



South Utica Newsletter #20 from Councilperson Celeste Friend

Twenty Newsletters - not bad for less than two years into my first term! (This one is later than it should be. Hopefully, when the campaign is behind us, I can get back to a more regular schedule.)

Welcome to Olmsted City!

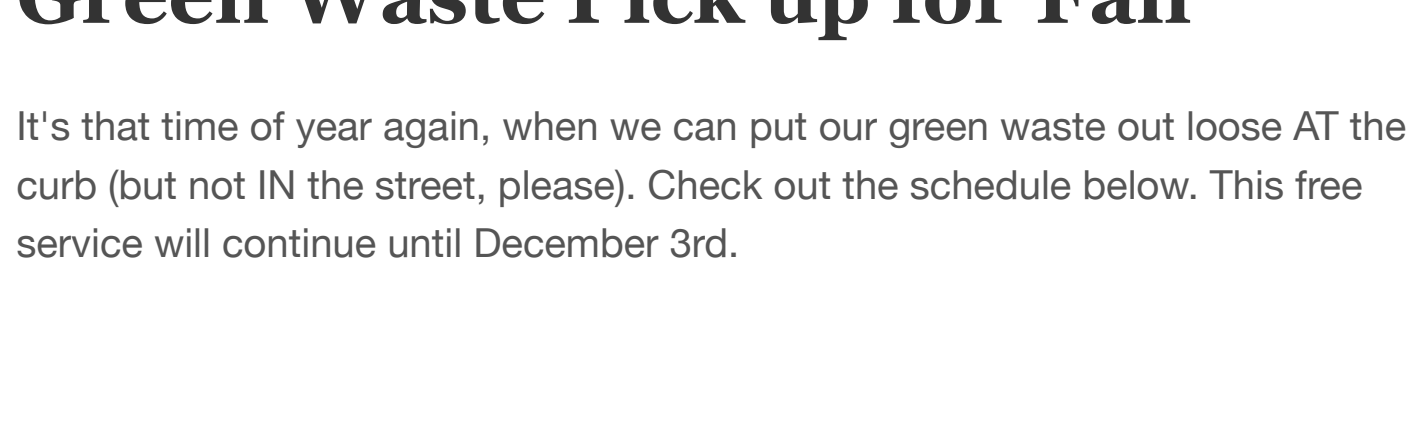
"Olmsted City" is a new program of the Landmarks Society of Greater Utica, a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization committed to preserving Utica's architectural heritage. Founded by South Utica resident Phil Bean, Olmsted City is entirely volunteer-driven. Its mission is to raise awareness, advocate for, and help restore our Olmsted-designed parks and neighborhoods.

Utica is the smallest US city with an Olmsted-designed parks and parkway system, and the cornerstone of that system, the 385-acre Roscoe Conkling Park, is located in South Utica. Utica is also home to 5 Olmsted-designed neighborhoods, including Proctor Boulevard, Ridgewood, and Talcott Road in South Utica.

Utica deserves to be considered an "Olmsted City," and it has something to gain in embracing this as a central part of its identity, particularly with the approaching national celebrations of the bicentennial of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (the creator of Central Park and the father of the man who designed so much of Utica's landscape), in 2022.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible gift to support the work of Olmsted City, you can make out a check "Landmarks Society of Greater Utica" with a memo saying, "for Olmsted City," and mail it to Olmsted City, PO Box 8597, Utica, NY 13505. Alternatively, you can also make a gift online using either a credit card or PayPal at the following address: <https://uticalandmarks.org/make-a-donation/>

To contact Olmsted City, you can send a letter by regular mail to the address above or send an email to olmstedcity@gmail.com. You can also find more information by visiting Olmsted City's Facebook page (listed as "Olmsted City of Greater Utica"), and there will soon be a website as well—stay tuned! We are all so lucky that Phil returned to his hometown, Utica, and brought his enormous talents, creativity, and energy with him!



