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Welcome to my very first Newsletter! I will use this Newsletter to make sure that you have a voice in City Hall. The Newsletter will list upcoming events and meetings where I can be found and you can participate in the life of our city. It will also keep you informed of my votes and legislation that I am working on. It will also explain various things going on in the city at large, as well as spotlight local, independent businesses. We hope that this Newsletter will help to keep South Utica a vibrant place in which to live and work, where you have a strong voice in your government and community.



Upcoming Meetings and Events

South Utica Neighborhood Association: Monday, January 13th, 6pm, Notre Dame Elementary School, 11 Barton Ave, just off Genesee Street

Constituent Hours: Tuesday, January 14th, 4-6pm, The Other Side gallery, 2011 Genesee Street

Meeting of the Common Council: Wednesday, January 15th, 6pm for pre-meeting, 7pm for regular meeting, public welcome to both meetings

Constituent Hours: Tuesday, January 28th, 4-6pm, The Other Side gallery, 2011 Genesee Street

Water 101: A Meeting About Flooding with Engineer Maggie Reilly, Tuesday, January 28th, 7-9pm,
Community Foundation, 2608 Genesee Street

TOWN HALL: I will be holding my first Town Hall for the entire Ward, which I'm calling "Get Involved, Stay Engaged" on Monday, February 24th, 7-9pm, Notre Dame Elementary School - more information to come



My Votes on the Common Council

Common Council met on January 2nd for our "Organizational Meeting". This meeting is stipulated by New York State Law and is where we make basic decisions about how to organize ourselves, including who to appoint to the positions of City Clerk and Attorney for the Common Council. I voted to retain Michelle George as City Clerk because I had no reason of my own to believe that she had not done her job well over the previous two years and because I believe that at least some of the objections to her were political. I lost that vote (4-5). The Council then voted to appoint Melissa Sciortino. Although I supported Michelle George, I have full confidence that Melissa Sciortino will do the job well and I am looking forward to working with her. I voted against reappointing Judge Garramone to the position of Attorney for the Common Council. Judge Garramone has done the job well and has a deep knowledge of the law. It is my opinion however, that he has served for too long and this his long tenure has created a situation where he has undue influence over the policy decisions of the Council, which only the elected members of the Council should have. As has been reported upon, at the last meeting of the previous Council, Judge Garramone tried to introduce legislation to eliminate public comment period, despite the fact that no individual Council member came forward to sponsor the legislation. Lastly, upon the recommendation of both Comptroller William Morehouse and Budget Director Heather Mowat, I voted to allow the city to secure financing through bonds for an improved street light system, which was clearly in the best financial interest of the city.



Constituent Services

Flooding: Back in November, 82 people came to a meeting I organized to talk about the Halloween Flooding. I have begun attending the Saquoit Creek Basin Intermunicipal Commission in order to keep track of efforts by both Utica and our neighbors to address the ongoing problem of flooding. I have scheduled two more meetings to continue to discuss floods and mitigation efforts with Constituents. Meanwhile, I am continuing to educate myself about the complicated problem of flooding so that I can best advocate for the residents of South Utica.

Street Lights: A constituent alerted me of a dark street light. We took care of that immediately. If you notice that street lights have gone dark, please take note of the pole number, the closest street address, and the closest street intersection. Pass that information along to me, and I can contact National Grid. They usually make repairs in less than a week.

Quality of Life: We called Oneida/Herkimer Solid Waste Authority on behalf of a resident on Emerson Ave and helped to get a pile of trash in front of a house taken care of. We called the Codes Department and let them know that a landlord had not fixed a broken window of an occupied house.



Spotlight on a Local Business

We will begin this feature next month, so stay tuned!

Going on in the City

Each month, I will keep you informed of new things going on in the city, such as the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, the recent Tree Inventory, or the great new street lights that we will begin to see installed this Spring, and which will be a great improvement. So stay tuned for this regular feature!



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