

IMPROVING OUR COMMUNITY

We continue to make Oswego a more attractive place to live, work and raise a family. We're adding public amenities, bringing value to our community, improving our parks, reviving neighborhoods, emphasizing community, live-ability and people. We renovated the street hockey rink, now the Jack R. Bobbett Memorial rink, at Shapiro Park, preserved Oswego City Hall through a \$2.6 million restoration project, built environmentally friendly bio-swales through our Green Gateway project along SR48, and created the new Lakeside Park at the end of East 10 1/2 Street, formerly an empty gravel pit, fully funded by a \$100,000 grant from State Senator Patty Ritchie. The new park allows for east side waterfront access, use of a pavilion, volleyball court, kayak launch, novelty chair and has proven to be an ideal location to watch the sunset and view the Oswego Lighthouse.



Oswego City Hall | 13 West Oneida Street | Oswego, New York 13126

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MAYOR



William J. Barlow, Jr.
City of Oswego Mayor

www.oswegony.org

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Dear City of Oswego Residents,

On January 1st, 2020, I was sworn in to begin my second term as Mayor of Oswego. During the Inaugural Ceremony, we reflected on the undeniable progress we've made since taking office in 2016. More importantly, we outlined goals for our second term, including capitalizing on our world class waterfront, continuing to improve our neighborhoods and using our revitalized downtown area to retain and attract city residents. We didn't know, however, our biggest challenge yet, in the form of a global pandemic, was on the horizon and would attempt to derail our progress.

2020 has proven to be a challenging year, but in typical "Oswegonian" fashion, we persevered, keeping the forward momentum, continuing to progress. As Mayor, I believe it's important for city government to make an honest effort at keeping you informed on City Hall happenings and would like to take this opportunity to provide you information with my annual newsletter.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office for assistance in the future!

William J. Barlow, Jr.
City of Oswego Mayor

BE INFORMED!

We implemented an alert system, notifying residents of emergencies, water shut-offs, construction detours, upcoming events and other announcements by text, email or phone call.
Opt in today at: <https://oswegony.alertmedia.com/public>

2021 COMMON COUNCIL

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RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC – PROTECTING OUR CITIZENS

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to threaten our community on many levels. First, once the COVID-19 virus arrived in New York State, my primary obligation was to do all I could to protect the general health and wellness of Oswego residents, while disseminating factual information for residents to consider in an effort to protect themselves and their family. I found it critically important to have local government ready to step up and respond to the negative impact the virus would have to the daily life of our citizens. When the pandemic finally arrived in Central New York, shutting down schools and closing the economy, we did our part to control the virus locally. **Oswego was one of the first municipalities in CNY** to implement a "Stop the Spread" essential-travel-only policy, ban mass gatherings via executive order, conduct information and education campaigns at local retail stores, hold mask distribution events and to implement social distancing enforcement details through the Oswego Police Department, all in an effort to protect our community from the invasion of COVID-19. **As a result of these quick and dramatic actions, we fended off the first wave of the virus and had a low caseload through Spring and Summer.** In addition, we promptly partnered with Little Lukes and the Oswego YMCA to offer free childcare to Oswego families, with priority given to first responders and those working in the healthcare field. We deferred bill payments for thirty days, built an emergency COVID-19 resource website, transitioned all city offices to work remotely, implemented COVID-19 virus detection into our city wastewater system and partnered with SUNY Oswego to test all essential city employees bi-weekly to protect our workforce and maintain adequate staffing levels to deliver the services our residents expect. Lastly, I did my best to hold press conferences, livestream announcements, virtual Q&A Town Halls and established a COVID hotline and email to create a forum for people to ask COVID related questions of any kind and get a response within 24 hours.

RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC – SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES

On March 20th, 2020, NYS ordered all non-essential businesses to close. That same day, we made \$275,000 in no-interest commercial loan funding available to businesses and worked swiftly to distribute funds within ten days. Simultaneously, we developed a restaurant business guide, informing the public of restaurants still open for to-go and delivery options, along with hours of operation and links to information as a method to inform the public and encourage residents to support local businesses through the shutdown. This flyer was mailed to every household in the city. Similarly, we promoted a #TakeoutTuesday campaign on social media platforms. We assisted many businesses with the essential waiver form where appropriate, allowing them to be deemed essential in the eyes of NYS and, as a result, stay open through the shutdown. We also aided many businesses with their federal Payroll Protection Program applications. Finally, we made available a streamlined, expedited process allowing businesses to utilize public space for expanded outdoor seating areas throughout the summer to, legally and safely, expand dining capacity.

RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC – ENGAGING OUR YOUTH

While the health risk of COVID-19 may not be as serious to our youth as others, the side effects of COVID-19 can have a devastating emotional, mental and behavioral consequence for young children. From having to learn remotely, to limited extra-curricular activities, COVID-19 has created a significant void in the lives of young people. City government immediately recognized this and acted to fill the gap using creative socially distanced activities and programs. First, the City of Oswego chalk walk was created to generate a community-wide fun activity as summer began. The youth bureau launched a "Young Adventurers" program to get children outdoors, taking up new interests and learning about our community. The Office of Economic Development launched a literacy initiative called "READ IT!", rewarding children who read every day for thirty days. We developed a creative way to honor the Class of 2020 by lining SR104 with banners listing the names of 2020 OHS graduates. Separate from the pandemic, city government partnered with the Oswego YMCA to open the new Oswego Youth Center and Skatepark at 201 East Sixth Street, creating a safe, secure and supervised location for youth to go to learn, socialize and relax after hours.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION UPDATE

It is with great pride that I report all 12 of 12 projects from our 2016 \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) are either finished or under construction. The \$22 million re-development of the Mid-Town Plaza site was the final project to break ground earlier this year. Other projects completed or near completion include the LITATRO project (former Global Buffet), Riverwalk project (former Harbor Optical site), Harborview Square (former Flexowire site), the Cahill Building, Lake Ontario Waterpark, Children's Museum of Oswego, creation of Water Street Square and our SR104 improvements. We've started to release our \$525,000

Downtown Improvement Program funding, resulting in façade and storefront improvements throughout downtown like Man in the Moon Candies, 1850 House and the Browne Davis Building. To supplement our DRI projects, we partnered with the owners of the movie theater to revive the marquee sign, implemented more green space throughout downtown and work continues on the interactive mural on the Schilling Building next to Water Street Square. Beyond that, we welcomed several new businesses to downtown including Zamp's apparel, Southern Fare and the state-of-the-art Aqua Spa Float Center & Wellness Boutique.

CAPITALIZING ON OUR WATERFRONT

Despite many complications caused by the COVID crisis, we pushed forward on our waterfront projects. Our waterfront projects are all designed with two goals. First, re-build and protect our waterfront from the high lake levels and associated flooding caused by Plan2014 (a new water management plan for the Great Lakes implemented in 2017). Second, our projects are designed to finally take advantage of our world class waterfront and utilize our waterfront property as an economic tool and prime attraction. To do this, in 2019, we worked to secure \$12.6 million in funding from the New York State Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI) and \$5 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). With no time to waste, in 2020, construction immediately commenced. Our \$1.7 million re-build and upgrade to Harbor Trail around Breitbeck Park is complete, complementing our improvements to the park and the work we first did to Harbor Trail back in 2018. Construction continues at Wright's Landing as the Department of Public Works leads our \$3 million transformation of Wright's Landing Marina. Our work raises the marina two feet in elevation to prevent flooding, renovates the restroom facilities, installs a new pavilion, a new welcome center, new fuel tanks, another firepit seating area and resurfaces all dock slips. I'm also proud to make the entire marina, along with the connection to Breitbeck Park, accessible to those with physical limitations. Wright's Landing Marina will be completed and reopened in June 2021.

CODE ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY

| Year | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Reported Complaints | 526 | 1,582 | 2,046 | 1,822 | 1,966 | 1,980 |
| Reported Violations | 974 | 2,106 | 3,510 | 2,812 | 3,039 | 3,060 |
| Building Permits | 231 | 291 | 593 | 538 | 535 | 559 |

*Data as of 12/12/20

2020 – A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ Passed 2021 city operating budget with **NO TAX INCREASE** for 3rd consecutive year
- ✓ \$1.765 million in paving of city streets completed (\$4.867 million total since 1/1/2016)
- ✓ Finished sewer separation project ahead of schedule, under budget
- ✓ Passed nuisance abatement law to help address disruptive and blighted rental property
- ✓ Conducted 2nd round of "Zombie Home" rehab program, repairing dilapidated homes
- ✓ Built September 11th, 2001 memorial at Oswego Fire Department
- ✓ Negotiated a \$375,000/10 year service agreement with Oswego Health
- ✓ Partnered with Oswego County Federal Credit Union on Veterans Banner Program
- ✓ Created the Neighborhood Engagement Team in Oswego Police Department
- ✓ Secured a \$176,000 grant for the Oswego Fire Department to aid COVID-19 response
- ✓ Secured a \$124,611 grant towards a new Oswego Bookmobile bus
- ✓ Installed two "Safe Internet Purchase Exchange" locations at OPD & OFD
- ✓ Collaborated with Victory Transformation to offer a warming shelter for the homeless
- ✓ Launched Neighborhood Cleanup program to simplify and expedite brush pick-up
- ✓ Overhauled plumbing and electrical code and examination process
- ✓ Appointed Phillip Cady Chief of the Oswego Police Department
- ✓ Performed a "Pedestrians First" initiative to protect pedestrians
- ✓ Developed the "Home for the Holidays" multi-purpose downtown holiday celebration