Green Waste Pick up for Fall

It's that time of year again, when we can put our green waste out loose AT the curb (but not IN the street, please). Check out the schedule below. This free service will continue until December 3rd.

City of Utica
2021 Bulk Green Waste Pickup Schedule*

Allowable Green Waste Items

- ✓ Grass Clippings
- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Weeds
- ✓ Flowers
- ✓ Bundled limbs and branches no longer than 4' and under 50 lbs.

Items NOT Allowed

NO Household Garbage	NO Plastic
NO Plant Pots	NO Bricks
NO Soil	NO Cement
NO Shrubs	NO Lumber
NO Stumps	NO Construction Debris
NO Logs	NO Hazardous Waste
NO Trees	NO Chemicals

Place items loose at curb, NOT in the street.

North (Broad St. and NYC & HR Railroad north to City Limit)
Spring: Starts April 12 – May 24 Final Pick-up
Fall: Starts Sept. 13 – Dec. 29 Final Pick-up

Upper East (Eagle St./Washburn Rd. south to city line and east of Genesee St./Memorial Parkway/Onieda St.)
Spring: Starts April 13 – May 25 Final Pick-up
Fall: Starts Sept. 14 – Nov. 30 Final Pick-up

South (Burrstone Rd. south to city limit and west of Onieda St.)
Spring: Starts April 14 – May 26 Final Pick-up
Fall: Starts Sept. 15 – Dec. 31 Final Pick-up

Lower East (Broad St. to Eagle St. and east of Genesee St.)
Spring: Starts April 15 – May 27 Final Pick-up
Fall: Starts Sept. 16 – Dec. 2 Final Pick-up

West (Oriskany St. to Burrstone Rd. and west of Genesee)
Spring: Starts April 16 – May 28 Final Pick-up
Fall: Starts Sept. 17 – Dec. 3 Final Pick-up

***Between May 31 – September 10, green waste MUST be in containers**
Each household is allowed (5) – 32 gallon barrels no more than 50 lbs. each
Branches MUST be bundled, no longer than 4' and weigh no more than 50 lbs.
Bulk Green Waste piles put out during the rest of the year will be cited.

Dates subject to change due to weather at the DPW Commissioner's discretion. Your FINAL PICK-UP is the last day to put out bulk green waste. Heavy volume of green waste in certain areas of the city may cause delays. Please be patient with crews.

