State of the City Update
Mayor Michael Villa
January 15, 2016

In this, my first State of City address, after spending only a few short weeks in office, I would like to bring the focus to the future of Amsterdam. I think that together with the new forward thinking Common Council, we will be able to tackle many initiatives and build on the foundation that we have in our community.

Financial Forecast

There is no doubt that we have financial concerns and we are in the process of determining exactly how deep those concerns truly are. Collectively we have decided to take a phased approach. The following steps will be taken over the course of the next few months to determine our overall financial health.

1) Financial legal Adviser to assist with a search and interview process to determine the most qualified accounting firms to serve our multi-faceted financial needs.
2) Once interviews have taken place, a list of finalists will be brought to the Common Council and a vote will take place to choose a firm to bring our financial records to a current and acceptable state.
3) The firm will be used solely for the aforementioned purpose and once that scope of work is complete, the City will begin an RFQ (Request for Quotes) process to choose an Auditor for the City.

By initially utilizing an outside accounting firm, our controller and his staff will be able to focus on financial issues that are current and once our financial forecast is complete we will be able to focus and meet all financial requirements of the City going forward.

Foreclosure Properties

We are considering all feasible options as we approach the date of our Auction of foreclosed city properties. Once the auction is held and properties are purchased, they will be placed back on the City tax roll.

City Initiatives

There are many initiatives that have been started that I plan to see through to completion and many initiatives that we can look forward to in the near future. I have highlighted some of those for you below and will keep you updated on their progress.

1) Continue our partnership with the land bank as we begin to rehabilitate designated properties in specific areas. We have solidly identified 13 units for renovations and 6 units for demolition for a total cost of $552,000.
2) A committee has been formed to work on marketing materials in anticipation of the opening of the Mohawk Valley Gateway Overlook (MVGO) Pedestrian Bridge, tentatively scheduled for

late June or early July 2016.Members include; Samantha Bonanno, Robert Von Hasseln, Danielle Whelly, Chad Majewski and Gina DaBiere-Gibbs.

3) We have plans to proceed with a feasibility study to relocate the train station. We will be seeking grant funding to cover the cost of the study. Assuming this is a viable option, we will seek funding through the Tiger Grant program to construct a train station in the new location.
4) The City will continue to explore options for historic preservation of our downtown and possibly the clock tower and FGI buildings.
5) RiverlinkPark will continue the concert series and is in the process of planning and scheduling other summer events and the Amsterdam Mohawks will begin their season at Shuttleworth Park early in June. Both venues bring thousands of people into our City throughout the summer months.
6) Generous donations from Dr. Rao, Bob's Paving and Cranesville Block have been secured to create a new, safe community playground and skate park behind the Centro Civico building on East Main Street. We anticipate a start date this Spring.
7) Our municipal collaborations with Montgomery County, the Town of Florida and the Town of Amsterdam will continue to be mutually beneficial in the coming years.

In our aging City, many updates, repairs and improvements are needed and in most cases they are quite costly. The former administration was diligent in finding opportunities for grants to aid in some of these updates and repairs; however the grants cannot cover the costs in their entirety.

I am confident that we will build on the momentum of the grants that we have already received, find new opportunities for additional funding and utilize current budgetary dollars to invest wisely in the future of our City.

City Improvements

1) Market Street 10 LLC has acquired the former Best Value property and is in the process of renovating the former hotel on Market Street into an Assisted Living facility. An aggressive rehabilitation schedule for the building predicts that the work should be complete in approximately one year. Once the facility is ready for occupancy over 75 new jobs from housekeeping to skilled nursing will be created.
2) Some of the City's local businesses are experiencing growth and possible expansion. Mohawk Lifts has been in the City for more than 30 years and they report that they have just received their biggest order in the history of their company. Noteworthy is also expanding their current capacity.
3) The Administration will be meeting with Senator George Amedore, Congressman Paul Tonko and Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara to seek support and funding to help with the city's needed infrastructure repairs.

Grants

1) **Culinary Corridor Grant** – Grant funding in the amount of $75,000 will be utilized to complete a feasibility study for a culinary district.
2) **DEC Water Treatment Plant**– The City was awarded a $183,000 grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to install a chlorination system at the

wastewater treatment plant. This installation is mandated through DEC regulations and the grant funds will cover 80% of the cost of installation. This system is necessary to effectively treat waste water and reduce the potential for contamination of the Mohawk River.

