

Oneonta Mayor – Hometown Oneonta Column – 09-25-22

500 words

Battle Plans

Lately, I find myself thinking about those generations past and especially the one dubbed the “greatest.”

How would they deal with this moment we’re in?

I think it’s a safe bet that many would step-up and pitch-in to support the effort.

That’s what much of a generation did in the 40’s. And I am betting on their descendants, in this 2022 version of Oneonta, doing that again.

This time, it’s not the forces of an army that threaten us, but the gloomy reality of a post-pandemic world. Where a decades long demographic shift - an exodus from the city, the town, the county, the state, and the northeast – coupled with an equally challenging workers shortage, has put us very much at risk.

We can prevail, though!

I know it.

The plan is to battle the trend. To vanquish the threats to business and neighborhoods. To raise the flag and brightly shine our light.

To bring 1,000 employed residents into the city.

This is the goal. This is what we’re fighting for.

Their addition to our community will deliver a jolt of energy that will crackle with potential.

But – I want to be clear - this doesn’t happen without a generation-defining effort from all of you.

I am happy and proud to report that that is exactly what’s happening.

Dozens have already stepped up, and every day, people approach me asking what role *they* can play.

Knowing our goal, identifying our challenges and competitors, recognizing shifts in the lines of battle, creating allies, and recruiting the best among us to join in the campaign – this is how we win.

Note: The enlistment of battalions of Oneonta volunteers is without precedent, and the process has caused a bit of agita for those looking for defining language in the charter. However, addressing those ambiguities is a campaign for another day.

Today I need to let you know about another “ad hoc” group to which, I hope, some of you will volunteer.

It is strategically important that we develop a mechanism to measure our gains, so that we can refine our planning accordingly. We need analytics.

So, among our immediate goals is the creation of a mechanism through which we can identify and quantify the numbers of new residents that move into the city.

In other, simpler terms, we need to know who has joined us. We need a headcount.

My plan to achieve this objective:

The creation of a “Welcome Wagon” committee that will package an introduction to Oneonta with discounts, incentives, resources, and more so that through a network of HR depts, realtors, landlords and others, new arrivals will be enticed to make this valuable connection.

And I need volunteers to help.

If you can give some time to a creative, respectful dialogue and planning, I want you to please step forward. My email: mayor@oneonta.ny.us

A “Welcome Wagon” committee will be another integral component of our campaign. I ask you to consider it.

Together – side-by-side – all in for a better Oneonta.