



**City of Port Jervis 2017
State of the City Address
By: Mayor Kelly B. Decker
January 26, 2017**

Councilman-At-Large Bavoso, Councilmembers Fitzpatrick, Hendry, Randazzo, Trovei, Belcher, Foster, Siegel, and VanHorn, Department Heads, distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen of the City of Port Jervis.

I am here in front of you tonight presenting my fourth State of the City Address. This address will be one of promise and hope for our future while understanding the challenges that lie before us. Port Jervis is a city that is on the move but we must understand that only we can be the motivators that will make that happen.

In my address last year, I said that I have asked the citizens of our great city to commit to change and that is what we have begun to do. We are embracing our past but pushing ahead for success. We have worked hard and focused on alternative revenue, growth, volunteerism, and community pride for our city.

I said that I was confident that 2016 would be a banner year for our city and so it began. The city has focused on new businesses and outdoor activities that will provide jobs to our city residents. We have been working with US Crane to develop the former Skyline Property as well as being introduced to the Orange County Accelerator to identify other areas in the city leading to economic development. We have seen more people walking on the city fitness loop with its new level sidewalks that is very encouraging as we frequently see joggers and mother's pushing baby strollers along the way. The hiking and biking trails now provide over 18 miles of outdoor nature activity that is second to none worldwide. We are also developing the railroad turntable with its future museum along with the tow path connection, and at least a partial revival of the D&H Canal that is set to come to life soon that presents a

flashback of what life was like with 19th Century Transportation here in America. The BOCES summer work program returned and cleared many of the areas near the towpath and canal from brush and debris. They even made signs. This free labor is paid for through a grant from BOCES and is a supervised program that teaches our local teenage resident's responsibility, coupled with hard work, equals success. A link from the old Erie railroad turntable to a 1 mile walking trail along a linear D&H canal, in the city, will be an asset that no other community can enjoy.

“Community Service Saturday's” continued its 3rd year by working on the D&H Canal and tow path. This is a program that every club, religious organization, or family in the area could help donate their time to freshen up our city. From 9:00am – 12:00pm, only 3 hours, on a Saturday allows the volunteers to make a difference in their community. It is not much to ask and many hands make for light work. Look for it to start again this April.

Although it has been a slow process, many houses owned by the city have had their titles cleared and the council is now working diligently to be able to best sell these properties and get them in the hands of hard working individuals that want to live here in our city.

Our city provides an array of events throughout the year that draws thousands of people to our small little city on the banks of the Delaware. The Soap Box Derby, Dinner Along the Delaware and Fireworks Show, Fall Foliage Festival, Chrstkindlmarkt, Art and History in the Park at Orange Square and the Tri-State Triathlon have provided wholesome fun for individuals and entire families alike. This past year four new events made their way to the city with the Snowball's Chance Fat Tire Bike

race, the Will of Orange cross country race, the Erie 80 Mountain Biking race all held in the new Watershed Hiking and Biking Park as well as the return of the carnival at Riverside Park. This year we will again see these event and new ones throughout our city.

Our challenge has been our budget and fund balance that is still dangerously low when it should be about 10% of our entire budget, its barely 2%. As I have said before that dipping into the fund balance to offset a budget increase was a recipe for disaster. When doing this the council only covers up the inevitable payment by creating a gap in funding that puts the city in jeopardy of failure. A fund balance is your rainy day savings. Our city has begun to fill those gaps but we still need to borrow, short term, even this year to make up the difference however it is certainly better than the last several years and is anticipated that the fund balance will begin to rise.

We have increased revenues by taxes yes, but are also tapping into an alternative income stream with vacant properties, solar energy, and the sale of city properties. We continue to explore how to create sustainable alternative revenues while enhancing our city. The problem we have is the State of New York as they continue to go ahead and raise mandated fees, program fees, and insurances rates to support their operations. Again for the 9th year in a row they have decided not to provide any additional aid to the city which is downright shameful. This year the state increased their health insurance expenses on our city employees, 8.4%. Yet the Governor along with his state tax cap expects Port Jervis to stay within that cap by raising taxes less .058% or about \$5,800 which is impossible without cuts. Clearly something needs to be done.

I continued to tell people that we live in a municipality that by the title “city” offers services. Cutting services and cutting personnel are the easy budget fix but it will ultimately lead to greater hardship for our citizens. If we cut services we will see more garbage on our streets, we will see crime rise, everyone will see insurance rates escalate, and much more. This is not a scare tactic, its reality that can be seen in other cities here in New York and across America. We have worked hard cleaning up our city and we are making it more attractive to visitors and new homeowners. Do we have problem areas? Certainly, but we have focused our rehabilitation goals there. Values will increase, as buildings are rehabilitated and so will the tax base making for happier residents and business owners.

