

## State of the City 2019 – Olean, NY

It is my pleasure to welcome The Reverend Jason Hladik of the First Baptist Church of Olean, Judge Daniel Palumbo, my wife Patty, my family and friends, Boy Scout Troop # 621, members of the media, members of the Common Council, our Department Heads and City Employees. Most of all, welcome to you in the audience in the Council Chambers and those of you who are watching at home.

We also have a few honored guests here tonight: former Council President Adam Jester and former Alderman Earl McElfresh.

I would like to acknowledge our Aldermen. It has been an honor to work with this Common Council. The residents of our community are blessed to have individuals who, as Aldermen, work diligently not only for their constituents, but also for the City. I look forward to working with them in 2019 as we continue our path of revitalization and growth.

And I want to recognize our city employees. Their commitment to Olean is outstanding and should be commended.

City employees are highly trained and strongly motivated. They are very diligent in planning for the future and solving resident issues. In addition the staff has a deep sense of community spirit. The list is long, but some of the events that they participate in are the Gift Tree Program, Rebuilding Together, and Toys for Tots. In addition they raise money and collect items for the SPCA and Genesis House.

The staff members in each department work hard to make Olean a great place to live, work, play and raise a family. I would like to thank them for their dedication.

Our City has a long history, well over two hundred years, and Olean residents have met numerous challenges along the way by the creation of partnerships between the public and private sectors.

In 1887 a group of businessmen got together in the parlor of the City Club and established the Board of Trade. The Board's job was to increase the commercial and manufacturing interests in Olean. Within one year the Board got commitments from a number of establishments, including Clark Brothers of Belmont, to establish a presence in Olean. This initiative by the Board of Trade, helped Olean's population grow from 10,000 residents to 12,500 residents in just one year.

Their next problem was housing—and Board of Trade helped to solve that by building houses and developing arrangements for the new residents to buy or rent at a fair price. The growing city needed new services and the residents met the challenges. Olean Light and Electric Power turned on the lights in 1887 and in 1918, to keep up with demand, the city of Olean cut the ribbon on its first state of the art water plant.

I mention the electric, water, and housing tonight for a reason—we will get to that soon.

Olean has come a long way since Major Hoops wandered our way. Traffic patterns have come and gone--and--returned again.

We are entering the third year since the completion of the major public works project on North Union Street. The great news is that private investment on the street has steadily increased each year. The chart on the slide shows the number of building permits that the City has issued for North Union Street before, during, and after the project.

It is an exciting time for Olean--there is a renewed sense of pride in our home town.

- New businesses have opened their doors.
- Established businesses have painted, purchased new awnings and made other investments in their properties.
- And buildings that have long been abandoned and or forgotten are on their way to a second life. And that is just the beginning...

We are now in the process of starting Walkable Olean Phase II. A project that will link North Union Street to the Olean General Hospital and the Park and Shop. It will make the crossings on Main Street at both Barry Street and Front Street safe for cars and pedestrians.

Revitalization did not stop in the North Union Street business district. We are seeing the effects of both private and public investment all over the City and are continuing to look for grant opportunities to help us transform our community. Our Park System is a good example of this.

Lincoln Park had a great year of Concerts in the Park. The weekly concert series is always very well attended and enjoyed by residents and guests and this year we increased the number of concerts from 10 to 12.

The park is the center of town and with the addition of the Permanent Farmer's Market slated for construction this summer, Lincoln Park will become a vibrant, active civic commons where visitors and residents of all ages and backgrounds can gather to shop and socialize. And the new structure will provide a venue for farmers and artisans to sell their goods all year long.

As you can see on the slide the City was awarded numerous grants to help finance this project.

In 2018 Oak Hill Park was the beneficiary of a grant from Marianne and Erick Laine through the Cattaraugus Region Community Foundation. This grant allowed the City to restore the Laurens Street entrance to the park. A great step in the restoration of Olean's historic park.

Oak Hill also received \$350,000 from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative which will help to upgrade existing facilities and install new amenities designed to complement the needs of the neighborhood and downtown.

The slide lists the upgrades that are being considered for the park.

Olean received a grant from KaBOOM!, and the Built to Play Initiative, supported by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation that will help the City bring a new park to Olean.

The City will transform a North Union Street property that has been vacant since the 1950's into a Parklet. Innovative equipment will be installed that will bring out everyone's inner child.

Construction will begin in June 2019 and the park should be operational at the end of July 2019.

King Street Park in East Olean will get new playground equipment and other upgrades thanks to a grant from Keurig Dr Pepper and KaBoom! And that's not all, our Department of Public Works has installed traffic calming curb extensions, or bump-outs, to the crosswalks adjacent to the Park. The shorter cross walks make it safer for both cars and pedestrians.

