



STATE OF THE CITY MESSAGE

MAYOR SAM TERESI

JANUARY 29, 2018

Madam President, Members of the City Council, Department Heads, Guests and my fellow Jamestowners.

In accordance with Article IV, Chapter 31-C of the Jamestown City Charter, it is once again my pleasure to present to you this evening the annual “State of the City” report.

For your review and consideration, I have prepared and included the following items:

- A 20-page summary of 116 separate initiatives advanced during 2017 of which, each and every single item was crafted and implemented with one goal in mind... to save our taxpayers money while preserving and enhancing our high quality of life.
- An ambitious 11-page, 59-item overview of the of the Administration’s major goals and objectives for 2018.
- Various other supportive materials and documents pertaining to the subject matter of the 2017 and 2018 reports, as well as the content of this message.

Please be advised that full copies of this comprehensive report may be found for public review and use at the following locations:

- Office of the Mayor, Fourth Floor, Municipal Building
- Office of the City Clerk, First Floor, Municipal Building
- James Prendergast Library, 508 Cherry Street
- City of Jamestown official website. www.jamestownny.net .

In the interests of time, I am again this year going to forego the long, lengthy and painful review of last year's accomplishments and the goals for the coming year, a practice that has become all too customary for such "State of the (fill in the blank)" speeches. I have the utmost confidence in you, my elected colleagues (serving on this local, history making legislative body), our talented staff, and the obviously intelligent citizenry (who have entrusted us all in our current positions) to read through the information being distributed tonight... and draw whatever conclusions and inspiration that might be appropriate.

But, if I may, I would like to share with you this evening some additional thoughts about the state of our wonderful city.

As you are about to see, the items contained in the exhaustive and impressive 2017 accomplishments report, represent but a mere sampling of the activities and strides made through the collective efforts of the members of this legislative body (including former City Council President Greg Rabb and former Councilmember at Large George Spitale), our outstanding department heads and managers, the best municipal workforce that one could ever imagine and a broader community of volunteers, business operators, property owners and non-profit organization leaders, who truly care about and love this city, and sacrifice on a daily basis to make it all that it is capable of being.

And because of that, and despite the problems and challenges before us... and make no mistake about it, we have many, and for that matter, what place doesn't... I believe that the state of our city is sound and getting stronger and better each and every day.

In fact, with what is currently happening, what is on the planning boards for the coming years and most importantly, the way things are happening, I am more confident about the future of this place, probably more so, than at any other point in my 57 years.

But, I also want you to take a moment to listen... really listen carefully. Can you hear it?

Unfortunately, I can, and have been hearing it all too loud and clear, from certain self-serving individuals, in certain circles and on certain platforms. Not just in the past several weeks, the past several months or through the diseased and destructively toxic and tribal national political environment of the past several years. No, this has existed in various, virulent forms and strengths throughout my nearly four decade career in local public service.

Now I'm sure that it will not shock many when I remind you that there exists a small, vocal and persistent group right here in our fair community that unfortunately carries and spreads the message that Jamestown is the "Little City that Couldn't". These are the people that imagine conspiracies lurking around every corner and tend to oppose any new idea coming down the pike. These folks believe that no matter what we think, say or do, things are always going to be too big, too expensive and too hard for a place like this and people like us to achieve. These

individuals believe that we should simply lower our expectations, go along and merely learn to accept our limited abilities and lowly station in life.

And, I can hear right now and all too well, their negative din and pathetic drum beat.

“How dare they talk about such lofty and demanding goals... for all places... Jamestown?”

“There is no way that we should try this OR we can achieve that. Maybe somewhere else, like down south or out west where my son, niece or granddaughter moved... but not here in Jamestown!”

And my personal favorite from the “Greatest Hits” list?

“This just isn’t the same town any more... and we need to take it back. And we need to band together and take it back to a point in time that made sense. A point in time where...