Spring April 12 – May 28
Fall September 13 – December 3

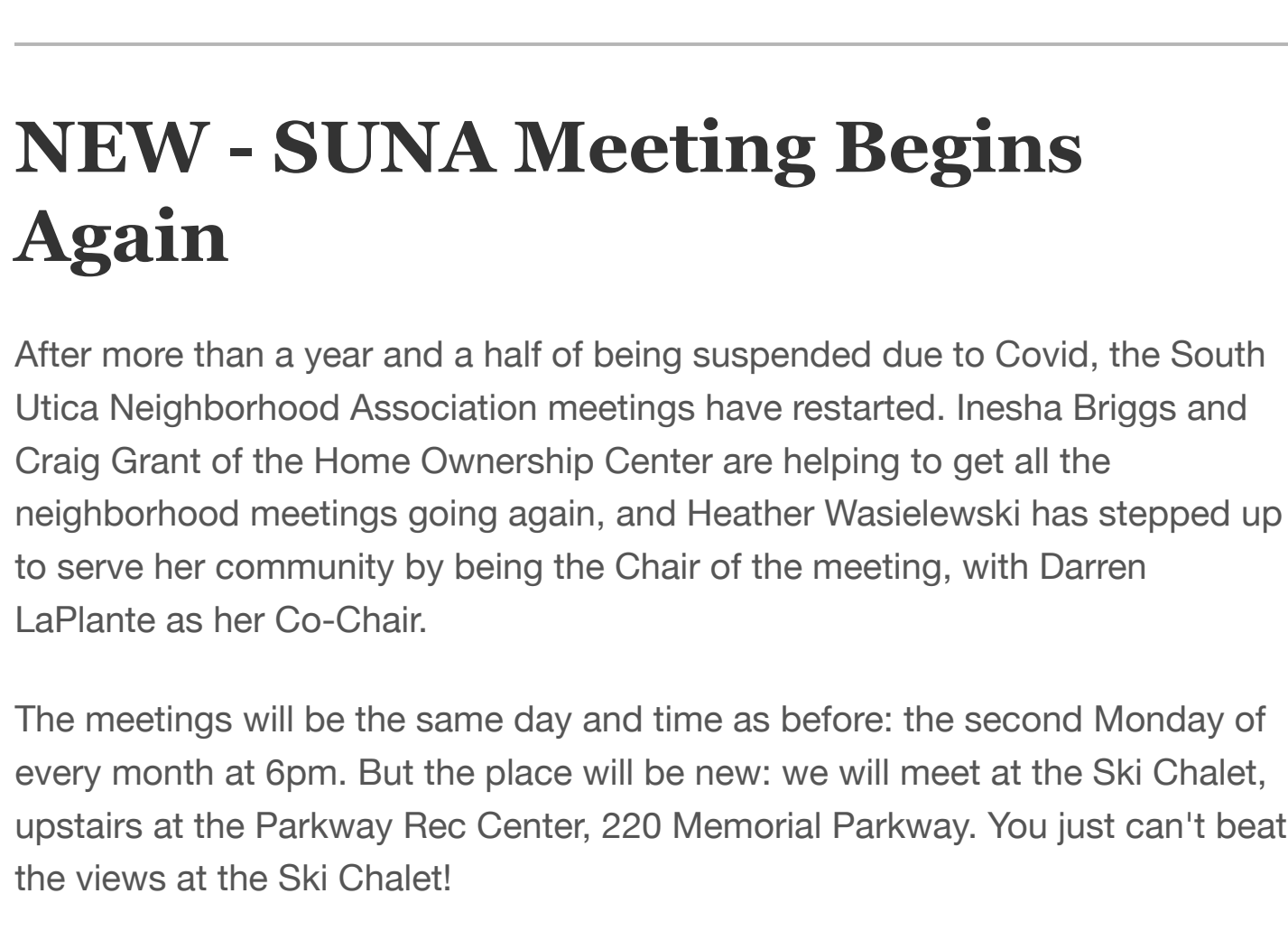
The City of Utica **DOES NOT** pick up large green waste items such as trees, shrubs, logs and stumps. If you have large Green Waste items to be removed call Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority at 315-731-0238 to schedule a pick-up. A nominal fee is charged for this service.
NOTE: Landscaping and construction contractors are mandated by the City of Utica Code Sec. 2-22-41 to remove all green waste from any city property at which they provide services

City of Utica Green Waste Collection Routes

Left to right: Larry Zegarelli, Scott Murray, Celeste Friend, Ari Papagianis, Emily Rasmussen, Bill Pickles, Melanie Mancari

Shared Services Agreement with Village of New Hartford

If you saw a street sweeper diligently cleaning streets in South Utica recently, but noticed that it was clearly marked Village of New Hartford, you may have wondered what they were doing in our neck of the woods. Well, they were holding up their end of what is known as a "shared services agreement." The City of Utica helped out the Village by taking down the old Village Pizza. The Village cannot do that sort of work themselves, but we certainly can! So we took down a building they didn't want, and in exchange, they will be sweeping the streets of South Utica. These shared services agreements are something that Mayor Palmieri is very good at entering into, and it is good for all of us, so I appreciate his efforts.



NEW - SUNA Meeting Begins Again

After more than a year and a half of being suspended due to Covid, the South Utica Neighborhood Association meetings have restarted. Inesha Briggs and Craig Grant of the Home Ownership Center are helping to get all the neighborhood meetings going again, and Heather Wasielewski has stepped up to serve her community by being the Chair of the meeting, with Darren LaPlante as her Co-Chair.