During 2018 the projects that qualified for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative were announced. I am pleased that about \$5.5 million was reserved for public works projects. Including \$900,000 to improve the North Union Street Streetscape. The money will be used for wayfinding improvements, beautification, appropriate lighting, seasonal banners, sidewalk replacement and seating in front of restaurants.

The City also received \$1.6 million to improve the streetscape on West State Street. The redesign will make it inviting and safer for pedestrians and cyclists, while accommodating traffic on the busy road. Improvements will be made to pedestrian crossings, landscaping, sidewalks, lighting and street furniture.

\$1.4 million of the DRI money has been set aside to improve the downtown gateway corridor between South Union Street and Henley Street. The project may include bump outs, medians, a bike lane, crossing enhancements, and sidewalk replacements. And the traffic signal may be eliminated and replaced with a roundabout.

And finally \$1.2 million of the DRI Money will be used to implement Walkable Olean Phase III, which will transform East State Street into a vibrant, walkable area. Improvements will be made to the intersections and streets.

The project will create an important connection between downtown, the proposed Farmers' Market in Lincoln Park, the Allegheny River Trail network, Bradner Stadium and War Veteran's Park.

As you can see for the next few years, Olean is going to be under construction. I am going to quote the Public Works Director, Bob Ring, "A street scape project is truly a work of art." When these projects are completed, and the back drop of the Allegheny River and Mountains are added, Olean will truly be a masterpiece.

Back to electric, housing and water....why did I single out those three items.

Well on June 13, 1887, Olean Light and Electric Power turned the lights on in Olean...

In the coming year Olean will start to see the benefits from the solar farm located on the brownfields. The City anticipates net metering credits in the amount of \$90,000.

As for the water plant, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of Olean's Water Filtration Plant in July. City Planners in 1918 made an investment in Olean's future—they made sure that safe, healthy, fresh clear water was abundant and available for distribution. That foresight and investment gave Olean an edge-- it helped our community prosper for generations.

Today Olean has approximately 100 miles of water line, and 775 fire hydrants. In addition to the filtration plant, Olean has 3 well sites and two tanks in South Olean as well as a tank and pump station on Stardust Lane. The City was fortunate to receive a grant of \$413,000 from New York State to help replace that pump station. And we continue to look for funding sources to help us replace the Washington Street Water line.

I mentioned housing. It was admirable that Olean's Board of Trade saw the need for affordable housing and went about to finance and build houses for the workers who came to Olean during the boom years.

We continue in that tradition—housing is important--as is the integrity of our neighborhoods.

Over the past year, the City rolled out the procedures for the Building Inspection Law passed by the Council late last year. The Codes office with the help of the IT department has installed a software program that will give code enforcement officers the tools they need, right in the field, to issue a violation. This software gives Code Enforcement an edge to monitor blight more efficiently and improve the safety of the residential structures in our neighborhoods.

In addition the City has partnered with the City's Community Development office, the Cattaraugus County Lank Bank, Rural Revitalization and land owners, to weed-out some of older, abandoned and more dilapidated homes. During the year Code Enforcement was able to demo 15 homes and four more homes are on the list for 2019.

We are tackling the blight—one house at a time.

But that's not all—

The City is working to help first time homebuyers secure the home of their dreams. To that end, the City applied for and received \$400,000 in funding from NYS State Homes and Community Renewal, and is partnering with Rural Revitalization and Chautauqua Opportunities to administer this grant.

In 1887 the Board of Trade went out and enticed businesses to relocate to Olean. Things really haven't changed all that much. Olean is still open for business and continues to recruit new businesses. The City received \$200,000 in funding from New York State to implement a Microenterprise Assistance Program.

The program will assist in the establishment and expansion of small businesses. The City partnered with Olean Business Development to manage the program. Awardees will be announced in the near future.

But that's not all...

Construction will start soon on the hotel in the brownfields. Imagine that—after all these years as a large, vacant lot, a hotel will stand soon.

The Olean Urban Renewal Agency continues its efforts on the redevelopment and dispositions of the former Manufacturers' Hanover and Siegel's Shoe Store buildings with preferred developer Savarino Companies. In addition, \$2 million in DRI funding was allocated towards the renovation and stabilization of the 101 North Union Street property--imagine that—the fourth corner on Olean's largest intersection will, finally, after over 20 years, be lit up.

A few years back the City undertook a \$22 million project to upgrade the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The Project is nearing completion and should be fully operational in 2019.

The City of Olean Police Department worked side by side with other law enforcement partners in the area to make the citizens of Olean as safe as they can. The main focus of the department continues to be drug enforcement. This year the department conducted 10 drug search warrants; generally due to the manufacturing of methamphetamine.

The department is involved with the community on many levels. During the year the Olean Police Department partnered with Olean City Schools to provide Special Patrol officers in the elementary schools. The Department also participated in No Shave November and Shop with a Cop during the holiday season.

