



This Black Rock NRZ 2013 Annual Report is submitted in accordance with the NRZ Bylaws Section 6.08.

Organization

At the June 2013 organizational meeting the following personnel were elected as officers of the Executive Committee:

President:	Gerry Manning
Vice President:	Stephanie Barnes
Treasurer:	John Marshall Lee
Secretary	Frank Basler
Immediate Past President	Joseph Ianniello
Member at Large	Philip Blagys

The Board of Directors as of June 2013 and their terms of office are listed in Appendix A.

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

John Marshall Lee (Chairman) Laura Hurwitz John Soltis

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:

Standing Committee	Name	Chairperson
1*	Business & Economic Development	James White
2	Education	Laura Hurwitz
3	Arts, Entertainment & Culture	Bruce Williams (Liaison)
4	Land Use, Development, & Historic Preservation	James White
5	Outreach and Communications	Frank Basler
6	Quality of Life, Environment, & Public Safety	Kraig Steffen John Gibson

* A special subcommittee of Standing Committee 1 was established to focus on the Village District development. This subcommittee is chaired by Stephanie Barnes.



The Black Rock NRZ, Inc. worked with members of the City of Bridgeport's administration. The following employees have worked on projects with the Black Rock NRZ in 2013:

- ❖ Deborah Thomas Sims, Director of the Neighborhood Revitalization Department
- ❖ Christopher Rosario, Director of Anti Blight
- ❖ Angie Staltaro, a member of the Neighborhood Revitalization Department
- ❖ Keith Rodgeron, a member of the Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED) department

Operations

There were four regular meetings of the Black Rock NRZ Board of Directors in 2013. There were many meetings of the NRZ Standing Committees.

As part of the bylaws the NRZ supports other Black Rock groups. In 2013, the NRZ worked with the following groups:

- ❖ Ash Creek Conservation Association (ACCA)
- ❖ Black Rock Artists Guild (BRAG) formed in 2013.
- ❖ Black Rock Business Association (BRBA) was reformed in 2013. The NRZ supported this effort.
- ❖ Black Rock Community Council (BRCC)
- ❖ Black Rock Families for Excellence (BRFE)
- ❖ Black Rock Garden Club (BRGC)
- ❖ Burroughs Community Center (BCC)
- ❖ Friends of the Bridgeport Public Library (FBPL)
- ❖ Mayor's Beautification Awards Program
- ❖ ONEBridgeport

The Black Rock NRZ was one of the two founding members of the Bridgeport NRZ Leadership Committee (BNLC) that consisted of the leaders in each of the 7 Bridgeport NRZs. The BNLC had monthly meetings with members of the Mayor's staff to discuss the status of the various City projects in each of the NRZ districts.

Fund Raising

The Black Rock NRZ, Inc. received their designation as a 501 (c) 3 organization in 2011 to facilitate fundraising.



At the end of 2013 the NRZ treasury had a balance of \$1,851.68. In 2013, \$100 was expended to support materials for a Board Member to assist in organizing the Black Rock Business Association (BRBA). \$150 was spent to handle State and Federal filing or reporting fees. The use of a USPS box was terminated since so little actual mail was received.

CDBG Funding Requests

Applications for three projects were submitted in 2013 for CDBG funding. CDBG regulations require that funding only be allocated to low/moderate income areas. In Black Rock Census Tract 702 (roughly Ellsworth Street to I-95) meets this requirement. The projects submitted were:

- ❖ Commercial rehabilitation of Fairfield Avenue between Ellsworth Street and I-95 (\$25K).
- ❖ Streetscapes on Ellsworth Street and Martin Terrace around the Burroughs Community Center (\$70K).
- ❖ Refurbishment of tennis courts in Ellsworth Field (\$45K).

None of these requests were granted; however, the City allocated funds for the refurbishment of the tennis courts at Ellsworth Field. This project is expected to start in 2014.

Highlights of the 2013 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.

