



## 2018 Annual Report

### MISSION STATEMENT

Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance is a not-for-profit, local development corporation whose mission is to help restore economic prosperity in the Ticonderoga region by serving as a catalyst for innovative ideas and resources, and for public-private partnerships and investment opportunities.

Ti-Alliance works within the Ticonderoga area, which includes the communities of Crown Point, Hague, Moriah, Putnam, and Ticonderoga. Below are the activities and accomplishments of 2018 that contribute to achievement of our mission.

### ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2018

The accomplishments and discussions below are divided into three categories, under which the original planned goals are noted, and accomplishments reviewed:

- Economic development
- TRA organization and development

#### I. Education Development

**Goal: Assist North Country Community College in the development of a new School of Applied Technology to expand trade education in our community (construction trades, automotive mechanics, facilities management).**

The Alliance provided extensive consulting and communication services to North Country Community College President Steve Tyrell and Board of Trustees President Steve Reed to develop professional and consistent messaging about a possible School of Applied Technology.

- We consulted on the previous feasibility study, updated its data, and created a presentation that NCCC could share with the faculty, legislators, education and business stakeholders, and the general public so that all stakeholders would have accurate and consistent information – a problem in the past.
- We assisted NCCC in creating a strategy for sharing this information, scheduling meetings with groups and public forums for the presentation.
- We co-presented the material at each venue as a committed, active partner willing to stand up in support of the program and pledge financial support.
- We convinced NCCC of the importance of having the previous feasibility study professionally analyzed and updated, resulting in a \$100,000 commitment from the NCCC Board of Trustees and Foundation to hire JMZ Consultants for this purpose.
- We assisted NCCC in establishing advisory committees to support the consulting process.

Unfortunately, the recommendation from JMZ Consultants was not positive. The cost projections to create a school with 4-6 disciplines of instruction appear to be prohibitive compared to the projected recruitment pool available for students. A number of other college-level schools in the region have expanded their capabilities in the last two years, though they are largely “geographically inaccessible” to Ti-area residents.

JMZ has recommended that NCCC begin a program with a single discipline (likely electrical) and task the faculty with a DACUM process (Develop A Curriculum) for this field of study. If they are able to do that, NCCC could potentially start a single program in a couple of years.

Nevertheless, the Ticonderoga Area still has an urgent need for tradespeople, particularly in the construction trades, and students at Ticonderoga High School still have a significant need for alternate career paths in the trades. The Alliance will work with existing trade education providers to promote their programs to Ti students and counselors, remove barriers to entry for our students, and seek out resources to provide better access for Ti area students to these programs.

## **II. Housing Development**

**Goal: Expand technical and financial support to the Town of Ticonderoga through programs and proposal development to address restoration and prevention of abandoned and derelict buildings in partnership with HAPEC and others, including through the possible use of Ti-Alliance LDC status.**

In February 2017 the Town of Ticonderoga received a \$75,000 grant for 18 months from the NYS Attorney General’s Office for the Zombie and Abandoned Properties Project. Ti-Alliance wrote the proposal for this grant together with the Housing Assistance Program of Essex County (HAPEC), which serves as a project partner with the Alliance and the Town of Ticonderoga.

The program is meant to achieve five goals, i.e., to:

- Strengthen and expand the vacant, zombie, and abandoned buildings data base and related IT tools within the Town’s Code Enforcement Office (CEO).
- Undertake a community outreach program to increase awareness of programs to help those residents “at risk” of mortgage foreclosure, and to help prevent or mitigate foreclosure.
- Increase enforcement by the Code Enforcement Office and Town Attorney of existing statutes, laws and regulations vacant, zombie, and abandoned buildings.
- Strengthen implementation through legal enforcement actions and application of the new State zombie law.
- Have the Town Attorney, Ti-Alliance, and other actors help develop strengthened or new approaches to derelict buildings at the local and county levels.

