



South Utica Newsletter #18 from Councilperson Celeste Friend

In honor of Summer months and time off, and the like, this month's Newsletter and next's will be a little shorter than usual. But there is always something to report, so I can't quite bring myself to take a complete break like I did last year. If you like getting this Newsletter and find it useful, we encourage you to tell your friends and neighbors to sign up for it as well. They can just drop me an email at cfriend@cityofutica.com and I will add them to the list. Or, visit uticaforall.com to sign up.

(Well, this took me much longer to finish than I anticipated. Sorry for the lateness!)

Two More Free Concerts Left!

Every Monday night, Kopernick Park, just across from Fountain Elms, comes alive with music and people. The Levitt AMP Concert series is definitely one of the best things about our City in the Summer, and an easy way to fall in love with Utica all over again. There are just two more left - Monday, August 30th and then the grand finale on Friday, September 3rd with the infectious energetic Sophistafunk!

Live Music is Back
 FREE CONCERTS AT KOPERNICK PARK IN UTICA
 MONDAYS JULY 5 - AUG 30 + FRIDAY, SEPT 3 • 6-9PM

LEVITT FOUNDATION COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

NEW YORK'S LEVITT AMP UTICA 2021 ORIGINALS

5 The Carolina Geets
 12 Danielle Ponder
 15 Alex Torres & His Latin Orchestra
 16 Youth Internship Acts Each Week

20 Samara Joy & Pasquale Grasso
 23 Sammy Bae & The Friends
 25 Shayna Steele
 16 Tom Nitti

23 Joanne Shenandoah
 30 Paul Beaubrun
 8 (Friday Night!)
 14 Sophistafunk
 14 Leeky XIV

Bring chairs and blankets

SERIES PARTNERS: P&G, Utica, DeSales Center, NEWARK PALATKA CENTER, SEASON SPONSORS: FERRI, COMPASS, UNION, HET BANK / PARTNERS TRUST BANK CHARITABLE FUND

The RoCo (Roscoe Conkling) Walkers - Summer Hours

For July and August, The Roscoe Conkling Walkers have been meeting at 8am in order to walk when it is cooler. We will return to our normal 9am in September. We walk every Sunday, and would be happy to have you join us. Just click here to see the Facebook page.



Stop Sign Survey - Help Needed!



Many, many years ago, if someone in Utica thought that an intersection needed a stop sign, the Mayor or Chief of Police would simply direct the DPW to install one. This means that to this day, there are still the occasional stop signs in the City that do not have the authority of legislation behind them. So, in an effort to fix this problem, Councilman Frank Meola has begun a campaign to survey stop signs and compare them to the legislation on the books called "Intersections where a Stop is required". I think this is a very good idea, and I commend Councilman Meola for this initiative. I'd like to do this in South Utica, but I hardly have time to do this myself. So I am looking for some people to help me out. All that is required is to drive through South Utica, and check existing stop signs against a list. If anyone out there would like to be involved in a project like this, please let me know, and we can work together on this. Just drop me a line, and I'll STOP what I'm doing and get right back to you. (Sorry, I couldn't resist illustrating this with a picture of the great old Spliak's neon sign, gone but not forgotten.)

Common Council Summer Schedule

Common Council meets once a month in the Summer: July 14th and August 11th. In September we will resume our normal routine of meeting on the first and third Wednesdays of every month. This means that we will be in Chambers this Wednesday, September 1st.

And don't forget - PUBLIC COMMENT is back in place. So come a little early to sign up for public comment, and directly contribute to making Utica Better for All of Us.



Green Waste - Please Use Containers!

Please do your part to keep our City beautiful and to keep our storm drains working properly. For a few weeks in the Spring and a few weeks in the Fall, the DPW will pick up bulk green waste that is piled at the curb. But for the rest of the Summer, it needs to be containerized. There is no charge for either form of green waste pickup, which is a very good thing. Every week for more than half of the year, we can put out green waste and have it picked up by the DPW. But we need all need to do our part to keep this free service from being a problem. And lately, everywhere I go in South Utica, I see piles of green waste piled up at the curb. The Solid Waste Authority may begin warning and ticketing people soon. So, please, use a container!



