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Councilperson Celeste Friend
SOUTH UTICA - THIRD WARD



cfriend@cityofutica.com
315-725-5987

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South Utica Newsletter #29 from Councilperson Celeste Friend

Common Council only meets once a month in July and August. This gives me the chance to get a little ahead on my newsletter, while there is less to report. So here, you go, my July 2022 Newsletter.

As always, please forward this email to anyone you know who might enjoy it. They can easily sign up just by clicking the link below.

[Sign Up for This Newsletter](#)

We Want Your Input on ARPA Spending

South Utica is getting its own share of the ARPA money. Although I have a general idea of how to spend the money, as well as how to leverage our money into even more, I do want the input from neighborhoods. I am grateful that

Hamilton College has offered me an intern for the Summer, Eric Santomouro-Stenzel. I was able to offer another internship to a Wells College student, Maria Miranova, who is from Utica. They will be out canvassing in the neighborhoods, and asking you questions about our parks and sidewalks, and how to make South Utica walkable and sustainable.



Our two interns and Internship Coordinator, and myself.

Vacant Building Registry Ordinance

This legislation has been in the works for a while. I researched it carefully last year and first introduced it to the Council in February. We placed it in Committee and brought in an Albany City official who uses a similar law to discuss the law with the Council. We also had a meeting with that same official and the Administration to really drill down on how it works. The basic idea is this: any residential property that the Codes Commissioner can determine is vacant is required to register their property with the City. They are also required to pay a fee, which increases as the property sits vacant. There is a fair amount of discretion accorded to the Codes Commissioner as they go about enforcing

this law, allowing, for instance, people making good faith efforts to sell a property to be exempted from it.

The Ordinance passed on a party line vote. All the Democrats voted for it and all the Republicans voted against it. Their concern was the question of how we would be able to enforce it and collect the fees. This issue, of how best to enforce our laws, is the role of the Executive Branch. I will be working with them and if need be, we will amend the Ordinance.

Meanwhile, it is my firm belief that this Ordinance will give our government another means by which to address the problem of vacant properties, and thereby make all of us better off. It will not solve all of our problems overnight, but it does move the needle in the right direction.



A property at 2803 that has been vacant for several years, much to the dismay of the neighbors.

Stewart's Gas Station on Genesee?

The Stewart's corporation has been informally talking to the City about buying the old Raspberries restaurant on Genesee Street in South Utica and building a new gas station and store there. In order to do so, they will have to go before both the Planning Board and the Scenic & Historic Commission. I know what I think, but I really need to know what you think. Please fill out my two question

survey (just follow the link below) so that I can best represent you on this matter.

Update: as of this writing, 379 people have answered this survey, with 89% of respondents living in South Utica. I am very happy to have so much input. I am met on Tuesday, July 12th, with the Mayor and representative from Stewart's. I am holding a Town Hall for Tuesday, August 9th at The Other Side at 2011 Genesee Street in order to present **the results of the survey** (as well as other input) to the community. I will also explain **the process** that Stewart's will have to go through and the opportunities **for public input** into that process. Chuck Marshall from Stewart's will be there to show us his plans and to answer questions. Urban and Economic Commissioner Brian Thomas will also be there to answer questions. I hope you can come, so please put that date on your calendar. I will send another email closer to the Town Hall to remind you.



[Take The Survey](#)

My Votes on the Council in July 2022

Here are all my votes in July. All votes described below were unanimous unless otherwise noted. But, of course, if there is more you'd like to understand, please let me know.

New York State Grants: New York State organizes all grant applications into the "Consolidated Funding Application" (CFA). Many of these grants require a Resolution from the municipality of the applicant approving of the grant application. These applications are due at the end of July, so this is the month that the Council considers such Resolutions. At our July 6th, meeting, we passed three Resolutions in support of the following applications:

Main Street Grant for Midtown Utica Community Center: this is the same grant that the Uptown Theater was awarded last year.