In 2018, Ti-Alliance continued to provide technical and coordination support to the town in management of the project and analysis of data to address issues related to derelict and abandoned buildings. The project was extended in September 2018 for an additional 12 months to September 2019, to utilize the unexpended funds for ongoing actions as well as to fund several asbestos surveys. These surveys are critical to determining how best to deal with properties that probably need to be torn down, but for which the cost of doing so is dependent on whether or not they contain asbestos.

A summary of the progress to date in the project is provided below.

1. Considerable outreach was undertaken, including by HAPEC, to inform area residents of the HAPEC financial counseling and mortgage counseling programs. This included a mail-out to all Ticonderoga residences.
2. Substantial progress was made since the start of the project in 2017 in remediation of Code problems regarding derelict abandoned properties. 55% (i.e., 49 of 90) of the vacant and abandoned properties with Code violations have been remediated over this period.
3. Progress was especially strong for “mortgage-related” properties and good but less for “owned outright” properties. The CEO collaboration with the New York State Department of Financial Services (DFS) in implementing the new State law has been an important element in the success with “mortgage-related” properties.
4. Progress regarding remediation has been especially strong for properties which have grass and/or garbage problems, and for those with medium level problems. However, it has been much less for properties with very serious problems.
5. The project helped the Code Enforcement Office develop a new mechanism for addressing the problem of unmowed yards and trash. As approved by the Town Board, the Code Office will now send a notice to the property owner giving them a fixed period (usually seven days) to remedy the problem. If this is not done, the Town will use its contractor to carry out this work and will bill the property owner, and if unpaid, will attach this to the property taxes.
6. A major underlying problem for derelict abandoned properties is that they are often left to deteriorate over a number of years. The new State law has had a significant impact on addressing this problem for that portion of these properties that are in mortgage arrears. It also appears that the steps taken by Essex County to expedite the processing of properties in County tax arrears, to bring them to auction in a matter of two years versus the previous up to five to six years, is making a significant improvement regarding this problem.

The Code Enforcement Office, with support where appropriate from the Zombie and Abandoned Properties Project, will be taking a number of initiatives regarding derelict abandoned properties in 2019, including to:

- a. Implement the new mechanism for mowing and clean up.
- b. Undertake asbestos survey for several “high problem” properties.
- c. Prepare cases as appropriate to be taken to court by the Town Attorney, with funding from the Project.
- d. Further utilize the electronic database for operational uses and to prepare and share analytical reports, to the Public Safety Committee and to the Town Board.
- e. Develop further tools linked to the database, such as checklists and forms for carrying out more systematic site visits and for easy recording and accessing this information.
- f. Continue its collaboration with DFS for related implementation of the new State law.
- g. Look into the issues and mechanisms by which the Town could get title to selected derelict abandoned properties, and then rehabilitate and resell them, or alternatively, that private buyers could be encouraged to buy and rehabilitate them, such as through identifying attractive financing mechanisms for low and moderate income buyers.
- h. Expand the program to multi-unit residential rental properties to assess the nature and scale of these problems, and identify possible actions to address them.

The project will also consider establishing a Working Group to include the project team and selected members of the community to help develop innovative actions and promote community support to address the issues of derelict properties. The Vice Chair of the PRIDE board is already in regular collaboration with the project team on derelict buildings, and he successfully connected the Town's Code Enforcement Office with the Queensbury Code Enforcement Office to share their model for grass and garbage related problems.

### **III. Economic Capacity Development**

**Goal: Help to strengthen coordination and proposal development of the Ticonderoga area application for the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process.**

This goal was not accomplished in 2018. The Town was engaged in other work related to the town infrastructure and did not have the interest or human resources to devote to this, nor were they willing to delegate this work. However we have worked to strengthen relationships with other economic entities in the Town and are working on expanded Ti-Alliance projects worthy of funding, and expect to submit a significant CFA proposal in 2019. Ti-Alliance will continue to track opportunities to strengthen coordination in this area.