Highlights of NRZ Activities

Standing Committee 1: Business and Economic Development:

The NRZ received PY 37 (July 2011 to June 2012) CDBG funding for a Village District Study. The study was awarded to BFJ a New York City based company. Because of the late award of contract the study was started in late August and had to be completed by September 30, 2012. The award was for \$12,500. The project was completed and a Village District Zoning Overlay plan was developed for Census Tract 702. The City's Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED) is reviewing this plan for incorporation in their development activity.

The advantages of a Village District are:



- ❖ Providing a way of protecting sections of towns that have a distinctive character, landscapes, and historic significance and structures.
- ❖ Enabling zoning commissions to adopt regulations governing such matters as design and placement of buildings and maintenance of public views.
- ❖ Retaining valuable elements of the Black Rock cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history and promoting a vibrant commercial environment and community shopping needs of Black Rock.

At the end of 2013 State Representative Auden Grogins asked for state funding to address improvements along the complete business corridor along Fairfield Avenue. On January 10, 2014 the state allocated \$500,000 for this effort. Representative Auden Grogins, the Office of Planning and Economic Development, the Black Rock NRZ, and the Black Rock Business Association are in the process of developing a plan for this funding.

The State continues to study the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge from Black Rock to the new Fairfield train station. Members of the Black Rock NRZ participated in this study. This project, if implemented, will tie in nicely with the Village District development.

Standing Committee 2 Education:

Black Rock School: The expansion of Black Rock School started in 2011. State Representative Auden Grogins was able to secure funds of \$10M from the State and \$2M from the City for the project. Black Rock School had selected an architect and project manager for the expansion. In 2013 the progress continued on adding pre-K and 7th and 8th grades to Black Rock School. A problem occurred with one of the buildings the city attempted to acquire. Instead of using the lengthy eminent domain process, it was decided to revise the plan.

The bidding process took longer than expected, however, construction has begun. The ground breaking ceremony was on October 8, 2013. The construction team is still predicting a completion date of September 2014.

Longfellow School: The second grammar school in Black Rock was found to have environmental problems. The state provided funds to raze the school and build a new one. It is expected to be completed by the end of 2015.

Standing Committee 3: Arts, Entertainment, and Culture:

The Third Annual City by the Sea art show was held at Captain's Cove on August 24th and 25th. In 2013 the show was juried: artist and University of Bridgeport professor Peter Konsterlie selected 32 paintings from the sixteen artists who applied. The weather was beautiful; once again there were fun activities for



children, and the event was very well attended. Earlier, in July, the committee had a show at Black Rock's Framemakers gallery, for the three winners of last year's City by the Sea art show.

A new arts group was formed in 2013 called the Black Rock Artists Guild (BRAG). The founding committee consisted of Michelle Hubler, Judy Noel, and Gail Robinson. There are 25 artists who meet the second Thursday of each month at Burroughs Community Center. Their first show was held at Burroughs on October 19th. The show continued with the paintings being displayed at Framemakers Gallery during the month of November.

This Standing Committee also works with the BRCC History Committee as described below.

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

In the Strategic Plan Summary of tasks, Task 12 stated, "Pursue alternative development options for 340-344 Brewster Street." This objective was basically completed in 2013 with the NRZ leading the effort to forge an agreement between a developer, the community, and the City administration.

Background: This property at 340-344 Brewster Street consists of an historic house and a large lot located mainly to the rear of the house. In 2008 the property was sold to a developer who applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness with the Historic District Commission (HDC) to demolish the historic house and build condominiums. Members of the community challenged the request and the HDC refused permission. The developer then provided another plan to leave the historic house intact and build three duplexes on the rear lot. Access to the duplexes was to be via a driveway through the three car attached garage. The HDC ruled in favor of the plan, but a neighbor sued the HDC and their decision was reversed by Superior Court.

The house stood unoccupied and was allowed to deteriorate. The three car garage collapsed. The house became a neighborhood eyesore.

