



This Black Rock NRZ 2014 Annual Report is submitted in accordance with the NRZ Bylaws Section 6.08.

**Organization**

At the June 2014 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	John Schwarten
Immediate Past President	Joseph Ianniello
Member at Large	Philip Blagys

The Board of Directors as of June 2014 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	Open
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.



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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 2014:

- ❖ Deborah Thomas-Sims, Director of the Neighborhood Revitalization Department
- ❖ Angie Staltaro, a member of the Neighborhood Revitalization Department

### **Operations**

There were four regular meetings of the Black Rock NRZ Board of Directors in 2014. There were many meetings of the NRZ Standing Committees.

As part of the bylaws the NRZ supports other Black Rock groups. In 2014, the NRZ worked with the following groups:

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

The Black Rock NRZ was one of the two founding members of the Bridgeport NRZ Leadership Committee (BNLC) that consists of the leaders in each of the eight Bridgeport NRZs. Joseph Ianniello, a member of the Black Rock NRZ Executive Committee, was elected Secretary of the BNLC in April 2014.

### **Fund Raising**

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

In 2014 grants were received totaling \$25,600. At the end of 2014 the NRZ treasury had a balance of \$16,100.



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### **CDBG Funding Requests**

The Black Rock NRZ was awarded a \$25,000 Community Development Block Grant under the Federal HUD program.

### **Highlights of NRZ Activities**

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

The process for obtaining a State grant for a pedestrian bridge from Black Rock to the new Fairfield train station continues. The study was completed in March 2014. The grant application needs to go to the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation Capital Improvement Program. The total cost is estimated at about \$2.5 million. State Representative Auden Grogins has lobbied state officials to support construction of the bridge across the Ash Creek Estuary that divides Black Rock from the Town of Fairfield where the Metro station is located.

Governor Malloy met with State Representative Auden Grogins and city development chief David Kooris in September 2014. Joined by Black Rock community members the governor was taken on a walking tour of the Fairfield Avenue business corridor to discuss the \$500,000 State grant and the Black Rock pedestrian bridge across Ash Creek to the Fairfield Metro North train station.

Village District Subcommittee: Subcommittee members met with David Kooris, City of Bridgeport Economic Development Director, and several members of his staff to discuss the Village District concept and zoning on Fairfield Avenue. They were informed that the City is in the final stages of drafting new zoning rules for Fairfield Avenue and similar commercial districts throughout the City – rules which are aimed at improving curb appeal and the “pedestrian experience.” They asked that when the draft of those rules will be finalized, it be presented to the NRZ for review and comment before it is presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission for approval.

The NRZ President presented a list of \$775,500 worth of Black Rock District Improvements that have been proposed. State Representative Auden Grogins, who has secured State bond money for Fairfield Avenue business district improvement for \$500,000, said much of this could be accomplished within the bonding amount. For example, some of the items could be done by the City using capital funds instead of the bond money.



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**Standing Committee 2 Education:**

Black Rock School: Black Rock School construction was delayed because the bidding process took longer than expected. The construction team has moved the completion date from September 2014 to January 2015.

Longfellow School: The flood management plan was just completed by the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). It has been referred to the Inland Water Resource Division for assessment. After the assessment, requests for bids for demolition were issued and the demolition was completed. The target completion date is June 2016.

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

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

The fourth annual City by the Sea Art show was held on September 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> at Captains Cove Seaport. Prize winners from last year's show will have their work displayed at Framemakers Gallery on Fairfield Avenue. In the future the show may include music as part of the program.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup> replicas of the Nina and the Pinta were at Captains Cove and the public was allowed to tour the boats.

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, Father's Day, fifteen 1930's styled hydroplanes participated in the second Annual Aqua Cup race on Black Rock Harbor. On the night before students at the Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture and Science School had a presentation on how they build the boats.

On September 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014 the Sacred Heart University sailing team hosted its first meet here at Captain's Cove. Known as the Sacred Heart Invitational, it was held under the auspices of the New England Intercollegiate Sailing Association. Universities and colleges participating included Sacred Heart, Fairfield University, Tufts, UCONN, Wesleyan, University of Rhode Island, and Mitchell College. Over 100 student athletes, plus parents and coaches, were in the Black Rock for the weekend.

**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." Most of the external renovation



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has been done in accordance with requirements of the City's Historic District Commission. The owner has moved into the house.

This Standing Committee continues to work with developers. A developer submitted a petition to the Zoning Board of Appeals asking for variances to build an apartment complex 3115 Fairfield Avenue. Among the variances requested was an increase in the allowable height to enable 6 stories and reduced parking requirements. The density was too high and traffic would not be appropriate for the location. The committee worked with the developer and a compromise was reached that was acceptable to the community. The NRZ supported the petitions at both the Zoning and Planning public hearings and the petitions were accepted.

**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.

**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 and John Gibson, both serve on both the NRZ's and the ACCA's Board of Directors, co-chair the NRZ's Standing Committee 6. This combining of the two organizations will provide a more powerful and efficient way to address these issues.

The ACCA is continuing to develop its Master Plan for the restoration of the Saint Mary's sand spit area. There are many benefits for putting in a great deal more sand both for beach grass and wildlife and to protect the marsh and neighboring houses on the North side of the sand spit. The proposal is a win-win, since more sand will also benefit those who want to use the spit for sun bathing and picnicking. Three parties are involved: Bridgeport, the Town of Fairfield, and the State. The ACCA will ask the NRZ Board of Directors to support discussions of restoration plans with these three parties.