This year the council will be working on a Serial Bond in which the city will make some major needed repairs on city properties and purchase large ticket items. However, some of those funds will be used to invest in the city so that we can begin to produce a revenue stream such as the development of Riverside Park and the White Water Kayak Park, the campgrounds at Elks-Brox Park which could also include an Adventure Park and Zip lines, West End Beach with canoe, kayak, and raft liveries, as well as the Railroad and Canal Museum just to name a few.

Additional ways of raising revenue is parking meters in our downtown Front Street, Pike Street, and lower Sussex Street locations. Many new and old businesses complain about the lack of parking for their staff and customers and building owners complain about parking issues for their residents. An evaluation of the parking situation found numerous and constant violations and a way to control it that also creates revenue is to implement parking meters. The meter revenue should initially be earmarked to go towards building a parking garage downtown which

will be needed as new businesses and apartments flourish in our developing downtown.

Speaking of fees, the city sewer fee which was implemented two years ago comes out of the necessity to provide mandated work in lieu of paying a larger fine that occurred from a sewer main break in 2013 on Jersey Avenue. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation fined the city and the city did not even have the funds budgeted to pay for that fix, the fine, nor the mandated corrections. Upon settlement it was decided that a comprehensive plan needed to be put in place to rebuild and repair our 120 year old sewer distribution line system that has been minimally maintained and had only spotted replacement since its inception. Over the last year the City has replaced nearly 20 manholes in an effort to fulfill the DEC consent order as well as beginning FLOW testing to identify inflow/infiltration . It will cost the city nearly \$99,000,000.00 in today's money to replace the entire system and the minimal sewer fee certainly doesn't make a dent in the overall system but we are forging ahead with writing grants and putting money towards a system that was neglected for over a century.

This year the city hit an all-time high in building permits issuing 235 permits. Some residents have taken advantage of 421-f called the "Capital Improvements to Residential Property" exemption, that was renewed by the council this year which allows homeowners who are putting an addition onto or rehabilitating their main structure the ability to apply for a tax exemption on city taxes over the course of 4 years for the improvements done thus offsetting any new tax burden. Our businesses also have a tax exemption too that many rarely take advantage of but are encouraged to find out how they can save money through our city Assessor.

This year our long time city Assessor, Yvonne Duryea retired and turned over the reins to her assistant Teresa Spradling. I would first like to “Thank” Mrs. Duryea from the bottom of my heart for the many years of service to this city and her guidance given to me when I began serving as your mayor. I would also like to welcome Teresa and her vast amount of knowledge that has allowed our Assessor’s office to move forward without a hiccup. Mrs. Spradling works diligently reviewing, inspecting, and updating properties on an annual bases in the city to make sure everyone, pays their fair share and that there is an accurate inventory of property. Unfortunately property exemptions continue to take up a great deal of the assessor’s office time. 21% of the city’s assessment roll is exempt and mandated by the State of New York without any type of state restitution. This equates to an annual loss to the city in the amount of \$1,762,168.00 up \$121,065.00 just from last year. Although the citizens should not be happy about this, the assessor’s office continually monitors these properties to make sure they abide by their exemption status. Foreclosures continued to be problematic in 2017 due to the poor lending decisions by banks in the past, but on the bright side the real estate market in the city has risen by approximately 10% over the last year which shows a recovery is in progress. The Assessor’s goals this year is to continue to ensure accurate and fair assessment rolls, work closely with the building department and stay informed regarding foreclosures, vacancies, and improvements as well as update property inventory, research, and review the expansion of solar energy in our city and assist other departments. All this information is crucial to make sure everything is accurately accounted for.