### **IV. Lifestyle and Community Development**

**Goal: Support the revitalization endeavors of other community organizations.**

1. Alliance former Co-Executive Director, Lance Clark, was a strong supporter of the twice-a-month TiCoustics music performances throughout the year as a musician, and as a sound and logistics person. He also played music at the Chamber of Commerce StreetFest, the Farmers' Market, and monthly at the Ticonderoga Nursing Home. The co-directors also supported various fundraising events of local organizations including the Ti Festival Guild, Rotary Club, PRIDE, and Kiwanis.
2. The Alliance was a fiscal sponsor of TiCoustics coffee house in 2018. Funding was provided from the Ti Festival Guild through the Alliance and helped to enable bi-monthly coffee houses at several new locations. This program is highly successful and has gained a strong following in the five years since inception. We are happy to support the performing arts in Ticonderoga.

### **V. Ti-Alliance Organizational Development**

**Goal: Achieve and maintain LDC compliance**

We achieved full compliance in 2018 and met all deadlines for compliance with the State of NY Budget Office and related filings. With the help of former Executive Director Nancy Archer, the new Executive Director is now able to maintain the filings in up-to-date status with an annual calendar of filings and annual audit reports from an independent audit organization.

**Goal: Hire a Paid Executive Director and Provide Organizational Development**

1. Former Ti-Alliance Board Member Donna Wotton became a half-time paid Executive Director on January 1, 2018.
2. Board Development: Ti-Alliance added two key board members with the ability to help drive new initiatives and funding. Our current Board is now 9 strong and energized members and while we have room for additional board members, we are not actively soliciting new members to the board in 2019. We currently operate without a board chairperson, utilizing the committee chairpersons as an executive committee when needed. New board members:
  - a. Chris Mallon is the former plant manager of the International Paper mill in Ticonderoga. He is deeply connected to the community and as the former head of the largest employer

in the area, he is uniquely positioned to lend insight into the challenges of local employers.

- b. Bobby Porter is a lifelong resident of Ti, a teacher in the Ticonderoga School System, Chairman of the Ticonderoga Teacher's Association Negotiating Committee, and owner of the Windchill Factory, one of the most successful businesses in town. He is intimately familiar with the school system, parents and students in the region, and the challenges that face small business here in our area.
3. Executive/Vision Development: The Board of Directors participated in an exercise to craft a long term vision for the work of Ti-Alliance focused on larger projects aimed at building sustainable economic development in the Ticonderoga Area with the participation of a variety of stakeholders in the region.
4. Development and Fundraising: In 2018 we created a formalized development plan that included the following:
  - a. Cleaned and synchronized our multiple Excel and Robly (list-serve) contact lists, including verification and updating of email and print mailing addresses and giving history of all contributors to Ti-Alliance since inception. Our lists are now clean and prioritized for continuing our mission.
  - b. Prioritized key individuals for potential larger donations and assigned the engagement of those individuals to specific board members.
  - c. Continued to build relationships with current funders, large and small for annual donations to support our operations.
  - d. Researched and developed a database/spreadsheet that identifies federal, state, private foundation, and individual donor resources that can help to build the overall capacity of Ti-Alliance and fund specific targeted projects consistent with the long term economic development vision of Ti-Alliance.
  - e. Explored the development of a strategy for revenue streams that can provide ongoing operational income on an annual basis to cover the costs of full-time staff and administrative needs of Ti-Alliance. This is an area that we will be working to develop further in 2019.
  - f. Developed a fall giving campaign with aggressive \$\$ goals and targets, specific timeline, and execution materials. The fall campaign yielded 96% of the goal, doubling the amount of last year's largest donation, and increasing all other donations by 700%. We doubled the number of donors over the 2017 fall campaign. The result is that we have fully funded operations for 2019 including the full-time salary of the director, and are positioned to focus our efforts for 2019 on expanding the project capacity of the Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance.

**Goal: Re-establish the Steering Board and utilize it to further achievement of the Ti-Alliance mission.**

The Terms of Reference for the Steering Board were drafted and approved by the Board of Directors in 2017. Informal discussions have taken place with community members around relevant topics such as derelict buildings, but a more formal Steering Board was not re-established. This was due to limited human resources to manage such a board and ensure results could be achieved. Focus will be placed in this area in 2019 as we develop more formal project focus.