In 2012 Standing Committee 4 met several times with the attorney for the developer and worked out a plan to resolve the situation. The NRZ and the Black Rock Community Council (BRCC) sponsored a community meeting whose attendance included many of the home owners who live in close proximity to 340-344 Brewster Street. The plan worked out between the attorney and the NRZ was presented at the meeting. A vote was taken and the majority felt that the plan was acceptable.

A Letter of Intent was developed and approved by the Black Rock NRZ and the Developer that captured the details of the plan. In the Letter of Intent the NRZ and



the community agreed that the large rear lot would be divided into two lots zoned for residential, single family housing. The Historic District Commission would ensure the historic house and the houses built on these lots would meet requirements of the historic district. The developer would post a surety bond with the City such that the restoration of the historic house would be completed under the auspices of the Historic District Commission within a year of the granting of permits from the zoning boards and the Commission.

The advantage to the developer was the extra lot created by the subdivision and the ability to move forward. The advantage to the community was the elimination of the eyesore of the abandoned historic house.

2013 Activities: The NRZ and community members supported the developer in his appearances before the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning and Zoning Commission. Both boards incorporated the Letter of Intent in their conditions of approval.

After the agreement by the zoning boards the historic house was sold. The new owner appeared before the Historic District Commission and has started renovations of the house.

Standing Committee 5: Outreach and Communications:

The function of this committee is to find people to serve on the other committees and make 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 2013 the committee was instrumental in finding board members for the NRZ. Also, the committee was instrumental in finding new chairpersons for Standing Committee 6.

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

The environmental issues that are part of Standing Committee 6 tasks are closely aligned with the Ash Creek Conservation Association's (ACCA) strategic plan. Kraig Steffen, who serves on both the NRZ's and the ACCA's Board of Directors, and John Gibson, also on the NRZ's and ACCA's Board of Directors, have agreed to co-chair Standing Committee 6. This combining of the two organizations will provide a more powerful and efficient way to address these issues.

The new co-chairs feel there should be an effort that focuses on well-defined projects that improve the overall environmental quality of life in Black Rock. As in early NRZ planning documents the projects were divided into short, medium and long term projects. Their objectives will be as follows.



Short Term:

- Improve bikeway along the Black Rock part of the City's bike path.
- Improve micro green space by working with Garden Club and BRCC. For example the Fairfield Avenue berms.
- Address the problem of abandoned lots
- Restore the Seabright Beach. Work with the City to fix the storm drains and install a new, improved sidewalk at the Seabright beach.

Medium Term:

- Coordinate community input for St. Mary's Beach with the BRGC, BRCC, ACCA, and the City.
- Improve berm plantings at the Saint Mary's barrier beach.
- Provide community information/projects on street drains, rain gardens, rain barrels, invasive species, and other sustainability and/or green infrastructure projects.
- Develop and support school/community projects with environmental/green space themes.
- Address the effort to include the Mill River curriculum into Black Rock School.

Long Term:

- Address infrastructure concerns such as the Combined Storm and Sewer drainage system.
- Work on restoration projects along Black Rock Harbor and Ash Creek.

BRCC Activities Closely Related to the NRZ Strategic Plan

Members of the BRCC were part of the NRZ Planning Phase and helped develop the NRZ Strategic Plan. Because of their expertise they lead the activities described below and deserve full credit for the accomplishments described. Part of the NRZ's role in supporting them is because of the NRZ's formal relationships to the City of Bridgeport and the State.

The BRCC continues to build their active and extensive Black Rock Block Watch program under their Public Safety Committee. The Police Captain who oversees Black Rock as part of his sector attends the monthly meetings of the Area Coordinators.



Philip Blagys (President of the BRCC, chairs the Public Safety Committee) is also a member of the NRZ Executive Committee.

The Black Rock Public Safety Committee collects statistics on crimes in the Black Rock area from city-wide reports supplied by the Police Department. These reports are reviewed monthly at the Area Coordinators Safety Committee meeting. Information is then provided to all block watch members about crimes and any other issues that they should consider.