- *Everyone was good, honest and nice to each other.*
- *Everyone spoke English and looked and acted like real Americans.*
- *Good factory jobs were falling off the trees and every man, with only a high school certificate in his hand, could literally walk down the street and have his pick of the litter.*
- *The downtown area looked like Times Square on a Saturday night and the throngs of happy shoppers with everything at their fingertips that they could possibly want, literally pushed pedestrians into the gridlocked streets. And the streets? Well, they were paved in gold, or at least the very rare pot holes were.*
- *A good and wholesome time, in which girls were girls, boys were boys and every real man, hardworking man, loved his family and took care of his own... without ever having to ask others for help.*
- *A time in which there was no crime and certainly no drugs or substance abuse issues.*
- *And, a time where everyone flew and pledged to our flag with pride, listened to Frank Sinatra, Elvis (at least the early stuff) and the Beatles and loved thy neighbors as thyself.*

Well my friends, the truth of the matter is that wonderful, “Norman Rockwell” place never really existed. Except of course in the well-meaning but historically revisionist hearts and minds of

those who choose not to deal with what is, or what can be... and what truly can be if we would only work together in the interest of others and not ourselves. And, what truly can be, if we only embrace the meaning of our nation's motto... E Pluribus Unum... Out of Many, One!

In the spirit and words of that great American poet and philosopher from Hicksville, Long Island, Billy Joel, I've always believed that "the good ole days weren't always good and tomorrow ain't as bad as it seems."

Tonight, I'd like to leave you with a little story that I may have shared along the way with some of you over the years.

Several years ago, as a young and newly elected public official, I was dining at a New York Conference of Mayor's meeting with a diverse group of my senior colleagues from throughout the State, when the conversation inevitably turned to the challenges, issues and successes in our respective communities. Upon completing an account of the amazing economic turnaround in the downstate City of White Plains, a booming suburb of New York City at the time, Mayor Joe Delfino turned to me and asked, "*So Sammy, tell us about Jamestown. What kind of place is it and what is happening there?*" I have to admit to you that for a moment I froze and was left wondering what I could possibly say in the wake of the White Plains tale of renaissance.

After taking a deep breath, I proceeded to share with Joe and the rest of our table mates, my vision of New York's Pearl City.

A good and generous place where:

- Folks live the "*miracle of hard work*", in the attempt to maintain their homes, send their kids to college and provide an improved standard of living for their families.
- Parents, teachers and community volunteers give of themselves, raise money, donate time and hang on every note played in support of the talented students comprising our world-class music programs.
- Thousands of volunteers and sponsors make possible parades, antique car shows, charity basketball tournaments, ethnic festivals, Babe Ruth World Series tournaments and hockey, baseball, football and skating events at every level for our young people.
- People truly embrace the arts, because they understand the important contributions the arts make, not only to the intellectual, but the economic wellbeing of the broader community.
- People touch the lives of friends, family members and individuals across the city and around the world, through one of our 100 churches, representing more than 40 religious

denominations.

- Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and caring adults coach youth sports teams and give of their time to the YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, PTA's and a host of other organizations.
- Professional educators, aides, foster grandparents and community volunteers, teach, care for and nurture our young people as if they were their own children.
- Men and women of all ages reach out to neighbors and offer individual acts of kindness to a stranger in need.
- The good and generous city government, with the limited dollars afforded to it by its hardworking taxpayers, provides the highest possible level of public services to enhance the quality of life not only within the city, but for its neighbors throughout Southwestern New York.

At this point, Joe emphatically stated: *"You, my friend, may not be the mayor of a wealthy city, but you are fortunate and blessed to be the mayor of a truly rich community with a bright future."*

And speaking of that future, it is obviously filled with critical choices that will determine what type of place this will be for our children and grandchildren.

Will we embrace my friend Joe Delfino's *"forest for the trees"* insight or will we choose to follow the depressing path of the doomsdayers and naysayers who seem to be hell bent on infecting the rest of us with their own strain of misery?

Will we innovate, plan and invest? Or will we drown in our own fears, limited vision and thoughts of diminished capabilities?

Will we allow small thinking and fear of failure to paralyze and hold us hostage in this chamber, in our homes and in our own minds? Or will we embrace and display the type of attitude and bold thinking by which those who walked and served before us, truly conducted their lives?

Will we be content to settle for doing the mundane and the bare minimum in order to merely get through the day? Or, will we allow ourselves to dream, take reasonable risks and build a better community for our kids and generations to come?

Tonight, I ask each and every member of this community to join with me, my colleagues and all of those who dare to think, plan, invest, collaborate and look at this marvelous place, not as it once was or even as it is now, but rather, for what it can be someday.

Join with us as we tell and demonstrate for everyone with an open mind and everyone who is willing to listen, that we are smart enough, strong enough, resourceful enough and good enough to look for and demand the best in others so that we can deliver the best to ourselves and future generations.

Yes, even with the problems and challenges before us, the state of our city is sound. And if we chose to work together in the interests of others and not ourselves, it will continue to get a little stronger and better with each passing day.