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Celeste Friend

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Here it is - our Third Newsletter! This Newsletter keeps residents of South Utica informed on a variety of issues. Please share it with your friends and neighbors and [direct them to our website where they can sign up for it themselves](#). We hope that this Newsletter will help to keep South Utica a vibrant place in which to live and work, where you have a strong voice in your government and community.



REGULAR MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Meeting of the Common Council: Wednesdays, March 4th & March 18th, 6pm for pre-meeting, 7pm for regular meeting, public welcome to both meetings, arrive by 6:55 to sign up for public comment

South Utica Neighborhood Association: Second Monday of every month: Monday, March 9th, 6pm, Notre Dame Elementary School, 11 Barton Ave, just off Genesee

Street

Constituent Hours: 1st, 2nd, 4th, (and sometimes 5th) Tuesday of every month, The Other Side gallery, 2011 Genesee Street, March 3rd, March 10th, March 24th, March 31st - 4-6pm

Please note: Common Council meets THIS Wednesday, March 4th. The pre-meeting conference is at 6pm and the regular meeting is at 7pm. BOTH meetings are open to the public. Please attend! If you wish to sign up for public comment, you need to arrive no later than 6:55pm.

MY VOTES ON THE COMMON COUNCIL

There have been two meetings since the previous Newsletter: February 5th and 19th. Here are my votes at those meetings:

February 5th

- 1) I voted NAY on waiving the reading of the minutes because there were no minutes to be read. (See more below.)
- 2) I voted AYE to authorize the URA to lease a parcel of land to the Compassion Coalition. I also voted AYE to authorize the URA to sell parcels owned by the city to private owners.
- 3) I voted to AYE to appoint Stephanie Tighe and John Mirante as Commissioner of Deeds.
- 4) I voted AYE to appoint David Roefaro as a marriage officer in the City of Utica.
- 5) I voted AYE to approve the Board of E&A's transfer of funds between budget lines.
- 6) I voted AYE to authorize the DPW to sell some of its old equipment.
- 7) I voted AYE to reaffirm that a certain section of sewer be designated a "Type II" action. The original project was changed such that it now has a smaller footprint than before. We voted to reaffirm that it is nonetheless still a "Type II" action and does not require further environmental review.
- 8) I voted AYE to authorize the city to acquire the Wells Ave Parcel. This parcel of land is necessary to the development of the Inner Harbor in Utica.
- 9) Rules of Order

I voted NAY on the new rules of order, along with Delvin Moody and Joe Betrus. Five members voted for the new rules, and so the motion passed. I had several objections to these new rules of order. But most problematic is the fact that these new rules of order dissolve all the standing committees of the Council. We now have nine standing committees, each one of which is composed of all nine members of the Council. In other words, we no longer work with committees. We will be doing all of our work as a Committee of the Whole. No other city council conducts its business this way. Members will no longer be assigned to committees based on expertise or interest. This will make it easier to rush legislation through the Common Council without being vetted by an appropriate committee. Time will tell as to how many problems these new rules of order will create. I remain skeptical.

February 19th

1) I voted AYE to waive the reading of the minutes! Our Clerk provided minutes to the Council just before the meeting began, so I was happy to vote to waive them. We are still working to make the minutes easily accessible to the public through our website, but I believe that we are moving in the right direction. I encourage anyone who is interested in transparency and accountability in government and who wants to know what the Council has done, to ask at the Department of Legislation for the minutes of our meetings.

2) I voted AYE to authorize the URA to sell two properties to private individuals. These properties are located on Pellettieri Ave and Lansing Street. I also voted AYE to grant an overhead utility easement on Edward Street to Matt Brewing Co. I also voted AYE to grant an easement for gas service to Niagara Mohawk for the new NYPA Visitor Center.

3) I voted AYE on a resolution, sponsored by Councilperson Jack LoMedico and co-sponsored by every other member of the Council, to keep the Medicaid promise. The Resolution urges State leaders not to cut necessary funding to Medicaid and Medicare.

4) I voted AYE on a resolution that Spectrum/Charter Communications should reimburse their customers for the loss of service in early February.

5) I voted AYE on a resolution to reinstate The City of Utica Youth Common Council and to appoint Stephanie Heiland as the advisor for this Council.

6) I voted to remove the Charlestown Mall from our tax rolls. The derelict Mall is delinquent on their taxes, but is also owned by an LLC, so the City has no means by which to recover those back taxes. Keeping the Mall on our tax rolls therefore creates a number of financial problems for the City, including that we are required to pay the portion of school taxes incurred by the Mall. It is also not a good idea for the City to foreclose on the property. We do not want to own it, as that would give rise to enormous liability issues for the City. Taking the property off the rolls is the best way for us to cut our losses and protect the City.

GREAT AMERICAN CLEAN-UP

In late April, Utica will participate in the Great American Clean-up, where people from all across the city will come together to clean up the city and make it a better and more beautiful place to live. If you know of an area in South Utica that could use some TLC, please let us know. And if you are willing to spend a couple of hours on a weekend helping us, let us know that too!

SPECIAL NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING FOR RESIDENTS NEAR AND AROUND THE INTERSECTIONS OF HOLLAND AVE & MEMORIAL PARKWAY, AND ONEIDA STREET & GREENWOOD COURT

Good things are coming to South Utica, in particular to the area near the Parkway Recreation Center! Join Celeste and Steve Bulger, the Executive Director of

iCan/Kids Oneida for a meeting on Tuesday, March 3rd, at 5:30 at the Parkway Recreation Center. Get the skinny on this exciting project before iCan goes public with a big reveal on Wednesday morning.



SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL BUSINESS

by Theresa Harden Smith

Maria's Pasta Shop
2520 Oneida St.
315-797-6835

web page: www.mariaspastashop.com
Facebook: Maria's Pasta Shop
Owner: Justin Allen

Hours: Tuesday - Friday 9:00 am - 6:00 pm
Saturday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Sunday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Maria's Pasta Shop is a family run takeout and catering business located in the

Ridgewood Plaza. The shop, as the name suggests, specializes in homemade gourmet pasta. They offer an array of dried and frozen pastas, specialty stuffed pastas, entrees ready to bake or microwave, and a variety of sauces--all made in their adjacent kitchen. Maria's has a rotating daily to-go special and fried meatballs every day. Sunday's special is pizza frita. With homemade greens, peppers, other Italian products, gift baskets, fresh Italian bread from Big O Bakery and gelato from Belvedere's, Maria's provides for one stop dinner shopping.

UTICA RISING

(a regular feature where we talk about things in Utica we love)

Would you be interested in contributing to this Newsletter? We need someone to take charge of this regular feature. Drop us a line if you might want to give it a try. We have lots of ideas and can help you get started!

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