy is further defined on the following pages.

<b>A. Implementation</b>	
1. Identify/create an entity to oversee implementation of the plan	■ Within 1 year
<b>B. Environment and Open Space</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
2. Participate in design of improvements to Ellsworth Park	■ Within 1 year
3. Participate in design of improvements to P.T. Barnum Park	□ 1-5 Years
4. Develop Black Rock Waterfront Linear Park	Ⓜ 6-10 Years
<b>C. Arts, Culture and Entertainment</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
5. Develop a strategic plan for the Arts, Culture and Entertainment Industry in Black Rock (include plan for interface with business and economic development plans)	□ 1-5 Years
6. Identify developer/funding and sites for artist and entertainment venues including live/work spaces, an arts center and multi-use performance venues.	□ 1-5 Years
7. Develop a public art plan to commission juried public art.	Ⓜ 6-10 Years
<b>D. Zoning, Land Use and Historic Preservation</b>	
8. Develop guidelines for and ratify the Conservation Overlay Zone	□ 1-5 Years
9. Influence ordinance re-draft to include denial of zone changes in historic districts	□ 1-5 Years
10. Develop preservation loan program	□ 1-5 Years
11. Draft and promote dock ordinance	□ 1-5 Years
12. Pursue alternative development options for 340-344 Brewster Street	■ Within 1 year
<b>E. Business and Economic Development</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
13. Establish a liaison within the City for business and neighborhood development in Black Rock	■ Within 1 year
14. Eliminate inappropriate commercial uses	□ 1-5 Years
15. Identify, encourage, and support high-priority development opportunities	□ 1-5 Years
16. Create incentives for sustainable development	□ 1-5 Years
17. Plan for the further development of Brewster Street	Ⓜ 6-10 Years
<b>F. Design Review and Development Standards</b>	
18. Establish Black Rock Village District and guidelines	■ Within 1 year
19. Create commercial rehabilitation and façade improvement programs	□ 1-5 Years
20. Develop plan for streetscape improvements	□ 1-5 Years
<b>G. Circulation, Access, Transportation, and Parking</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
21. Develop neighborhood gateways	■ Within 1 year
22. Improve existing municipal parking lots	■ Within 1 year
23. Provide traffic lights or other traffic-calming devices at trouble intersections	□ 1-5 Years
24. Investigate potential for neighborhood trolley route	□ 1-5 Years
25. Investigate potential for foot bridge across Ash Creek	□ 1-5 Years
26. Enable bicycle access in Black Rock	□ 1-5 Years
27. Implement on-street parking regulations	■ Within 1 year
28. Develop parking plan for Black Rock Library	□ 1-5 Years
29. Explore expansion of municipal parking on available sites	□ 1-5 Years
<b>H. Quality of Life</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
30. Increase communication between the City, public safety, and the community	■ Within 1 year
31. Advocate for a police officer position dedicated to Black Rock	■ Within 1 year
<b>I. Education</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
32. Improve infrastructure at Black Rock schools	□ 1-5 Years
33. Increase children's access to education, including transportation to neighborhood events	□ 1-5 Years
34. Emphasize partnerships within Black Rock	■ Within 1 year
35. Identify additional funding for gaps in education	□ 1-5 Years
36. Support keeping Black Rock School as a neighborhood school	■ Within 1 year



<b>Task Number</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>A Implementation</b>			
1	Identify/create an entity to oversee implementation of the plan	Completed	
<b>B Environment &amp; Open Space</b>			
2	Participate in design of improvements to Ellsworth Park	Completed	
3	Participate in design of improvements to P.T. Barnum Park	Completed	The City working with Cal Ripken foundation announced a state-of-art little league ball field to be built on current field
4	Develop Black Rock Waterfront Linear Park	Started	Initial reviews in process
<b>C Arts, Culture, &amp; Entertainment</b>			
5	Develop a strategic plan for the Arts, Culture and Entertainment Industry in Black Rock (include plan for interface with business and economic development plans)	On going	The first annual City by the Sea Arts Fair was held at Captains Cove Marina on 2 days in May 2011
6	Identify developer/funding and sites for artist and entertainment venues including live/work spaces, an arts center and multi-use performance venues.	On hold	
7	Develop a public art plan to commission juried public art.	Completed	Annual Arts Festival (See task 5)
<b>D Zoning, Land Use, Historic Preservation</b>			
8	Develop guidelines for and ratify the Conservation Overlay Zone	Guidelines Developed	A City Attorney to be assigned to help with this
9	Influence ordinance re-draft to include denial of zone changes in historic districts	On hold	A City Attorney to be assigned to help with this
10	Develop preservation loan program	Not Started	
11	Draft and promote dock ordinance	Ordinance drafted	A City Attorney to be assigned to help with this
12	Pursue alternative development options for 340-344 Brewster Street	In process	Superior court reversed Historic Commission ruling. Will begin process to consider alternative solutions



<b>Task Number</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>E Business &amp; Economic Development</b>			
13	Establish a liaison within the City for business and neighborhood development in Black Rock	Completed	
14	Eliminate inappropriate commercial uses	On hold	
15	Identify, encourage, and support high-priority development opportunities	On going	
16	Create incentives for sustainable development	Not being addressed by the NRZ	The City is addressing this.
17	Plan for the further development of Brewster Street	In process	
<b>F Design Review and Development Standards</b>			
18	Establish Black Rock Village District and guidelines	In process	Draft zoning overlay and design guide documents done. Needs professional review.
19	Create commercial rehabilitation and façade improvement programs	In process	Part of Village District
20	Develop plan for streetscape improvements	In process	Part of Village District
<b>G Circulation, Access, Transportation, &amp; Parking</b>			
21	Develop neighborhood gateways	Identified	
22	Improve existing municipal parking lots	In process	Main municipal lot was repaved and lined. Parking study in process that identifies need.
23	Provide traffic lights or other traffic-calming devices at trouble intersections	In process	State has provided lights on Brewster Street near new train station. Need to address traffic lights on Fairfield Avenue.
24	Investigate potential for neighborhood trolley route	On hold	
25	Investigate potential for foot bridge across Ash Creek	In process	State is doing a feasibility study for foot bridge from Fox Street to new train station
26	Enable bicycle access in Black Rock	Completed	



<b>Task Number</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
27	Implement on-street parking regulations	In process	Parking study in process
28	Develop parking plan for Black Rock Library	In process	Parking study in process
29	Explore expansion of municipal parking on available sites	In process	Parking study in process
<b>H Quality of Life</b>			
30	Increase communication between the City, public safety, and the community	Done by BRCC	A Sector Captain works with BRCC Public Safety Comm.
31	Advocate for a police officer position dedicated to Black Rock	BRCC	This exists at the patrol and leadership levels.
<b>I Education</b>			
32	Improve infrastructure at Black Rock schools	In process	Adding infrastructure for grades 7 and 8.
33	Increase children's access to education, including transportation to neighborhood events	On going	Several events were done in 2011.
34	Emphasize partnerships within Black Rock	Completed	
35	Identify additional funding for gaps in education	In process	
36	Support keeping Black Rock School as a neighborhood school	On going	Construction started to increase school from K to 8.