

Oneonta Mayor – DS Column – 06-10

Working together requires communication, (and I'm doing my best.)

While it's no secret that my mayoralty's goal is collaboration, my first priority is communication.

Our city's future depends on our success in engaging groups of people who've not been part of our conversations and our strategies, to come together in shared purpose, and quickly.

We need ideas. And we need new blood.

So, every day, I'm reaching out to you - in print, through social media, and conversation.

It's important to share my vision of this "light switch moment" and identify people willing to help flip that switch. We are on the verge of opportunity the likes of which Oneonta hasn't seen in a century.

There is a plan, and it starts with my making this connection with you. To get you on the team.

We have a plan to revitalize our city, to bring in new residents, create new jobs, and enhance and develop our potential. But that plan will fail if we don't fix our most pressing issue, housing.

Many before have tried and been stymied by the sheer size of the problem, but I'm taking a new approach. I believe that overcoming this obstacle will require multiple attacks on specific targets, each with its own battle plan.

Picture our housing problem as a mountain that we surround and see from different vantage points. While the mountain remains the same, our views of it are very different. However, from our own particular vantage points, we may have become familiar enough with the features of the mountain to identify its best passage to the top.

We're going to scale the mountain from different sides. Once we get to the top, we'll set our charges, and blow this thing up.

In the mountain's rubble, we will make Oneonta a place that can welcome hundreds of current and new residents to home-owning or rental. We will be a city in which bad landlords are held to account. Where housing is maintained and beautified. And neighborhoods blossom.

Realizing this goal will take many viewpoints and suggestions of routes to take. So, this is my shout-out to you.

Oneonta needs you.

With its next meeting, I am rebuilding our housing commission. In this new iteration it will be a hub of professionals who will provide support and direction to seven individual ad-hoc committees.

These will be working groups, comprised of dozens of our neighbors.

The time commitment will be as short or long as schedules permit, but whether you live in the city or beyond, if you want to be a part of the solution, we'll be glad to have you!

Look for a button on my Facebook page (facebook.com/MayorMarkD), and on the City website.

That's my pitch. I hope it moves some of you to action, but here's what I know from my experience in media.

If we're going to be successful in this recruitment effort, it will take ongoing communication of the need through every possible avenue.

That is one of the reasons that I am saddened by The Daily Star's loss of Mike Foster-Rothbart, a rock solid communicator and someone you could trust to present accurate quotes and their context.

He moves on to more lucrative employment, and I congratulate him on that. But we will miss him at City Hall.

Each day presents new challenges for print media, and for community newspapers in particular. Please look for ways to support them. We need good and reliable avenues of communication.

That's how we will build connections and drive collaborations.

It's how we flip the switch.

So expect to hear from me again – soon.