The Olean Police Department is pleased to announce that Officer Ryan Aylor graduated from the Drug Recognition Expert School. This school is difficult to get into and very difficult to complete. The knowledge that Officer Aylor gained from this school will

enable the police department to be more effective in arresting people for driving under the influence of drugs. It is, unfortunately, something they are coming across more frequently and will increase if marijuana is legalized in New York State.

Next year the department hopes to implement a body worn camera program.

The Olean Fire Department rapidly responds to emergencies citywide, but the department partners with the community in many other ways. Each year they sponsor the Fourth of July fireworks, a spectacular event that brings Olean residents and visitors together to celebrate our nation's independence. Their commitment to this event makes Olean the center for Cattaraugus County's Fourth of July Celebrations.

In addition the Firefighters wore pink for Breast Cancer Awareness, they rang the Bell for the Salvation Army Kettle Campaign and decorated the Christmas tree at an adult assisted living home.

The department is proud to announce that over the past year two firefighters graduated from Paramedic School and two firefighters graduated from Advance Emergency Medical Technician School.

Youth and Recreation had an excellent year. Over 300 children participated in the summer recreation program and new programs were added including Kids' Yoga and a movie night.

The William O. Smith Recreation Center is now in its second season since the renovation and the facility has been well received by the public and the hockey groups that utilize it. This year we had 20 sponsors for the 12 Ice Skating Days of Christmas and daily participation was excellent. I want to thank the sponsors for making the rink available and free of charge to our community during the holiday season.

The Rec Center is also used for the summer youth program, Olean Area Home and Garden Show, AKT Martial Arts Tournament and the Enchanted Mountain Roller Derby. And we have instituted a new program this year—Ice Bocce—it has been very well received.

The Youth Center at St. John's has been busy with 25 plus students attending daily. The basketball program is underway with 10 teams and 72 students participating in the program.

The Senior Center's numbers are steadily increasing. New programming, an inviting atmosphere, and better equipment makes the Senior Center an excellent home for social activities for Olean's senior citizens.

And Bradner Stadium, along with hosting the exciting Olean Oilers games during the summer—Bradner Stadium hosted the finals for Olean City Cup Softball Tournament in August and was utilized for other private events during the year.

It's clear that the City of Olean has a lot to offer and we work very hard to accomplish our tasks without raising taxes. As the chart on the screen indicates we have been diligent over the past five year in keeping the City portion of your property taxes low.

We are also seeing some good numbers come in: sales tax revenue is up over \$200,000 over the same 7 month period of last year. Ice skating and ambulance revenue are up as well. And pension costs have come in \$20,000 under budget.

This all allows us to maintain the services that the City needs to provide without raising taxes beyond the tax cap.

But we can't do it without the help of our residents...

Olean has an amazing group of volunteers who work diligently to make our community a great place to live. Just take a look at the Bartlett House grounds and the beautifully decorated rooms—all work of volunteers. When the funding for the Bartlett House was on the line, it was a private citizen who offered financial help to keep it open. And, it was volunteers who sponsored events at the facility to make it accessible to all residents of Olean. The slide shows the events that the Bartlett House Volunteer Group sponsored.

It is volunteers who plant and maintain gardens in our parks. It is volunteers who weed many of the gardens on North Union Street. It is volunteers who pick-up the litter. It is volunteers who planted the planters on North Union Street. And it is volunteers who are helping to keep our neighborhoods safe with the new Task Force for Empowering Neighborhoods and Encouraging Proactive Change.

Our City has a lot to offer—our quality of life is exceptional. Olean City School District does an excellent job with our younger residents. Our City has not one—but two—institutions of higher learning, St. Bonaventure University and Jamestown Community College. We have a first class hospital—in the center of town. We have two historic districts, wonderful restaurants, many shops, and plenty of opportunities for recreation.

Olean really is a great place to live—optimism is spreading. The partnerships between our residents, our businesses, our Greater Olean Area Chamber of Commerce and our City's staff help to make Olean shine. Oh and by the way—the new Christmas tree and holiday lights are provided by the Chamber.

Just like Olean residents in 1887, we are maintaining the tradition of working together to make Olean a great place to live for upcoming generations.

John F. Kennedy, in his Inaugural Address said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."

In that same spirit, I'd like to suggest that we all look around and see if there's something we can each do for Olean. It doesn't have to be anything dramatic or time consuming. If there is a scrap of paper on the sidewalk, please pick it up and drop it in

the trash. If your elderly neighbor's sidewalk needs shoveling, please shovel it. If you have a suggestion for the City, please let us know. Your suggestions make Olean a great place to live.

Olean is better when we work together.

Henry Ford said, "If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself." Better together in 2019.

A rising tide raises all boats, and as my grandfather used to say, "A wave of enthusiasm raises all hopes."

My grandfather certainly knew what he was talking about—Olean is better when we work together to secure a bright future.