3) **EFC Sewer System ImprovementsGrant** - The City has just applied to the New York State environmental Facilities Corporation for a grant of $1,250,000. The application was also for 0% financing on improvements to the City's sewer system. The City is under Consent Order to make improvements to the Sewer System and this funding will enable those mandated improvements to be made in a more affordable fashion. The City has been notified that it qualifies for the 0% financing and are awaiting the decision on the availability of the grant funding.
4) **CDBG Sewer System Improvements Grant** - A $600,000 HUD Community Development Block Grant was obtained by the City. A portion of these funds are earmarked to provide critical improvements to the City's three main sewer pump stations. The remainder of the funds was used to replace the deteriorated sewer line that services Florida Avenue. A portion of the funds for the project will be used to mill and pave that street in the Spring.
5) **CDBG-Disaster Recovery West end Storm Drainage Improvement Grant** – The City will be making improvements to storm drainage in the City's west end that are anticipated to begin in the Summer and Fall of 2016. These improvements will be made possible through a $1.4 million grant from the HUD Disaster Recovery program.
6) **CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Grant** - The Urban Renewal Agency is in the final stages of a housing rehabilitation program in the Reid Hill neighborhood. This program has been funded with two Community Development Block grants in the amount of $400,000 each that has allowed for the rehabilitation of over 30 buildings in that area. As a result that rehab effort is estimated to be an investment in excess of $900,000 (including private investment) for the improvement of residential properties. The program will be completed in the Spring of 2016.
7) **Home Housing Rehabilitation Grant** – The City has been awarded a $400,000 housing rehabilitation grant under the HUD Home program that will enable the rehab of approximately 22 units of rental housing in the City and generate a matching investment opportunity from owners of rental properties around the City.
8) **CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Grant** – A $400,000 Community Development Block Grant was recently awarded to the City of Amsterdam to rehab housing in the Grand Street Neighborhood. The grant will allow for the rehabilitation of 20 housing units and provide grants to qualified property owners in an effort to reduce the blight in that area of the City.
9) **NYS Parks and Recreation & Historical Preservation Grant** - A grant in the amount of $224,000 will allow for improvements to the east portico and deck of City Hall and should be underway in the coming months.
10) **Mohawk Valley Gateway Overlook** – The City is in the planning stages for over $650,000 in improvements and enhancements to the Mohawk Valley Gateway Overlook. A grant in the amount of $325,000 from the New York State Department of State and a $325,000 grant from the New York State Department of Transportation will be utilized for this purpose.
11) **Land Bank Grant** –The Land Bank is a cooperative venture between the City of Amsterdam and the City of Schenectady. Grant funds totaling $552,000 from the Office of Attorney General will be used for a number of projects in the City. These projects will include demolition of 6

dwelling units on Division Street and rehabilitation throughout the City that will then be sold as owner occupied housing.

In addition to implementing grants for improvements and repairs, I am committed to continually monitoring and evaluating current processes, procedures and departments to ensure that they are running in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible. Some examples of how we can increase efficiency are listed below.

Increased Efficiencies

1) An Environmental Facilities Corp (EFC) funding option is underway in the amount of $5,000,000. The funding will be used to upgrade current infrastructure and sewer treatment plant repairs that are necessary to the day to day operations and functionality for all City residents.
2) The prior Administration's decision to install solar arrays by Monolith should yield an approximate savings of $43,000 per year. Borrego's Solar System arrays will be installed that are projected to save an additional $110,000 per year.
3) The administration will continue to look for ways to increase efficiencies without reducing services in all of our City departments.
4) The administration has committed to changing our current lighting over to LED lighting. The projected annual savings for this change is broken down below.
    a. Riverlink Park - $8,000
    b. Water Treatment Plant - $10,000
    c. Waste Water Treatment Plant - $20,000
    d. Golf Course - $3,000

Amsterdam Industrial Development Agency

I am looking forward to seeing the progress on projects begun by the City's Industrial Development Agency. They are currently engaged in a joint effort to expand AGT services and continue with the development of a turbine cluster of companies to be located in Amsterdam. My hope is that they continue to market the former Mohasco Site on Forest Avenue as well as the City's industrial park on Edson Street as possible energy turbine sites. Their commitment to continue with the City's efforts for revitalization of the downtown area and possibly bringing a new hotel to Amsterdam is encouraging. We will build upon these efforts and look for new ways to collaborate with the County's IDA to continue to bring new industry to our area and surrounding towns.

Summary

As you have read, there are many exciting projects in our City's future. Some of which were started under the previous administration, some are anticipated and many possibilities have yet to be mentioned. I am committed to the residents of Amsterdam to not only managethe day to day operations of the City but to continually explore opportunities for the improvement and financial stability.

In closing I would like to quote a former Mayor; "I am seeking a new spirit of harmony, ideas and solutions all working for the one common goal, that being the renewal of our city".

Thank you, and God Bless You.