People frequently ask about loans or grants whether it is for housing or businesses and I find that it is our Community Development Agency, that is contracted by the city and which is an intricate part of our city's future growth, usually comes in to help. CDA director Valerie Maginsky works day and night seeking funding for our businesses and residents. The CDA manages more than anyone can imagine. Currently the CDA manages 8 working grants that include White Water Kayak Park permitting, a \$600,000 sewer grant, local business micro-enterprise grant, affordable housing rehabilitation grant, sewer flow study, a Waterfront Revitalization grant for planning and city code, a Tech Rescue grant for Swift-Water Rescue, and the Promenade grants. Although they manage nearly \$1,352,050 in grant money currently they continue to apply for many others which is very time consuming and heart wrenching when they are not successful. This year we will have 3 new grants totally \$318,993 that will purchase a generator for the underpass pumps, the demolition of six city owned properties, and a confined space tech rescue grant. The state declined two grants this year for over \$774,597 for the Hammond Street Sewer replacement and a firefighter grant for vehicle communication equipment. In addition, the CDA director attends many meetings across the county and state representing our city, the agency manages Section 8 housing for the city including the new first-time homebuyers program. This coming year their goal is write and submit more grant applications to keep our city moving forward, to work with the city to develop policies and procedures that comply with state and federal regulations, focus on downtown revitalization, initiate new loans for businesses and property owners, support a tourism and marketing program for the city and continue to streamline the agencies operations.

In recreation that is led by John Faggione, we saw a banner year for our city. The opening of the Watershed Park and Recreation Trails created by volunteers with money from donations and grants has already taken our nations mountain biking community by surprise with outstanding feedback worldwide. Three very successful mountain biking events drew people to Port Jervis from all over the world. Eclectic as it sounds the Snowball's Chance Fat Tire Mountain Bike race kicked off in March while the Erie 80 brought the country's most formidable mountain biking racers here in October. In between, the United States Army at West Point mountain biking classic was also held here drawing college students from Ivy League schools up and down the east coast. The summer playgrounds saw about 2,500 children in our city parks during the summer and the Youth Center saw about 5,500 during the year. Recreational programs continued throughout the year ranging from Art & Crafts to Karate, Judo, Basketball, Bowling, Skateboarding, and Sleigh Riding which all help bring countless kids, teens, and adults together while also building family time. The Recreation Department sponsored 15 special events and trips for all ages in the community. We saw the re-opening of West End Beach and held concerts and events such as the 23rd Annual Delaware River 5K run, Dinner Along the Delaware and Fireworks Show, 2nd Annual Tri-State Triathlon and the Halloween parade. The Recreation Department also dedicated the Tennis Courts at Church Street park after long serving Recreation Commission member Luann McCarthy. This year the Recreation Department will continue its vision with the city by expanding the Watershed trail to potentially 26 miles, refurbishing the campground at Elks-Brox Park with new picnic tables, grills, tent platforms, lientoos, and possibly a cabin that were all provided through a grant from Senator Bonacic. There will be clearing of brush from the river bank starting at West End beach to Riverside Park in order to provide scenic views of

the Delaware. Additionally, the focus will turn to searching for funds to rehabilitate the Farnum House with a gymnasium creating a true Community Center for our Seniors, Youth, and Emergency Management. As I said last year and will reiterate it again this year recreation is a key component to this city's survival and we will continue to expand and change, where necessary, to meet the demands of drawing tourists and new residents as well as keeping friends who live here to stay.

Every event or project that is done here in our city is done using members of this department that also maintain and clean our city streets, provides us with our clean fresh water, maintains and cleans our sanitary lines, and removes our garbage weekly. We certainly cannot survive without the members of our Department of Public Works led by Director Jack Farr and his assistant Steve Duryea. This year alone this department installed 16 ADA compliant sidewalk curb cuts. They also installed new streets signs with funds through CHIPS, rehabilitated over 20 sewer manholes, installed kiosks, created parking areas, and built gates in our Watershed and Elk-Brox park as well as cleared brush and trees out of the D&H Canal bed and Erie turntable all with funds from grants the city received. They also started FLOW testing our sewer system, and repaired a retaining wall at city hall. Last year was just a test for this coming year when they will commence construction of the Downtown Promenade as well as sidewalk and streetscape replacement of downtown Front Street through another grant obtained. They will continue to make our city ADA compliant through additional curb cut replacements, they will be working on the major sewer main replacement on Jersey Avenue and begin the safe routes to schools sidewalk replacements on East Main Street, Kingston Avenue, and Hamilton Street with yet another grant. Additionally the members of the DPW

will be assist when necessary on the FEMA spillway project that will finally begin this year as well as the Tri-State bridge and road widening project.