The Ash Creek Conservation Commission (ACCA) was awarded \$15,000 as part of a consent decree to repair damage a cement company has done at Ash Creek.

The ACCA met with Mayor Bill Finch to develop a plan to restore the sand spit at Saint Mary's by the Sea Park.



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The ACCA commissioned a consultant (One Nature) to create a long-term plan for the restoration of Saint Mary's sand spit for both Bridgeport and the Town of Fairfield. The final report includes:

- Natural storm protection and flood control
- Aesthetically pleasing beach area
- Valuable habitat protection of the salt march and dune habitat
- Bridgeport's Parks Master Plan's objective of "Re-Naturalization"

Quality of Life: KaBOOM! is a Washington, DC based national non-profit dedicated to saving play for America's children. Their mission is to create great playspaces through the participation and leadership of communities. Ultimately, they envision a place to play within walking distance of every child in America. They offered to build playgrounds in Bridgeport and the Mayor suggested building one at the site of Shell Street in Black Rock. Shell Street was closed when the Cal Ripken field was constructed.

The Black Rock NRZ received grants to fund the building of the playground. More than 500 volunteers from Our Family Foundation by Stop & Shop, the City of Bridgeport, organizers from KaBOOM! and residents of the Bridgeport community joined forces on Thursday, September 18, 2014 and built the playground in one day.

### **BRCC Activities Closely Related to the NRZ Strategic Plan**

Members of the Black Rock Community Council (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.



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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 and a BRCC Public Safety Committee Block Watchers Handbook for members of the block watch organization. These documents were approved by the Public Safety Committee's Area Coordinators and have been reviewed by the Bridgeport Police Department. They are being reviewed by attorneys, and when these reviews are completed they will be submitted to the BRCC Executive Committee for final approval.

Another BRCC committee, associated with the NRZ Strategic Plan is the Historic Committee also headed by Phil Blagys.

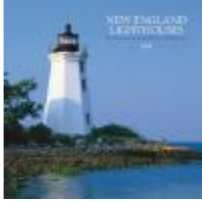
Honoring Lighthouse Keeper Kate Moore: The Coast Guard has launched a Fast Response Cutter the "Kathleen Moore" named after the legendary keeper of the Black Rock Lighthouse. The Coast Guard Cutter was commissioned in December 2013 with Kathleen Moore's name on it. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century she worked with her father when he was the lighthouse keeper and after his death replaced him and was lighthouse keeper for 54 years. She is credited with saving 22 lives.

The Bollinger Shipyard, who built the ship created a monument for her grave. There was an official dedication on May 8, 2014 in Mountain Grove Cemetery, with Governor Malloy's wife, Mayor Finch of Bridgeport, a high ranking officer of the Connecticut Coast Guard, and the President of the Bollinger Shipyard in attendance.

The Black Rock History Committee has forged a commemorative plaque in honor of Miss Moore to be set in a stone and placed along the shore where the lighthouse can be viewed.

In 2015, if funding is available, the vessel will make a visit to Black Rock Harbor.

Lighthouse Restoration: The BRCC Historic Commission initiated a discussion with the Mayor and the City's Central Grants Department, who then submitted a request for \$435,000 to the State Historic Preservation Office to restore the base of the



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lighthouse. The grant was awarded to do base restoration due to storm damage for the lighthouse built in 1822-23.

A Newtown group called Ben’s Lighthouse, named after a boy killed in the tragedy in Newtown Connecticut, painted the lighthouse and spruced up the grounds.

Respectfully submitted,

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Gerry Manning  
President, Black Rock NRZ, Inc.

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Date

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

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Date





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

<b>Regular Member</b>	<b>Term Expires (2014 Update)</b>
Phil Blagys	June 2016
Joy Cline	June 2016
John Gibson	June 2016
Shaquanna Shaw	June 2016
Doren Wright	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
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            18**  
**Maximum authorized members            21**  
**Minimum number of members            14**

<b>Ex Officio Members</b>	
Susan Brannelly	N/A
Enrique Torres	N/A
Angie Staltaro	N/A



**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	

\* On-going tasks are activities that do not come to completion. Two examples are Business and Economic Development and Zoning, Land Use, and Historic Preservation. These activities are open ended, in that conditions change often and require monitoring by NRZ personnel. There have been considerable accomplishments in these areas which indicates mechanisms are in place to address issues as they arise.

Practically, it can be said that these are completed to date. The status above would then be adjusted as follows:

Task Status	Number	Percent
Completed/On-Going	19	53%
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.

<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. Bamum 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	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
<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 fourth annual City by the Sea Arts Fair was held at Captains Cove Marina on 2 days in September 2014.
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)
<b>D Zoning, Land Use, Historic Preservation</b>			
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	
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	



<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	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.
	<b>F Design Review and Development Standards</b>		
18	Establish Black Rock Village District and guidelines	Completed	
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
	<b>G Circulation, Access, Transportation, &amp; Parking</b>		
21	Develop neighborhood gateways	Completed	
22	Improve existing municipal parking lots	In process	
23	Provide traffic lights or other traffic-calming devices at trouble intersections	In process	State \$500K State grant to address this is in the State approval process.
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	



<b>Task Number</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
27	Implement on-street parking regulations	In process	\$500K State grant to address this.
28	Develop parking plan for Black Rock Library	In process	
29	Explore expansion of municipal parking on available sites	In process	
<b>H Quality of Life</b>			
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.
<b>I Education</b>			
32	Improve infrastructure at Black Rock schools	Completed	Adding infrastructure for grades 7 and 8. Expected completion in 2015.
33	Increase children's access to education, including transportation to neighborhood events	On going	
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.