Historic Preservation grant for Tabernacle Baptist Church: this grant will allow this beautiful piece of our downtown architectural treasure trove to finish their reconstruction of their large, complicated roof and gutter system. You may have noticed that they had scaffolding surrounding their steeple for a long time. That scaffolding has now been removed as they near completion of this important rehabilitation.

Main Street Grant for Munson-Williams: this grant will allow Muson-Williams to rehabilitate their property at 503 Henry St.

Resolution Authorizing an Installment Purchase Agreement for the Utica Police Department: The current body cameras used by our Police Department are about to become obsolete and unserviceable. The UPD has decided that the best way forward is to purchase, over a ten year installment plan, a complex system of tasers, body cameras, digital software, and cloud-based storage system from Axon Enterprise, Inc. This will amount to approximately \$500,000 a year for this necessary equipment and system. It is hoped that by buying this sophisticated system and equipment, we will enable our police officers to meet their discovery requirements more efficiently and thereby spend more time out in the community where they do their most important work.

Local Law to Change the Taxable Status Date: This law changes our taxable status date from August 1st to March 1st, beginning in 2023. This will bring us in line with other municipalities and NYS. This change was initiated by our Assessor, Rich Maxwell.

Vacant Building Registry Ordinance: See above for a full description of this Ordinance.

Update: New Forest Cemetery

Many of you may have noticed that New Forest Cemetery, on Oneida Street, is getting quite overgrown. (New Forest is on the left, or the North, side of Master Garden Road, with the older and larger Forest Hill Cemetery on the right, or South side of the road.) The cemetery has some financial liabilities, and the current Board is on the verge of resigning. Recently I toured the cemetery with Assemblywoman Buttenschon and state officials. She is working hard on the problem at the state level. There will be an important meeting for all plot owners on August 5th at Hanna Park, in front of City Hall. Please spread the word about this important meeting.



Image: headstones in New Forest Cemetery

Levitt AMP on Monday Nights - the BEST part of Summer in Utica!

My favorite thing to do in Utica in the Summer is, hands down, the Levitt AMP Monday nights concert series. For ten Monday nights, Kopernick Park comes alive with music, dancing, children making art, and people from every corner of Utica enjoying all of it. These concerts are wonderful, and they will continue on every Monday night until and including August 29th. Bring your own chair and a picnic, or buy dinner from one of the food trucks.

Here's what my friend Jeff Parker has to say about these concerts: "if you haven't come down to Utica for the Levitt AMP Utica Music Series on Monday evenings, you are missing one of the best things that has ever happened in Utica. These events are so entertaining, diverse, multi-generational, inclusive, creative and incredibly well thought out."

[You can Follow Levitt AMP On Facebook.](#)



Photo: an image of several different musicians and musical groups and the words "Monday Nights In Utica"

Green Waste Must Be Containerized

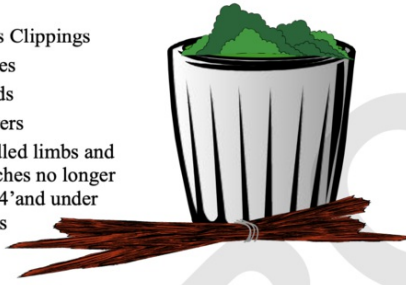
From now until the first week in October, ALL GREEN WASTE MUST BE CONTAINERIZED!!! Everywhere I go in South Utica, I see green waste piled up at the curbs, and even worse, in the streets. It is making a mess, and it is getting worse every day. The City has begun ticketing and citing property owners. If need be, the City will pick it up and then directly charge property owners on their taxes. Please save yourself the trouble of a citation by picking up any loose green waste you have already put out, place it into a container, and put it out on your regular trash night.



CITY OF UTICA 2022 GREEN WASTE PICK-UP 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 |

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 have provided services.