The Public Safety Committee has a webpage on the BRCC website. Residents can access and view crime issues, and ask questions about the program and area issues through this webpage. The webpage also collects information about problems residents may experience with either a 911 emergency call or a non-emergency call. The committee interfaces with the Head of the Dispatch Operations Center and also with the Police Captain that heads the City's West Command.

In 2013, the BRCC Public Safety Committee developed a Block Watch Program Manual that defines the block watch program. This manual was approved by the Public Safety Committee's Area Coordinators and has been reviewed by the Bridgeport Police Department. It is being reviewed by attorneys, and when this review is approved it will be submitted to the BRCC Executive Committee for final approval.

Also in 2013, a BRCC Public Safety Committee Block Watchers Handbook was developed for members of the block watch organization. This handbook is in the approval process.

Another BRCC committee, associated with the NRZ Strategic Plan is the Historic Committee also headed by Phil Blagys. The committee has placed two historical markers along the coast of Long Island Sound in Black Rock. These are the Isaac Chauncey plaque on his homestead on Seabright Ave and the Caleb Brewster marker located at the corner of Ellsworth and Brewster Streets, the site of the Brewster farm.

In 2013, the Historic Committee worked on placing an historic plaque to commemorate Kate Moore, who worked as the lighthouse keeper for 54 years during the 19th Century. A U.S. Coast Guard Cutter was commissioned in May 2013 bearing her name. The committee is also planning a walking tour on Fayerweather Island, where the Black Rock Lighthouse is located, that will focus on the life and work of Kate Moore. The dedication ceremony should be held in June 2014 and it is expected that the Kate Moore Coast Guard Cutter will sail to Black Rock for this ceremony.



Lighthouse Restoration: There is money being distributed by the National Park Service through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in Hartford for structures adversely affected by Hurricane Sandy. The BRCC Historic Commission initiated a discussion with the Mayor and the City's Central Grants Department, who then submitted a request for \$350,000 to restore the base of the lighthouse. The grant is being considered by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerry Manning
President, Black Rock NRZ, Inc.

Date

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

Date



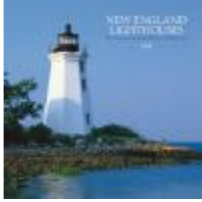
Appendix A: Black Rock NRZ, Inc. Board Members

Regular Members	Term Expires (2013 Update)
Phil Blagys	June 2016
Joy Cline	June 2016
Bishop John Diamond	June 2016
John Gibson	June 2016
Shaquanna Shaw	June 2016
Felicia Stovall Upchurch	June 2016
James B. White	June 2016
Stephanie Barnes	June 2015
David Barbour	June 2015
Joe Ianniello	June 2015
Gerry Manning	June 2015
Maritzka Jones Stevenson	June 2015
John Schwarten	June 2015
Frank Basler	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

Grand total number of Directors 20
Maximum authorized members 21
Minimum number of members 14

Ex Officio Members	
Susan Brannelly	130 th City Council Member
*Steven Stafstrom	130 th City Council Member
Angie Staltaro	Member of City NRZ Department

*In December 2013 Rick Torres replaced Steven Stafstrom as the 130th City Council Member.



Appendix B: Status of Strategic Plan Tasks

The table on page 12 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 13 through 15.

A summary of the status of the Strategic Plan tasks is:

Task Status	Number	Percent
Completed	15	42%
On-going	4	11%
In-process	12	33%
Not Started, cancelled, or dererred	5	14%
Total	36	



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.

