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TERM LIMIT LEGISLATION

As most of you are already aware, at the last Common Council meeting, on November 18, I submitted legislation to return term limits to the 8 consecutive year limit as voted into law by a majority of voters in 1992. I brought legislation intended to make a new Local Law which would reenact that 1992 referendum. I brought the legislation to the Council at the urging of a group of my Constituents who had circulated an online petition asking me to do this.

My legislation was contentious, both ahead of and at the meeting. Some objected that I had agreed not to bring such legislation this year. I assure you that I had not made any such agreement. I have been and continue to be committed to transparency and accountability, which means that I do not enter into back room agreements with my colleagues. I was also told that I was "grandstanding", apparently because I had discussed the legislation on the radio and on social media. Communication is key to transparency, so I am simply not interested in taking such claims seriously.

In any case, the meeting was contentious with many ideas exchanged. One thing became clear: many members of the Council would only be willing to vote for this legislation if it was not effective until January 1, 2022. This would mean that three elected officials would be able to run again in 2021, even though the 1992 referendum would not have allowed them to do so. Those three elected officials are Jack LoMedico and Mark Williamson, Councilpersons-at-Large, and Bill Moorehouse, our Comptroller.

We meet again tonight, and we will be discussing three different potential term limit laws. If you want to listen in, you can do so on [YouTube](#) - just search for "City of Utica".

THE NEW ZONING ORDINANCE

The Common Council continues to study the new zoning ordinance and make what we see as necessary adjustments in the process of adopting a new Zoning plan.

The hope is that this will give all of us a new, streamlined, and environmentally updated zoning code as we move into a bright new future. A recent water bill contains a notification from the City about this Zoning update. The Council will have to weigh in by passing this zoning plan as an Ordinance. If at least 10 people are interested, I would be happy to arrange a meeting for South Utica about this Zoning plan. So please let me know if you would come to such a meeting. [You can check out the new zoning code here.](#)

There is a PUBLIC HEARING at the regular Common Council on December 16th. Please weigh in on this important legislation. And reach out to me in the meantime with questions or concerns.

UTICA YOUTH COUNCIL

This Fall, Councilperson Delvin Moody brought legislation to the Council that reinstated the Youth Council, which Delvin had served on while a student at Proctor. The Common Council supported this project, and we now have a full Youth Council. It is advised by Stephanie Heiland, who directs the "Pathways to Justice Careers" program supported by a grant from Working Solutions. The members of the Youth Council are: Widad Ibrahim (President), Victoria Vo (President Pro Temp), Eh Moo Serr, Diego Landaverde, Olivia Tobiasz, Yasmin Wilson, and Emma Ferguson, who is from South Utica. Each member of the Youth Council was appointed by the Common Council. They are already taking initiative and doing some great things for our City. So if you know them or meet them, be sure to thank them for working on behalf of Utica and for making sure that young voices are included in our democracy.



CONSTITUENT HOURS FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

I will continue to hold my regular Constituent Hours on the 1st Tuesday of every month from 4-6pm at The Other Side at 2011 Genesee Street, right next to Cafe Domenico. Please come with a mask and plan to practice social distancing. As always, I am happy to take your texts or phone calls at 315-725-5987 or your emails at celeste4utica@gmail.com. I work on Constituent Services 7 days a week, so reach out anytime. My next Constituent Hours will be on Tuesday, January 5th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

This is my tenth Newsletter this year. I had intended to do one every month, but well, Summer... But still, I'm pleased to have gotten ten done, and I always like to have room to improve. So next year my aim will be to send out a Newsletter every month. AND, I am going to start sending an additional email, in about the middle of each month, to make a series I'm going to call something like "How Your Government Works". It will explain one particular aspect of our local government and how we do what we do. So, it will delve into such topics as: paving, solid waste, code enforcement, open meetings, the police department, and the like. (And I probably won't be able to resist the occasional one from a more theoretical point of view about the nature of government, the law, and so on.) Is there some aspect of local government you've always wanted to know more about? Let me know!

The upcoming year will also bring my first campaign for re-election. I loved running

the first time, and I'm excited to get back at it. If you are interested in being involved in our campaign in any way, drop me a line. We will take all the support we can get.



SPOTLIGHT ON A LOCAL BUSINESS!

Help the Conservancy Maintain our Parks!

In Utica, as elsewhere nationwide, public parks are more popular because of Covid. This shouldn't be surprising. Public health research shows that time spent in them confers significant physical and mental health benefits—our parks serve these needs.

The Conservancy is a nonprofit that helps to restore and maintain Conkling Park, the two Proctor parks, and the beautiful Parkway that connects them. We plant 30-50 trees annually to renew the system's canopy, absorb rainwater and carbon, and provide beauty, shade, and cooling, and twice annually we plant flowers on the Parkway. And this year, we launched a multi-year campaign to restore F.T. Proctor Park for the 2023 centennial of its donation to the people of Utica.

This work is very costly—and money unfortunately doesn't grow on trees! Our endowment covers only about 70% of this cost. Our current Fall Appeal seeks to raise the rest, and we greatly appreciate the very real power of many hundreds of modest gifts. You can donate by sending a check to the Conservancy at 1641 Genesee Street, Utica, 13501, or by giving online at www.uticaolmstedparks.org (under "Support Your Parks")

Thank you!
Phil Bean, Executive Director
philip.bean@uticaolmstedparks.org



MY VOTES ON THE COUNCIL

November 4, 2020

I voted AYE for my own legislation, "An Ordinance Entitled Article IV Refuse and Garbage. New Section to Sec. 2-22-73" This Ordinance tightens up the City's codes surrounding refuse and garbage that some property owners allow to accrue on their properties. It is now against City code for people to accrue piles of scrap metal outside on their properties. There are many other details to this new code. In general, it gives the City the teeth it needs to protect property values in our neighborhoods. I was happy to bring such legislation, and I appreciate the unanimous support of my colleagues. I voted AYE for a Resolution calling for a Public Hearing on the new Zoning Ordinance. I voted AYE for a new Ordinance that requires neighborhood stores to be licensed. We hope that this will give the City the ability to better regulate

neighborhood stores when they become a nuisance to the City and its neighborhoods. I voted AYE for a Resolution, originally sponsored by Councilperson Mark William, to encourage New York State to enforce and strengthen laws about resisting arrest. (This Resolution was contentious, and I raised many objections. In the end it was sufficiently amended so that I was willing to vote for it.)

November 18, 2020

I voted AYE to schedule a Public Hearing for December 16, 2020 on the subject of the Zoning Ordinance currently under consideration by the Common Council. (A previously scheduled hearing had to be cancelled because we inadvertently did not get it into the newspaper in time.) I voted AYE to place into Committee by Term-limit Local Law. (See above.) I voted AYE to place into Committee an Ordinance establishing a Minority and Women Business Certification Program". And finally, I voted AYE to appoint Dennis Bova to the Upper Mohawk Valley Regional Water Board.

Remember all meetings of the Council are live streamed on the [City's YouTube channel](#), and I encourage you to watch our meetings from home. As soon as it is safe to do so, I will do everything I can to

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