City of Utica
1 Kennedy Plaza
Utica, NY 13502

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Photo: an image of a postcard that Utica mailed to all households with the Green Waste schedule on it



CITY OF UTICA 2022 GREEN WASTE PICK-UP SCHEDULE

Place items loose at curb, **NOT** in the street.
(See reverse side for a list of allowable items.)

- NORTH** (Broad St. and NYC & HR Railroad north to city line)
Spring: STARTS April 11 – May 23 FINAL PICK-UP
Fall: STARTS Oct. 3 – Nov. 14 FINAL PICK-UP
- UPPER EAST** (Eagle St./Welshbush Rd. south to the city line and east of Genesee St./Memorial Parkway/Oneida St.)
Spring: STARTS April 12 – May 24 FINAL PICK-UP
Fall: STARTS Oct. 4 – Nov. 15 FINAL PICK-UP
- SOUTH** (Burrstone Rd. south to the city line and west of Oneida St.)
Spring: STARTS April 13 – May 25 FINAL PICK-UP
Fall: STARTS Oct. 5 – Nov. 16 FINAL PICK-UP
- LOWER EAST** (Broad St. to Eagle St. and east of Genesee St.)
Spring: STARTS April 14 – May 26 FINAL PICK-UP
Fall: STARTS Oct. 6 – Nov. 17 FINAL PICK-UP
- WEST** (Oriskany St. to Burrstone Rd. and west of Genesee St.)
Spring: STARTS April 15 – May 27 FINAL PICK-UP
Fall: STARTS Oct. 7 – Nov. 18 FINAL PICK-UP



CITY OF UTICA GREEN WASTE COLLECTION ROUTES

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.

Between May 28 – September 30,
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.**

Photo: an image of a postcard that Utica mailed to all households with the Green Waste schedule on it

The "new" Daily Sentinel - now available at Cafe Domenico

As we all know, our own Observer-Dispatch was bought out by Gannett, and ever since has covered less and less local news. The Rome Sentinel has stepped into that vacuum and is now becoming the Daily Sentinel, covering

Utica news as well as that from Rome. And now you can buy this new daily local paper at Cafe Domenico.



Photo: an image of someone holding up the Daily Sentieneel newspaper inside Cafe Domenico

Report from E&A - June-July 2022

The Board of Estimate and Apportionment is a five person Board, on which I serve, that oversees the day-to-day budget operations of the City. All transfers of monies from one area of the budget to another must be approved by E&A, as well as all expenditures of supplemental monies that come into the City, as well

as any and all changes to the Table of Organization, which lists all employees of the City. E&A is also authorized to settle lawsuits brought against the City.

Listing every transfer we make is turning out to be very time consuming. So from here on out, I will give a general summary of the work of E&A, and also provide a link where all of the minutes of E&A can be found.

So far, E&A has not met since my last newsletter went out, so I have nothing new to report.

Full minutes of the Board of Estimate & Apportionment can be found at the link below.

[Minutes for Board of Estimate & Apportionment](#)

Watch Common Council Meetings Online

I've always encouraged everyone to attend Common Council meetings. Come and participate in our democratic process, even if only by witnessing the Council as we conduct the City's business. But if you can't come in person, you can always watch the livestream available on YouTube. So, young or old, on a computer or on your phone, even while eating pizza, feel free to tune in. Regular meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of the month. Our pre-meeting conference is at 6pm, and the Council meeting is at 7pm.



Photo: an image of a young child watching a Common Council meeting on a phone while eating pizza.

[Watch Common Council Live on YouTube](#)

No SUNA Meetings for July & August

The South Utica Neighborhood Association, after surveying lots of people,

decided to suspend meetings for July & August. But they are still busy reaching out to the community and keeping people informed. Sign up for their email in order to stay in the loop.



Photo: an image of a SUNA meeting at the Ski Chalet at the Parkway Rec Center

[Sign up for the SUNA Newsletter](#)

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If you have found my Newsletters interesting and informative, I have good news. They are now all archived on my website.

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