

Anti-Social Media and the Facts of the Matter

Betsy often tells me, “Stay off social media.”

That’s good advice in most cases, but in mine, it’s not feasible. I use social media as a delivery system for posts that support the efforts of local businesses and individuals in enhancing our collective Oneonta experience, and for my own messaging – including video updates on matters of consequence.

So, I spend time there... and I’m aware.

The national discourse seems irreparably and dangerously damaged, and it’s unrealistic to expect that the interests of those who profit financially and politically by the “click-bait” potential of divisive posting will ever be subordinated for the public good. Many embrace “facts” that align with their vision, and which are echoed among their friends and other like-minded souls.

This is the landscape that surrounds us, the toxic nature of which colors our perceptions and undermines our confidence. For all its value as a forum for constructive connection and engagement, social media is the devil’s playground.

However, it is my expectation of Oneonta, that we can do better.

We can use these tools for our mutual benefit, for crowd-sourced strategizing of solutions to our challenges, and for promotion to those interested in exploring their future’s potential in our city.

That is my hope, and the vision I share with you.

However, current reality is unfortunately out of sync with those aspirations.

In some social media feeds, there are posted a great many false and misleading rumors masquerading as facts. These are demoralizing to those who strive to an ideal in which the community works together, brainstorms its planning, and discusses its challenges with respect for the opinions and motivations of one another.

As the elected leader of our city, I’ve a duty to provide another path on which we can walk together with shared knowledge of our current circumstance and the plans for our short and long-term; where we can entertain diverse opinions and have respectful dialogue.

That starts with a shared understanding of the facts, and the knowledge that those neighbors you’ve elected are committed to a complete, unbiased, and

truthful dissemination of those facts. It should be appreciated that they are oath-bound to deliver their best efforts in support of the city and every person, agency, and business therein.

I am committed to helping build that fact-based foundation. A foundation upon which we can erect a sturdy framework for Oneonta's future.

And...that starts with answers to your questions.

To that end, I will be meeting with interested residents and business owners to provide information about the status of our city's parking infrastructure, the timelines for the creation of additional options, the current discussions within the council regarding future strategies, the costs of their implementation, and the methods under discussion for funding.

Beginning November 16th at 5:30 pm at Roots, and repeating quarterly, we will hold a Community Q&A, in which the City Administrator and I will try to answer every question that you may have, on any city topic – from the homeless, to affordable housing, and everything in between.

(Note: We cannot change what may have taken place months or years ago, but we can hope to control the present, and impact the future. So, our Q&A will be moderated with that premise.)

I have earned a reputation for responsiveness to texts and email.

And I do use social media as an information tool - ([facebook.com/MayorMarkD](https://www.facebook.com/MayorMarkD))

If you're uncertain of facts, I encourage you to reach out to me.

You pick the platform.

But otherwise, just say "no" to social media – except, of course to share photos of pets and grandkids. We all love those.