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South Utica Newsletter #21 from Councilperson Celeste Friend

This Newsletter is a little late, but less late than #20 - so by the start of the New Year, I do think I will be back to a regular schedule of sending out newsletters on the first business day of the month.

South Utica Paving Update

For a combination of reasons the City was able to do a lot of paving this year. We will have paved a total of 7.42 miles of road and 3.51 miles of that is in South Utica. In addition, we are putting in 70 new ADA compliant curb ramps. All this is good news. But we are not quite done - several roads still need their final coat of fine asphalt. Once that is done, the manhole covers will be even with the road surface again, and the transitions from one road to another will be even and smooth. Rain has slowed us down some, as well as simply doing so many miles in one year. But keep your fingers crossed for some good weather over the next week or so, and we will be able to finish up.

Looking forward to next year, I intend to advocate for a number of streets to be done here in South Utica. On my list so far are: Dewey Ave, the entire length of

Meeker, all of Hopson, and the stretch of Sunset Ave that is south of the railroad tracks.

I also intend to advocate for a complete rebuild of my own street, Emerson Ave. I feel somewhat self-conscious advocating for my own street, as I would not want to create the impression of getting special treatment because I serve on the Council. But at the same time, it would not be fair to my neighbors to forgo asking for Emerson Ave to be redone just because I want to avoid the appearance of impropriety. And Emerson does need it badly. Our curbs are worn down to nothing in some places, and we have deep potholes at one end and large stretches of delamination at the other. So I will be asking for Emerson to be done.

If you believe that your street should be repaved, let me know and I will come look at it. Keep in mind that I can only advocate with the Administration for certain streets. In the end, those decisions are made on the second floor of City Hall. But I am happy to advocate, as always, for South Utica in any way I can.



Uptown Theater Gets a New Roof!

I was very happy when I learned that the Administration had decided to allocate American Rescue Plan funds to help the Uptown get the new roof they desperately need. The old roof leaks, which makes renovating the main theater impossible. As soon as they got the word, they got to work, and you may have seen the stone facade being repaired at the corners.

The Uptown Theater is the linchpin of a renewed South Utica. Check out their website, and look for me at their Tuesday night films, shown in their lovely lobby.



[Check out the UTCA website](#)

New Year's Eve Downtown Celebration!

The City of Utica and the Bank of Utica are once again hosting a Downtown New Year's Eve Celebration. The event kicks off at 7pm with swearing in ceremonies for elected officials, including the Common Council. Then it's a full evening of music, live performances, horse drawn carriage rides, a chili cook off contest between our Police and Fire Departments, and more. So mark your calendars now and I'll see you there!



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 and the fireplace at the Ski Chalet!

I plan to 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.

You can keep informed of their meetings and agendas by following them on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UticaSouth>. They are working on a website as well, so stay tuned for that information.



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 October 2021

Here are all my votes in October. I am no longer going to break down my votes by specific dates, but rather group them by the month.

Resolutions I Voted For:

I voted for **Public Hearings** for the sale of the following properties by the URA: 503-505 Leah St to Marisol Collado; 1144 Brinckerhoff Ave to Jessie & Leuberta Dennis; 782 Elizabeth St to Esed Eso & Mirzeta Hamza; 824 Waverly Place to Anthony & Anthonia Lucas; 1311 Francis St to Constance Williams;

I voted for four Resolutions whereby the City of Utica takes over the maintenance of 4 separate highway lighting plans from the State. The Council discussed this at great length, after Councilperson Jack LoMedico expressed concern that some of the lights were installed in such a way that makes them likely to be damaged by snow plows. I had great reservations about taking over a system of lights that would likely become a burden to the City. After much deliberation, and after listening to the arguments that we essentially had no choice and that this resolution was a pro forma ratification of a prior agreement between the City and the State, I voted for it. But I also qualified my vote to express my concern that we were essentially agreeing to repair something that we ourselves had not installed.

I voted to re-appoint Richard Karam to a three year term on the Mohawk Valley Water Board.

I voted for a Resolution to honor the life and legacy of General Elder Charles Henry Felton Sr.

I voted to authorize the Utica Zoo to sell beer and wine at a fundraiser on October 22nd and to authorize Bagg's Square Brewing to do the same on October 16th. I also voted to authorize the sale of beer and wine by F.X. Matt Brewing Co. at Bank of Utica's New Year's Eve event.

Ordinances I Voted to Place in Committee:

I voted to place the following Ordinances for the sale of properties by the URA into Committee: 503-505 Leah St to Marisol Collado; 1144 Brinckerhoff Ave to Jessie & Leuberta Dennis; 782 Elizabeth St to Esed Eso & Mirzeta Hamza; 824 Waverly Place to Anthony & Anthonia Lucas; 1311 Francis St to Constance Williams;

I voted to place into Committee legislation that would limit access to Utica parks from sunrise to sunset.

I voted to place into Committee legislation to amend recent legislation

prohibiting the use of ATVs and other off-road vehicles on City streets.

Ordinances I Voted For:

I voted to authorize the sale of the following properties by the URA: 301 Mortimer St & 1116 Neilson St to Carlos Martinez; 1441 Sunset Ave to Alisandra Hernandez; 503-505 Leah St to Marisol Collado; 1144 Brinckerhoff Ave to Jessie & Leuberta Dennis; 782 Elizabeth St to Esed Eso & Mirzeta Hamza; 824 Waverly Place to Anthony & Anthonia Lucas;

I voted to rescind one hour parking on Barton Ave, North Side, from Genesee to Barton Ave (this was on the advice of the UPD, to alleviate problematic parking at Notre Dame Elementary school). I voted to require stop signs at Erie St. & Jason St. I voted to make a section of Hager St no parking at all times. I voted to make the intersection of Westminster Place & Dunham Rd. into a four-way stop. I voted to make the east side of Harrison Ave "no parking at all times". I voted to add a stop sign at James St & High St.

I voted to transfer funds between different Codes budget lines.

I voted to Ordain the placement of a sign at Valley View Golf Course to honor Henry Furgol Sr. and Henry (Hank) Furgol Jr. for all their contributions to Utica.

I voted in favor of an Ordinance to amend recent legislation prohibiting the use of ATVs and other off-road vehicles on City streets. The amendment changed the means by which infractions of this law will be arbitrated.

I voted for an Ordinance to amend the definition to "smoking" in our Code prohibiting smoking in public places, such that "smoking" now includes various means of "smoking" cannabis.

Local Laws I Voted For:

I voted to establish a temporary moratorium on new convenience stores and smoke shops in the City of Utica.

Legislation I Voted to Discharge:

I voted to discharge from committee a piece of legislation in relation to Complete Streets policy. I also voted to discharge two ordinance to amend the towing ordinance.



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