

If it was easy, everyone would do it.

Like any city, Oneonta has its challenges. But unlike many others, it has a community of neighbors who are willing to pitch in, to work together, and make things better.

Popular opinion is that we are too factionalized as a society to agree on a set of facts or to find common ground in addressing the concerns they pose. And yes – that is clearly true for some, but arguably not Oneontans – not in this moment.

And thank goodness for that. Because we have some difficult issues to grapple with. They are not easy. They are not convenient. They're not, and won't be popular, but they are being addressed.

This is the point of my mayoralty. It's been my mission to bring people together to help solve those vexing problems that would otherwise sink our hopes for a better, healthier, more promising future.

We no longer have the option to kick the can down the road. We must embrace the challenges and when necessary, take our medicine. I, for one, will not shy from those third rails of politics that have stymied action in the past.

Oneonta, I've seen it in these last fourteen months... you are right there with me, and my gratitude for your partnership knows no bounds.

We have a deer problem. Their over-browsing of our woodlands has put the understory, and the habitats of insects, birds, and small animals at risk. They have greatly contributed to the tick-borne illnesses that plague us, and their destruction of ground vegetation has contributed to the flooding of our streets and homes at the base of hillsides. Perhaps most concerning is the health of the deer population itself.

No one wants to manage the herd through a culling program. But, however distasteful, that is the responsible action.

I applaud the members of the Deer Management Taskforce who sifted through the information, established a baseline of facts, advanced a proposal, and have begun a campaign of education.

This is what's necessary. It isn't easy, but it's what needs to be done.

Similarly, Oneonta has been unable to provide affordable options for housing for years. The sky-high rents that can be charged have forced young couples and families to look for rental opportunities elsewhere.

Our anchor-institutions and businesses find it difficult to recruit new employees as finding a nice place to live is too great a challenge for many.

Entrepreneurs have made the bonds of neighborhood impossible to forge as streams of transient tenants make our center-city communities more anonymous and disconnected.

We must begin a process that opens our neighborhoods to long-term rental and owner occupancy. To do less will cripple our recruitment efforts and doom our chances for a more vital Oneonta.

This won't be popular among the landlords who have long enjoyed a business model that provides an excellent return on investment. But the facts of the situation are inarguable, and over 5-dozen community volunteers are working to provide options and solutions.

Parking and the city's finances are two more inextricably woven and controversial subjects. But again, we have more than a dozen community members tackling the former and we will be convening twice that number to address the latter.

In the end, I know that Oneontans will give credence to facts ascertained and presented by their neighbors, and that they will do the uncomfortable or bear the inconvenient.

If it was easy, everyone would do it.  
It's not, but we can, and we will.

We are Oneonta, and we're a city to be reckoned with.

See us in action at [All4Oneonta.com](http://All4Oneonta.com)