Chief William Worden and Lt. John Fitzpatrick lead our very dedicated and highly recognized professional police department. These sworn public servants of our community define our mission of safety and security to all its law abiding citizens. They are committed to working in partnership with the community they serve to improve the quality of life here for all of us. They stand with courage as they face all types of situations and provide an excellent service. Port Jervis, like many small cities across our great nation are experiencing challenges in crime, disorder, and quality of life issues. Our police department has rallied a proactive address to the community in which they serve. They problem solve by listening to the public and respond with data driven evidence. Community Policing is a proven crime suppressant that builds partnerships and enhances the quality of life for everyone. Our city is safe as our officers are well-trained with the latest technology and up to date proactive enforcement strategies. Our officers work collaboratively with other law enforcement partners and succeed in their operations of multifaceted strategic enforcement which allows them to make the serious arrests and get such a high conviction rate. Our elite detective division is second to none that continues to proactively address the heroin epidemic. They have prioritized the aggressive targeting of narcotics dealers that sell heroin and crack cocaine that is often associated with the deadly overdoses, thefts, burglaries, frauds, aggravated assaults and robberies and puts these suspects out of commission. By obtaining such skills, our police department has seen notable reductions in Part 1 Serious Crimes with a 25% reduction from last year and a 32% reduction from 2014 and more so a 57 ½% reduction

from the city's historic high in 1996. Those major crime reductions are robbery, aggravated assault, thefts, and forcible rape. We have also seen a reduction of 8.4% in personal and property damage traffic crashes. It should be very clear that a commitment to adequate staff with proactive community driven policing has been a strategy that is working to our favor. Our officers attended over 100 community based events and meetings this past year and have built alliances with our city school district, PJ Pride, Empowering PORT, the recreation department, Bon Secours Community Hospital, Neighborhood Watch, businesses, and local faith based organizations. Crime Prevention and Outreach builds partnership and solves problems. Our police department will continue this year to improve transparency and the dissemination of public information by utilizing social media and their webpage to promote public awareness, education, and safety. We will seek to install a state of the art citywide HD camera system that will help in police investigation work. They will expand the campaign of "Be Part of the Solution" by enhancing the community we live in as well as the "Slow Down, we love our children" campaign that launched just this last year. In March, our police department in cooperation with Safe Homes will launch the Grant Funded Enhanced Violence Intervention Program which is a team approach to improve response and intervention of domestic violence. They will continue to aggressively pursue those who sell illicit narcotics in our city to remove this plaque from our community where they are not welcomed. The police department will continue our canine program with the purchase and training of a new canine and officer. Lastly, the department will be introducing its first youth police academy this summer by educating 20 youths from 6-8th grade of the values of being a leader and a role model as well as the importance of making good choices to be a civic minded young citizen.

The city building department led by building official, Dave Rivera, has continued the task of cleaning up the appearances of dilapidated, unkept, and unsafe buildings throughout the city. This department has moved into the 21st century with computer driven tracking software that keeps tracks of inspections, violations, reminders, and summonses for those frequent violators. Compliance is a major goal when issues arise and this department focuses on compliance and wishes for the owner to work it out before being issued an order to do so thus making this city look and operate in a safe manner. This year Rivera and his assistant Laurie Powrie will continue to work to improve the health, safety, and image of Port Jervis by making sure code enforcement is fair, equal, and across the board. Our Building Department works with commercial and residential owners to problem solve issues in compliance as well as working closely with architects and engineers to make sure full compliance is obtained as we begin to rebuild our city. As was the case last year, observing and identifying violations that will hopefully be corrected first with just a contact is welcomed; while unfortunately others will need to be cited, these violations will be well documented. It is important that our neglected buildings are attended too and it is this department that will make sure that the code and standards are followed.

Our City Clerk's office, led by our City Clerk-Treasurer Robin Waizenegger, traditionally collects taxes, fines and fees. Additionally, the City Clerk's office is responsible give guidance to improve the city's cash flow and make the necessary recommendations needed to effectively run our city efficiently. As the city begins growing it will be this department that will look at the financial aspects of that growth and make suggestions for positive results. As we try to provide our residents with a level of services that they are accustomed to while trying to meet unrealistic financial mandates set through NYS policy is trying but this

office will continue to make recommendations on balancing our funds. The City Clerk, whose office is now in full complement by filling the Deputy Clerks positions this past year, believes that our city is now beginning to move forward from a potential devastation to a positive future, while still being cautiously optimistic as we proceed forward.

