



## **STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS 2022**

Our community that we love so much has been tested since 2020. Who would have known that almost 3 years later the world would be challenged with a pandemic, inflation, supply chain issues, a war in Ukraine and a struggling economy.

I feel leadership in our community must be willing to bring people together for the common good of the community, regardless of politics. This starts with each and every one of you as elected leaders.

So, what does this mean? Be compassionate, open and have honest communications to our resilient, strong residents, businesses and city staff that have been through, and still going through these challenges. It certainly has been highly emotional and very trying for everyone. BE KIND to one another, as we are all one team!

I also need to acknowledge our outgoing council members who served during these past years, navigating new technologies, as well as staff who were, and still are, challenged beyond words, but still address their responsibilities for our community.

### **AS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT...**

Our OWN downtown businesses have created a vibrant area with great ideas and excitement!

Our community recognizes the change. Revolving loans, grants and facade grants have helped to change the faces of our downtown buildings, and many others throughout the city.

We as a city have been involved with multiple developers, and anticipate an increase to much needed housing, and possible industrial growth.

This summer we hope to begin the first development of housing to potentially bring in 300 units. We have been working with three major companies to address the stormwater runoff to help in the area around McHenry Street and Market Street. We all hope to bring closure to this issue, and the many meetings that have transpired over these past years, very soon.

### **AS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES...**

The City of Burlington will be seeking Paramedic licensure this year. We will still work very closely with Rochester Fire and Rescue, as calls are up to six calls per day on average. The trucks are out an average of one minute after being toned out.

Our high school students, who are studying to be EMT'S, are now able participate in ambulance rides and work with real patient contacts again. This program was stopped because of the pandemic.

I can't say enough about "Flight For Life". Being housed here and involved in our community, they have added additional strength to our emergency response team.

## **VISION 2040**

The City has been working on a comprehensive plan that will help guide and grow us for the next 20 years. We started this on December 8, 2020. The plan is a framework for land use, transportation, housing, utilities and community facilities, opportunities for economic development, agriculture, and cultural and national resources to help guide our future. There will be a public meeting on May 21 soliciting community feedback.

## **COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**

We have brought back communications with the Town of Burlington and will be joining the Racine County Intergovernmental Cooperation Council to look at how communities in the county can collaborate more effectively and efficiently for our constituents.

## **IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DOWNTOWN**

This year Jefferson Street will have a makeover with angled parking and green space. The Jefferson Street Bridge, which is a State project, will go out to bid and finally be replaced in 2023.

We are looking for a downtown streetscape plan that will remove the paver bricks as just one of the improvements for 2025 and beyond.

## **DAM RESTORATION OR DAM REMOVAL**

This is probably one of the most critical decisions of what Burlington will decide. Community input will continue. The steering committee will work together on both plans which will also create language for the referendum, if the Council decides to move forward with it. I still feel we can work together to combine ideas of both plans and keep the dam and bring back Echo Lake to the level for enjoyment for all.

## **MAYOR'S TASK FORCE**

During the second council meeting of May, the task force will release the ideas coming from the listening sessions that were held. These listening sessions are inclusive of all citizens in our community. We are not involved with our school policies. We discussed our community only on any betterment we can do for our residents. Many work and attend schools here.

The county is also involved with these listening sessions and County Executive Delagrave and myself will be meeting and sharing thoughts. Dr. David Thomson from Burlington is giving his time for his community to head the Task Force now.

I said this once before, "Great cities don't just happen - it takes a commitment to hard work and believing for all of us to reach our goals. " Nothing is impossible!

Thank you and God bless us all!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeannie Hefty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "H".

Mayor Jeannie Hefty