

STATE OF THE CITY
Believe in Yourself and Your Community Will Rise Together
Mayor Jeannie Hefty
April 21, 2020

This is my 13th year of addressing our community. These eyes have seen a lot in 13 years. We have seen the creation of a historic district, a bypass, an overpass, our “Field of Dreams” which encompasses the Wellness Center, Burlington High School, and 2 Gateway education Centers. The Riverfront, which removed blighted areas and uplifted development in our city. The Community Aquatic Center, and all the commercial development on 36 North and 83 South.

Despite these current times, there is still much more brightness to be seen for our future.

Talking about the excitement of development is usually the substance of the State of the City Address, but tonight I need to address to all of you of our current state in our community.

I see all of you with so many emotions, scared, irritated, loss of patience, missing the norm, family members, friends, and losses to COVID-19. Concerns of “Will my business survive?” and “When will I work again?”

This weighs heavily on me to read the sadness currently going on. I want everyone to be safe and thrive in our community.

Remember 3 years ago the Flood of 2017 struck our City? We knew it was coming and started filling sand bags, preparing for the unknown of the damage, possible loss of life and injuries. It crested at 16 1/2 feet higher than projected.

Loss of power left us in darkness but the strong spirit within us, we knew by working together we would survive. We did and became stronger than ever.

Now, we are stricken with the COVID-19, an invisible virus. Taking measures to be safe, watching the many deaths on national news, businesses closing, and wanting your life back, emotions are at its highest. Yes, the news magnifies the dread and disparity making us feel more vulnerable.

Our community has already received monetary donations to ensure our “at-risk citizens” have food on their table. A blood drive was organized to ensure adequate supplies are maintained. Small businesses have been pushed to their limit and have evolved to offer new services to keep their staff employed.

But sadly, many businesses don't have that option and have needed to close. These are all actions of FIGHT and DETERMINATION!

We will rise, as we always do. We have been tested before and we will prevail.

But we need to do this together. Think of the many individuals that are also hurting. Let them know you care.

Think of all the kids decorating the City with hearts and happy messages. You need to smile. They are wanting to be a part of this journey and finding positive ways to make the most of these times.

The many citizens of Burlington that are on the front line as healthcare workers, first responders, and those working in essential businesses for our daily needs. Pray for them and let them know you appreciate their efforts. Also pray for the ones that are currently unable to work or open their businesses. They will need our support more than ever when this is finally over.

Over the last few years many businesses have opened in the community. What we need to do as a community, is continue to support each business as if it were their last day.

It is us to pull the community out of darkness and into the light of the future.

So keep the faith and know that this too shall pass.

Keep believing in Burlington! God Bless to all of you and be safe.

Remember, "BURLINGTON STRONG"!