**D. Produce regular Ti-Alliance newsletters.** A Fall 2018 newsletter was produced in coordination with the Development Committee. The newsletter was well received and helped to generate excellent donations for the organization through the fall giving season. In 2019 we expect to expand our

communications program to include regular communications with our donors and list-serve list, and an expanded social media program.

### **PAST AND ONGOING PROJECTS**

**(Past) Downtown Gallery:** The Gallery was launched by Ti-Alliance and spun off in 2014 to the Ti Arts Initiative. It continues to be a viable concern in downtown Ticonderoga offering art shows, monthly receptions, an annual Plein Air weekend competition, and a gift shop.

**(Past) Trekonderoga & Star Trek Studio Tours:** The Star Trek Studio Tours held their 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Trekonderoga event in August 2018 to record numbers of attendees (upwards of 2,000). The event has grown annually since 2015 when Ti-Alliance provided financial seed money, administrative support and planning, and full management of the event on their behalf. The organization has done a great job of taking over and improving the systems we put in place, and the national popularity of the event is growing each year. In 2017 Ti-Alliance turned a donation to our organization into a mortgage for James Cawley (owner of the studios) and he was able to purchase the building housing the studios as a permanent location for the studios, event, and fan filmmaking operations.

### **(Ongoing) Northern Lake George Paddle Tennis, LLC:**

Northern Lake George Paddle (NLGP) was launched in 2014 in partnership between TRA and several advocate investors in paddle tennis. TRA is the majority owner with 99% of the shares. NLGP continues to grow with approximately 40 players at least once a week during various times of the year, including winter. Many weeks at least a dozen of these players are out on the court 2-3 times a week thanks to year round programming.

Round robin play for members and guests is organized weekly by Patty Hogan, a former APTA National Champion and member of the sport's Hall of Fame. Sheridan Burleigh, a retired school teacher organizes play during the winter months when Patty travels back to NJ. In addition to local players, there are several out of town players from Bolton Landing, Burlington, Glens Falls and Troy who join in the play when their schedules allow. The word is getting out about how much fun it is to play paddle and how great it is in the middle of winter to be able to play a racket sport outside. 90% of members have renewed their membership for a second, third, and fourth year.

In addition to revenue from memberships, revenue is coming in from "Paddle Camps" for out of state players whom are assisted to locate housing and are provided several hours of expert instruction and many hours of entertainment. The Paddle pro also teaches clinics in Glen Falls, Troy and Burlington the proceeds from which are donated to NLGP, and which have drawn new members from these areas.

The Summer Job Training Program involved seven boys in grades 9, 10 and 11. They learned job and work readiness skills at Eddies Restaurant (a NLGP partner), Ticonderoga Country Club, and Five Nations Driving Range and Mini Golf on a weekly basis. Participants also worked at several other sites in town learning handyman skills with local organizations. Exposure to various tasks has broadened their skill set and taught valuable work readiness skills.

Local youth have not embraced paddle although the Ticonderoga High School is now offering a class called Lifetime Recreation and Platform Tennis was included in the Fall and again this Spring. The majority of youth play is with many summer resident kids playing, particularly when their parents are dining at Eddies. Kids can always play for free but we need more of their parents playing to move toward sustainability. Six school and Boy Scout groups came out to the facility last spring so we will continue to offer free introductory play in the hope of gaining more players.

We plan to continue to reach out to out of town communities for paddle camps to bring in revenue to NLGP and to contribute to the community with rentals of houses, hotels and local dining.

### **ASSESSMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROLS**

Ti-Alliance conducted a formal process to assess the effectiveness of its internal control structure and procedures in 2017. This is documented in the 2017 audit document. Internal controls were found to be adequate and fully compliant and will be updated in the 2018 filings.

### **2018 FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

As of December 31, 2018, Ti-Alliance total liabilities and equity were \$509,667.74, including \$144,330.45 in cash, and \$365,337.29 in other assets, an increase of \$28,158 over 2017. Monthly payments on the Star Trek mortgage are received regularly and on-time.