This will be the last year of the city's Nutrition Program as we know it, Kathy Shortell who has faithfully been behind the management of this program for many years will be retiring and the program will be morphed into the county program which is responsible for this service to our citizens. The meals now are currently produced by Orange County and Kathy and her staff continue to welcome guests, in the Farnum House for a hot meal lunch. This sit down service is really what will no longer be offered. Noticeably this has been declining over the past 2 years anyway by 62% mostly due to the meals coming from the county program which had in the past only subsidized the local facility menu and cooking. Others receive meals sent out to guests that are flash frozen by the county and need to be microwaved. During this year the Nutrition Program continued its 3rd year of providing a 5 week summer cooking program called "The Little Chefs at Rec." This program provided cooking techniques to children as well as sanitation education, culinary vocabulary, and of course lots of taste testing. The project once again produced, bagged, and labeled cookies for the National Night Out against Crime that was held on the first Tuesday of August at Riverside Park and ended with a final farm style family meal for the participants. Little Chefs at Rec will continue this year. Further Kathy and her staff coordinated a tax program that was offered to our low-income seniors for over 25 years with the assistance of Paul Brislin, unfortunately this service will not be provided this year as Mr. Brislin has retired from the AARP/TIC Tax Program. The city would certainly like to "Thank" Mr.

Brislin for his many years of service. Not leaving all the tax program participants in the lurch Kathy is referring clients to the new United Way Program by having them call 211 where they will be given instructions on how to transfer to this new service.

Our 100% City of Port Jervis Volunteer Fire Department led by Fire Chief Frank Fuller 3rd responded to a total of 422 calls in 2016. The Fire Department updated its technology with the purchase of tablets to be installed in all fire apparatus this coming year, this after installing each fire station with internet access to allow the uploading of call information from the tablets. This system will allow firefighters to see real time updates for calls from the 911 center. This will also allow companies to see which manpower is currently en-route to their station to staff apparatus more appropriately for calls. Additionally, the tablet seeks to move the department to the world of paperless filing. The department is currently still in the running for a 2016 NYS DHS grant to establish a properly trained confined space rescue team. We should hear about this acceptance soon. The department will also be closing out a grant it received in 2016 to send more members to Charlotte, North Carolina for the remaining swift water rescue training. Additionally the department will begin replacing all of its thermal imaging cameras this year for added safety and better technology. However, announcing tonight for the very first time I want to commend our Fire Department, chiefs, officers, and firefighters who just yesterday received word that the city's fire department has reached their goal to improve our ISO class rating from a class 4 to a class 3. The ISO acronym stands for the Insurance Services Officer that independently rates organizations licensed in the State of New York for fire protection. They perform an objective review analyzing critical elements that contribute to overall fire suppression capabilities that affect loss severity. The essential

elements to receive a class 3 rating includes pumper capacity to suppress any fire in any building in the city, 24 hour dispatching in which there are two, annual testing on hose, ladders, pumps, & hydrants, a definitive, reliable, & pressurized water system, firefighter training above minimum standards, that meet the threshold of certified interior firefighters, and they perform annual fire and building inspections. Currently there are 2,423 fire departments in New York State and only 278 of them are rated at a class 3 putting our city near the top. So you may ask, what does this mean for our city? ISO ratings play an important part in the decision insurers make when underwriting and pricing property insurance. Commercial businesses in our city should easily see a decrease in their premiums beginning May 1, 2017 the date when this rating goes into effect as well as attracting new businesses to our city. Commercial businesses should contact their insurance provider to seek the benefits of this change.

As always, our Fire Department is looking for special individuals that are willing to step up and answer the call to be a firefighter and protect our city and her citizens.

Earlier I mentioned the White Water Kayak Park which is in the permitting stage by the Army Corp of Engineers. Up to this point we have spent a little over \$100,000 of grant money only, no city money, to permit, have testing and engineering completed. This process while slow and tedious is progressing. Now is the time to move forward with the project to finish the permitting stage and get ready for construction. Construction is not just limited to building the in the water park, it is also the development of Riverside Park into a venue which will draw visitors year round and create revenue for the city and its businesses. I am seeking money from the council in a serial bond to hopefully complete the permitting stage. I am also committed to allowing the

public to decide on this project for construction in a referendum when it gets to that stage. Of course there will be information supplied at that time to educate those that vote about the pros and cons. Furthermore, there has been new monies donated to this permitting stage by private donors which will help keep city costs down as well as a fundraising campaign of cans and bottles with more information to come. This project can be a vital piece of recreational activity that can bring a positive economic impact to our city. The White Water Kayak Park can increase tourism in the city and provide a unique draw for those with different levels of expertise that like to fish, kayak, canoe, raft, tube, surf, or boogie-board as well as welcoming sunbathers and walkers in an area that is currently overgrown and underutilized.