Adopt a Storm Drain!

Speaking of green waste and the havoc it wreaks on our storm drains, please consider "adopting" a storm drain close to your home, and spend a little time keeping it free from debris, so that when it rains, our storm drains can function properly. When storm drains become covered with debris, water does not flow in and the drain does not function properly. Or, when the debris does go in, it can build up and block the drains so that again, they don't work the way they should. So please consider taking responsibility for just one drain near your home. Every now and again, and especially after it rains, clean off any debris that has accumulated. I have begun taking care of one just one house up the street from my home. In five minutes I had it cleared off and the weeds around it pulled. My plan is now to check it after every rain and do a little maintenance. (I realize that some of you reading this already do this, and that I am late to the storm drain party. Thank you for doing this!)



My Votes for the Council on July 14, 2021

Resolutions I Voted For:
 We voted on 7 Resolutions together calling for Public Hearings on the sale of properties by the URA. These are properties that the City was forced to foreclose on and is now turning back over to private property owners. All sales of City property must be preceded by a Public Hearing.

I vote to authorize the sale of wine and beer at the Our Lady of Lourdes and Notre Dame Elementary School Annual Bazaar and at Handshake City's Downtown Getdown, and to the Utica Zoo for their Brewfest.

I voted to adjust the Solid Waste Service Charges to a number of people and organizations who do not use the services of OHSWA, but who are charged automatically.

Resolutions I Voted to Send to Committee:
 Three Resolutions came before us which would have the City taking over the maintenance of new street lights recently installed by New York State. These are new lights installed as part of the State's recent renovation to 5S. The Council had legitimate questions about whether these lights had been located in such a way as to make them vulnerable to being hit by snow plows, and so decided to place these Resolutions in a committee until we could gather more information. I, for one, am skeptical of a traditional process whereby the State installs lights but then the City has to be responsible for maintaining and replacing them.

Ordinances I Voted For:
 I voted for two transfers of funds. The Board of Estimate and Apportionment regularly moves monies from one budget line to another. Those transfers must be approved via Ordinance by the Common Council. These Ordinances transferred monies from "Contingency" to "Engineering - Contractual" and from "Sewer - Capital Outlay" to "Sewer - Judgements and Settlements"

I voted to rescind an outdated "One Hour Parking At All Times" on part of Lyon Place. I then voted for a new Ordinance making "No Parking At All Times" for three blocks of Lyon Place, from Genesee to Lomond Place. I sponsored this legislation after a Constituent brought it to my attention that allowing parking on both sides of Lyon was creating difficult driving conditions on a narrow road. The Traffic Safety division of the Utica Police Department studied the situation and agreed that parking needed to be limited to one side of the road for those three blocks.

I voted for an Ordinance to establish The Utica Film Commission. This will enable the City to work more closely with regional and state agencies to attract filmmakers and producers to Utica. Having films produced in Utica will benefit the City in many ways, so I was very happy to see this legislation be developed by President Michael Galime and to have it pass the Council unanimously.

I voted for two more Resolutions authorizing the applications of organizations to apply for New York Main Street grants. (In June I sponsored and voted for a Resolution of this nature for the Uptown Theater.) First, I voted for to authorize the application for a grant by the Mayor on behalf of a group of private investors who have recently bought 239 Genesee Street, known as the Mayo building. And second, I voted for to approve the application of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute for a Main Street grant to renovate the property at 503 Henry Street.

Ordinances I Vote to Send to Committee
 This vote got a little complicated: first, the Council passed three Ordinances to dispose of and sell some City property, including IT equipment and City-owned vehicles. Then we noticed that there was language in the legislation that we had not seen before, and out of an abundance of caution, we decided to rescind and send to committee the three pieces of legislation. (Spoiler alert: we ended up passing those same pieces of legislation at our August meeting.)