A. Implementation		
1.	Identify/create an entity to oversee implementation of the plan	■ Within 1 year
B. Environment and Open Space		Implementation
2.	Participate in design of improvements to Ellsworth Park	■ Within 1 year
3.	Participate in design of improvements to P.T. Bamum Park	□ 1-5 Years
4.	Develop Black Rock Waterfront Linear Park	Ⓜ 6-10 Years
C. Arts, Culture and Entertainment		Implementation
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
D. Zoning, Land Use and Historic Preservation		
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
E. Business and Economic Development		Implementation
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
F. Design Review and Development Standards		
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
G. Circulation, Access, Transportation, and Parking		Implementation
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
H. Quality of Life		Implementation
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
I. Education		Implementation
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



Task Number	Activity	Status	Comments
A Implementation			
1	Identify/create an entity to oversee implementation of the plan	Completed	
B Environment & Open Space			
2	Participate in design of improvements to Ellsworth Park	Completed	Improvements completed except for tennis courts
3	Participate in design of improvements to P.T. Barnum Park	Completed	The Cal Ripken foundation built a state-of-art little league ball field at P.T. Barnum park
4	Develop Black Rock Waterfront Linear Park	Cancelled	Not feasible at this time
C Arts, Culture, & Entertainment			
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 third annual City by the Sea Arts Fair was held at Captains Cove Marina on 2 days in August 2013. A new arts group BRAG was formed in Black Rock.
6	Identify developer/funding and sites for artist and entertainment venues including live/work spaces, an arts center and multi-use performance venues.	On going.	
7	Develop a public art plan to commission juried public art.	Completed	Annual Arts Festival (See task 5)
D Zoning, Land Use, Historic Preservation			
8	Develop guidelines for and ratify the Conservation Overlay Zone	In process	Guidelines Developed. This is being pursued by ACCA (see below)
9	Influence ordinance re-draft to include denial of zone changes in historic districts	Deferred	See Standing Committee 4 accomplishments.
10	Develop preservation loan program	In process	This is being pursued by ACCA
11	Draft and promote dock ordinance	In process	Ordinance drafted. This is being pursued by ACCA
12	Pursue alternative development options for 340-344 Brewster Street	Completed	See Standing Committee 4 accomplishments



Task Number	Activity	Status	Comments
	E Business & Economic Development		
13	Establish a liaison within the City for business and neighborhood development in Black Rock	Completed	
14	Eliminate inappropriate commercial uses	Completed	Done by ONE Bridgeport
15	Identify, encourage, and support high-priority development opportunities	On going	See Standing Committee 4 accomplishments
16	Create incentives for sustainable development	Not an NRZ task.	This is a major effort by the City administration.
17	Plan for the further development of Brewster Street	Deferred	This will be economically feasible when a successful Village District is achieved.
	F Design Review and Development Standards		
18	Establish Black Rock Village District and guidelines	Completed	City is reviewing.
19	Create commercial rehabilitation and façade improvement programs	In process	Part of Village District activity. State allocated \$500K for 2014.
20	Develop plan for streetscape improvements	In process	Part of Village District activity
	G Circulation, Access, Transportation, & Parking		
21	Develop neighborhood gateways	Completed	
22	Improve existing municipal parking lots	In process	Main municipal lot was repaved and lined.
23	Provide traffic lights or other traffic-calming devices at trouble intersections	In process	State \$500K State grant to address thi in 2014.
24	Investigate potential for neighborhood trolley route	Cancelled	Not feasible at this time
25	Investigate potential for foot bridge across Ash Creek	In process	The State is doing a feasibility study for foot bridge from Fox Street to new train station
26	Enable bicycle access in Black Rock	Completed	



Task Number	Activity	Status	Comments
27	Implement on-street parking regulations	In process	\$500K State grant to address this.
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
H Quality of Life			
30	Increase communication between the City, public safety, and the community	Completed (Done by BRCC)	A Sector Captain works with BRCC Public Safety Comm.
31	Advocate for a police officer position dedicated to Black Rock	Completed (Done by BRCC)	This exists at the patrol and leadership levels.
I Education			
32	Improve infrastructure at Black Rock schools	Completed	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	Completed	Construction started to increase school from pre-K to 8.