The meetings will be the same day and time as before: the second Monday of every month at 6pm. But the place will be new: we will meet at the Ski Chalet, upstairs at the Parkway Rec Center, 220 Memorial Parkway. You just can't beat the views at the Ski Chalet!

The first meeting was a candidate forum, with all the Common Council candidates on the ballot in the Third Ward there answering questions, plus Oneida Family Court Judge and NYS Supreme Court Judge 5th District candidates there as well.

I plan to always get to the meeting no later than 5:30pm and work on Constituent Services. So please, by all means, drop by early if you want to discuss anything with me.



Newsletter Archive Now Online

If you have found my Newsletters interesting and informative, I have good news. They are now all archived on my new, shiny purple website. I am very grateful to Zac and Heather Wasielewski for building me a beautiful new site!

[Newsletter Archive - See them all here!](#)

My Votes on the Council in September 2021

September was a busy, and at first glance, slightly confusing, month for the Council. We met on September 1st, and our votes are normally scheduled to do. One thing we did at that meeting was to hold Public Hearings and then sell a few properties belonging to the City. After we had done that, however, we learned that the Observer-Dispatch had failed to post notifications of those Public Hearings. That meant that those sales were not in fact legal. So, we scheduled a special meeting on September 8th, in order to reschedule those Public Hearings. (I participated via Zoom, as I had an unavoidable work conflict that kept me in Norwich.) Then, because Public Hearings require 10 days notice, we moved our normally scheduled September 15th meeting to September 22nd. Everything we wanted to get done got done, but a little later than we had originally intended. And we closely followed the law, in particular the law requiring that we hold Public Hearings before selling property belonging to the City. Those laws are an important way in which we remain transparent, and so I was more than willing to rearrange our schedule in order to meet the standards set out by the law.

So here are all my votes in September. I am not going to break them down by date, as that would be needlessly confusing.

Resolutions I Voted Against:
I voted against a Resolution to hold a Public Hearing for the sale of 315-317 Court Street to Michael Pezzolanello for \$400,000. I will discuss this in detail below, where I explain why I voted against the sale as well.

Resolutions I Voted For:
I voted to hold Public Hearing for the sale of 124 Thomas Street for \$30,000 to Patricia Muela.
I voted to hold a Public Hearing for the sale of 1125 Summit Place for \$1,500 to Suvad Nesust.
I voted to hold a Public Hearing for the sale of 707 & 709 Mohawk Street and 703, 705, 707, & 711 Blandina Street to Azmir Cerimovic for \$7,000.
I voted to authorize the sale of beer and wine to St. Anthony and St. Agnes Church for their St. Cosmas and Damian Annual Feast.
I voted to approve a shared services agreement with Oneida County and neighboring municipalities. (These agreements are great.)
I voted for a Resolution to authorize an engineering planning grant for a combined sewer overflow abatement study.
I voted for a Resolution calling for a Public Hearing for the sale of 301 Mortimer Street and 1116 Neilson Street to Carlos Martinez for \$500.
I voted for a Resolution calling for a Public Hearing on the sale of 1441 Sunset Ave to Alisandra Hernandez for \$31,500.
I voted for a Resolution calling on the Mayor and the Commissioner of Urban and Economic Development to commission a comprehensive housing study. This study is meant to determine exactly what kind of housing we have, its condition, and the kind of housing we in fact need.
I voted for a Resolution authorizing the sale of beer and wine by FX Matt Brewing Company for the Boilermaker.

Ordinances I Voted to Place in Committee:
I voted to commit an Ordinance to sell 124 Thomas Street to Patricio Muela for \$30,000.
I voted to commit an Ordinance to sell 1125 Summit Place for \$1,500 to Suvad Nesust.
I voted to commit an Ordinance to sell 707 & 709 Mohawk Street and 703, 705, 707, & 711 Blandina Street to Azmir Cerimovic for \$7,000.
I voted to commit an Ordinance for the sale of 301 Mortimer Street and 1116 Neilson Street to Carlos Martinez for \$500.
I voted to commit an Ordinance to sell 1441 Sunset Ave to Alisandra Hernandez for \$31,500.

