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OUR STATE OF EMERGENCY CONTINUES

Yes, we are beginning to open up, slowly and carefully, as dictated by the State. But Utica remains under our state of emergency, and I caution everyone to remain on guard against this terrible disease.

YOU CAN READ MORE ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE

Tune into Tonight's Common Council on YouTube, where the meeting will be livestreamed. There are three separate meetings scheduled for tonight:

5pm: a meeting of the Public Safety Committee

6pm: Pre-conference meeting of the Whole

7pm: Common Council Meeting.

JUST FOLLOW THIS LINK TO LIVESTREAM THESE MEETINGS FROM YOUTUBE

MY VOTES ON THE COUNCIL

(an explanation of why I voted how I voted on important issues before the Council)

April 15, 2020

I voted to lease a parcel of land belonging to the City to the Memorial Auditorium. I voted to sell a parcel of land on Whitesboro Street to the Adirondack Cooperage for a new manufacturing operation as well as restaurant and distillery. I voted to authorize the URA to sell a piece of property on Lansing Street. I voted, obviously, for the Rent Relief Resolution sponsored by myself and Councilmember Delvin Moody. We were very happy that after we had made our arguments for the Resolution, and had happily incorporated some suggestions by our colleagues, it passed with unanimous support. I also voted for the "Memorializing Resolution" supporting healthcare workers and first responders and encouraging the Federal government to get the support they need to do their work during this ongoing national emergency. This Resolution was originally sponsored by Councilmembers LoMedico, Betrus, and Burrmaster, but it ended up being "Full Council", meaning that it was sponsored by

every member of the Council.

May 6, 2020

I voted NO on Local Law No 3, of 2020, which sought to overturn a 2008 referendum passed overwhelmingly by the citizens of Utica to require police to live in Utica. We all argued forcefully. In the end, Councilmember Frank Meola and I were the only two members of the Council to vote against the Law. I voted for a Public Hearing on the sale of some property by the URA on Spring Street. I voted to authorize taking 311 Turner Street (formerly the Charlestown Mall) off the tax rolls. (We had voted on this previously, but a technicality required us to vote on this again.) I voted to amend the "Citizen Participation Plan" so that public input into the use of CDBG funds can go forward during the constraints of the pandemic.

FERAL AND HOMELESS CATS

Feral cats are a problem in many parts of our City. Many people spend their resources taking care of these cats who have been abandoned by other people. But sometimes this presents a problem for their neighbors who find themselves living in close proximity to large cat colonies. We need to address this problem in a long-term, humane, and smart way. The Council has begun the process of researching the best way to address this issue. Stay tuned for updates on this issue, and always feel free to reach out with your concern on this or any other issue.

THE OLD BENDIX SITE

Many residents near and around French and Seward have noticed increased activity at this location. I talked to Brian Thomas at City Hall. This is work being done by the property owners, not the City. They are doing some basic remediation of the property (e.g., fixing the fencing, cleaning up dead trees, etc), most likely in order to be able to sell the land. My understanding is that the land is contaminated in such a way that it is very unlikely to ever be developed for residential purposes. But it is possible that it could be sold and then developed for something like light industrial or commercial use. This will depend on how that property is zoned once the city overhauls its zoning regulations. Stay tuned. If I learn more, I will certainly let you know.

CONSTITUENT HOURS

Until the Governor, under the advice of experts, gives us permission to ease up on our social isolating, I will be suspending my Constituent Hours. I will happily resume them as soon as possible. Meanwhile, call or text or email me anytime. I am looking into what it would take for me to hold a Tele-Town Hall. So stay tuned.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT HELPLINE

The State of New York has gathered mental health professional volunteers from all over the state - over six thousand of them! - to staff the NYS COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline at 844-863-9314. It is staffed 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week. The phone line is staffed with specially trained volunteer professionals who are there to listen, support and refer if needed.

MAKE SURE TO BE COUNTED!

The Census is very important - it is the way we can make sure that our state and our region gets what it deserves, both in terms of representation and resources.

To fill out the Census online, just go here. It couldn't be much easier!

I WILL BE IN TOUCH AGAIN AS SOON AS I HAVE ANYTHING TO REPORT.

MEANWHILE, REMEMBER THAT AS A COMMUNITY, AS A CITY, AND AS A COUNTRY, WE HAVE WHAT WE NEED TO MAKE IT THROUGH THIS. BE KIND TO YOURSELF AND OTHERS. BE SAFE, AND REACH OUT ANYTIME.

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