Our local Soap Box Derby continues to be the world's largest local derby and returns to Sussex Street on Sunday, June 11th. Our local derby completed its 17th year and is affiliated with the International All-American Soap Box Derby. After the racing is over there will be 4 champions in 4 different divisions (Stock, Super Stock, Masters and Super Kids). This local, led by its director Wayne Addy, brings thousands of spectators that spend their entire day watching races, eating food from our local vendors, and enjoying activities for kids right here in our city.

The Mayor's office has continued to work extremely hard in notifying residents and businesses in the city about activities, functions, events and projects through e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, Nixle, the radio and our news media outlets. Our council meetings are still broadcasted on Public Access Tri 23TV for cable viewers and now LIVE on the Mayor's Facebook page. I would again like to thank the many volunteers from Public Access Tri 23TV for not only taping and

showing our council meetings but for the entertainment and news worthy shows they have offered on access for nearly 3 decades. This year we are committed to marketing our city near and far to show what it has to offer as well as the potential it has to be a magnificent draw.

We are beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel but really the thanks go to you the citizens. We are stepping up and taking control of our destiny. Everyone hates that dreaded word taxes. I have said in the past and hold this to be true that our local taxes are the heart of our city's operation. Any new sustaining revenue that we can create will help our local taxpayers and help offset any further tax burden. I say this as I want each of you to understand that although we do receive a few small token grants from Orange County we as taxpayers pay over \$1.5 million dollars each year in property taxes to the county alone. What do we see for it? I will leave that for each of you to decide. My major request to the county has been to locate higher education here for our residents. I have hope that it will come someday but today we have none. In addition, many of you pay income tax to our state, you pay to renew your car inspection, registration, license and other various state mandated fees that collectively is in the millions of dollars just from the residents and businesses of Port Jervis alone. In return, our city hasn't received any additional aid from the state in over 9 years. Although, Thankfully we have received several grants from New York State Senator John Bonacic to be able to do some of the projects that I have stated before but the funds are specifically designated to those projects. I'm sure the state could do much more to help us out but unfortunately it seems to only falls on deaf ears.

So we must take charge of our destiny.

As I said last year and the year before, these will be some trying years that lie ahead for our city, we have focused on correcting our financial woes ourselves as we see that any substantial help from the County, State and Federal government are little more than rhetoric. We faced hard truths that the services we provide to our residents come with a price tag and that we are pretty much on our own in addressing those needs of our community for clean drinking water, safe roads, a functional sewer system, and quick response by our police, fire, and ambulance personnel in emergencies, that replacing an aging infrastructure will happen but with hard work, determination, and team building. We are getting through the difficult times and beginning to live in a city that is starting once again to prosper and make our forefathers proud.

This year is election year and whether it is me or someone else that may come knocking at your door, seeking your support for a vote on Election Day, hold them accountable. Don't let them throw out sound bites that seem great. Ask them for detailed plans. Four years ago after being elected mayor I gave, and every year since have given, the council an updated 5 year Strategic Plan. This is my view on how to move our city forward. I thought about this plan in depth for a long time and continue to adjust it based on opportunity, success, and inhibitors. While working for this great city as a police officer I would frequently think about how we can make this city be as great many of us remember it as kids. It was a hustling, bustling city with light industry, and homeowners who took pride in where they lived. As we begin to see industry thriving and growing here and new industry being born this revival is on its way. Recreation is the other key component to this revitalization that will positively affect our downtown businesses. But that is my belief. Please

make sure your candidate this year has a solid plan to move our city forward, that is all I ask.

Accomplishments have been many over the past few years and many more are on the horizon. So I ask PLEASE do not let this forward motion disappear. I do realize there are those that do not see this vision and I realize that there are those that believe it is moving to slow, as do I. In order for our investment to grow in this city whether we are a homeowner or a business, WE must be committed to change. We must stand up and move ourselves forward. We must understand that we are doing this for the most part alone. ...and WE will be the ones to make Port Jervis great again. ...but WE must also realize that there are forces that do not want change here in our city and with respect to them we must move forward anyway.

This seems fitting for a reminded Teddy Roosevelt quote who said “In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.” These past 3 years the eclectic council has begun to do something and must continue to do something but we certainly must avoid doing nothing. Therefore the citizens of Port Jervis need to come together, communicate your vision, and plan to work hard to show those that visit our city, or to show those that want to buy a home or start a business in our city that we have more to offer to them and their families than anyone else in a place they too can call home.

God Bless America and God Bless our small city on the banks of the Delaware, Port Jervis, New York...Thank you!