Ordinances I Voted Against Placing in Committee:
I voted NO to commit an Ordinance to sell 315-317 Court Street to Michael Pezzolanello. Again, I will discuss this in detail below, where I explain why I voted against the sale as well.

Ordinances I Voted For:
I voted to sell the Kennedy parking garages to Downtown Utica Development (also known as Bowers & Pike). Although I am in general skeptical of selling City assets to private developers, this was warranted. The garage is in desperate need of repairs that we cannot afford, and we can use the proceeds from this sale (\$1,500,00) to repair the Washington Place garage right across the street. Moreover, this development company has an excellent track record of good development in the City.
I voted to sell 125 Thomas Street to Serafin Vazques-Martinez for \$8,000.
I voted to add a stop sign at the intersection of Leeds Street and Eagle Street.
I voted for two Ordinances to rescind "No Parking" on portions of Schoolcraft Rd, and then voted for an Ordinance to create "No Parking at all Times" on certain portions of Schoolcraft Rd.
I voted for a number of Ordinances to transfer funds: between different UPD budget lines; between different budget lines - from Police to Street Lighting; between different Fire Department budget lines.
I voted for an Ordinance to rescind a "No Parking at All Times" on portions of Broadway.
I voted to sell 124 Thomas Street to Patricio Muela for \$30,000.
I voted to sell 1125 Summit Place for \$1,500 to Suvad Nesust.
I voted to sell 707 & 709 Mohawk Street and 703, 705, 707, & 711 Blandina Street to Azmir Cerimovic for \$7,000.
I voted for an Ordinance to allow for a Residency Waiver for a new electrical inspector for the City. As part of its Charter, Utica requires that most of its employees live in the City. But the Council has the authority to waive this requirement. We were convinced by the Commissioner of Codes that this waiver was necessary in order to be able to hire the best qualified electrical inspector available.
I voted to for an Ordinance to transfer funds from street cleaning (i.e., salt) to the Capital Outlay for the DPW Garage. This was one part of a combination of funding streams for repairing the DPW Garage, which lost an entire wall during the 2019 Halloween floods.

Ordinances I Voted Against:
I voted against selling 315-317 Court Street to Michael Pezzolanello for \$400,000. (As outlined above, I also voted against the Resolution calling for a Public Hearing for this sale, and I voted against placing this Ordinance into Committee.) I had several reasons for voting against this:
1) I do not believe that the City marketed this property well enough or long enough. I was not convinced that we got enough money for this property, especially after investing in the legal cost of taking it by eminent domain.
2) I do not believe that the City needs more luxury apartments, which is the intent of the buyer of this property. We have only just commissioned a housing study in order to really determine what kind of housing Utica really needs. Moreover, in the middle of a homelessness crisis in Oneida Square and on the heels of shutting down the Olbiston and in the process forcing many people out of their homes, to then sell a City-owned property so that we can have more luxury properties downtown, struck me as inappropriate and tone-deaf, even unseemly.
4) And even if that eminent domain was justified by very unusual circumstances, I very much do not like the **appearance** of the City taking private property from one person in order to sell it to another.
I did not lobby my fellow Council members to follow my lead, and I knew that I would be in the minority. But sometimes being in the minority is just where I want to be.

Local Laws I Voted to Lay on the Table:
I voted to lay on the table a Local Law calling for a moratorium on Convenience and Smoke Shops in the City of Utica. These stores have created various kinds of nuisances in parts of the City. For more than a year, the Council has been trying to create legislation to better manage these stores, but that is legally complicated. And so for now, we have decided to enact a full moratorium on new convenience stores and smoke shops until we can figure out how better to approach this problem. This Local Law is sponsored by all nine members of the Common Council. (We generally refer to this as "going Full Council", as in, "What do you say, colleagues, shall we go Full Council on this?")

