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MAYOR KATHY SHEEHAN REVIEWS FIRST HUNDRED DAYS IN OFFICE AND REPORTS ALBANY'S PROGRESS

Mayor Sheehan highlights initiatives and policies implemented during her administration's first hundred days and looks ahead to upcoming events and opportunities

ALBANY, NY – Mayor Kathy Sheehan highlighted key initiatives launched during her administration's first hundred days in office at a press conference this morning at the Washington Park Lakehouse. Mayor Sheehan reflected on what her administration has accomplished since her inauguration. "While there is still much work to do, we have taken the initial steps on the road to a revitalized and renewed city," said Mayor Sheehan. "There is a new and exciting energy not only in City Hall but throughout Albany," she added.

Mayor Sheehan reviewed a number of accomplishments and initiatives taken during her first one hundred days.

Overall City Operations

- Albany experienced the most severe winter that the City has seen in many years. Despite three snow emergencies, the Department of General Services generated cost and overtime savings. In addition, the weather resulted in an increased number of water main breaks and serious fires that the Water Department and Fire Department expertly handled.
- The Mayor filled key positions including new Commissioners of the Department of General Services, Water Department and Recreation, Youth and Workforce Services and the hiring of a new Budget Director, Personnel Director, and Chief of Staff. She also had the privilege of swearing in a new Chief of the Albany Fire Department.
- Together with the City's Chief Technology Officer, the Mayor created a new organizational structure for the City's IT department that will allow it to help the City enter the 21st Century and efforts are underway to implement that reorganization.

Community Engagement and Empowerment

- As part of a larger effort to empower our communities and combat economic inequity, City Hall advanced an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) awareness initiative and promoted the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program. This valuable information and tax assistance tool provides important access to financial opportunities during the tax season.
- City Hall was designed by famed architect Henry Hobson Richardson and construction was completed in 1883. Our historic building began hosting monthly events to celebrate the rich history and culture that Albany has to offer:
 - In January, a public open house was held by City of Albany Department of Planning to discuss proposed improvements to the Corning Preserve Waterfront Park.
 - February featured a "Dreaming of Timbuctoo" exhibit. The traveling historical installation told the remarkable story of a free black community in the 1840s Adirondacks.
 - Women's History Month was celebrated in March with a Harriet Tubman Symposium hosted by University at Albany Professor Janell Hobson.

- The Mayor engaged with residents and stakeholders at numerous forums during her first one hundred days including the West Hill, Shaker Park and Melrose neighborhood associations. She also participated on panels for Albany Law School, the Business Review and the Women's Club of Albany, just to name a few.
- The Albany Police Department has completed a five year strategic plan with strong community engagement with various stakeholders. The open meetings held as part of this initiative led to action plans that will now be developed for implementation.

Recreation, Youth & Workforce Development

- The Department of Recreation is promoting a new city-wide fitness challenge. The goal is to promote wellness and unity city-wide, expose our facilities and green spaces, as well as challenge residents to make physical activity a daily routine. Open to all age groups in the city, this challenge will push Albany residents for at least 30 minutes for 52 days starting May 1st. The challenge will conclude with a city-wide fitness event.
- The City Summer Jobs Program has been revamped into the Albany Learning Initiatives Gaining Headway Together (LIGHT) program. The Albany LIGHT program offered four registration days across the city to accommodate the growing need of young people who are looking for summer employment. The program now features a mandatory orientation to provide a realistic look at entry into the adult workforce. To date, 1,241 students have already enrolled. Under the direction of Bennie Robinson, an Albany born, retired NYPD detective, and Newark, NJ Youth Program Coordinator, students will participate in Friday professional development days, and work 16-hour weeks. The program will culminate with a presentation by students on their experience to their parents and the community.

IT Upgrades and OpenAlbany

- The Mayor is very pleased to announce the launch of the public data website OpenAlbany (<http://data.albanyny.gov>). This new database opens the informational doors to City Hall and provides data regarding city operations and personnel in one easily accessible location while accomplishing the goal of increasing the transparency, accountability, and efficiency of City government.
- Available datasets will include employee payroll, vendor payments, crime statistics, tax assessments, and parking citations. To engage the community that OpenAlbany will serve, citizens will have the opportunity to suggest new datasets to be added as the site evolves.
- IT enhancements have been initiated that are remedying the technological challenges that City Hall has long faced, including software upgrades, server consolidation, and cloud-based storage.

Planning and Economic Development

- Development in the context of thoughtful and comprehensive planning has been stymied by adherence to outdated City zoning regulations. The Albany 2030 Sustainable Code Project guided by experts in the field will reform the City Code to enable the City to strategically plan how development fits into the greater Albany 2030 Plan. The Department completed a RFQ which will be issued next week to start the process of bringing the City's zoning code into the 21st Century.
- In January, the Corning Preserve Master Plan was completed. The City is now starting on this first phase of implementation with an initial investment of \$6.7 million. Implementation will include: new and improved pedestrian and bicycle enhancements; the provision of new and enhanced access points; a new multi-use trail; creation of traffic calming measure on streets; and creation of new and innovative performance places at the Maiden Lane and Broadway entrance.
- The City is developing a strategic framework and bringing together key partners to achieve the fundamental goal of maximizing the City's economic and community benefit related to the new Convention Center. This will be achieved by: creating a hospitality culture, encouraging local sourcing and hiring; helping position our existing businesses to take advantage of the growth in downtown activity; identifying gaps in services and fostering new business creation; developing and strengthening pedestrian connections and transportation options; and linking convention-goers with our rich cultural and recreational attractions. The Mayor has begun the strategic planning necessary to create a Convention Center City.
- Our economic development team and our partners at the City of Albany Industrial Development Agency and Capital Resource Corporation have been hard at work in these first 100 days closing on over \$99.3 million in new projects. These include: the redevelopment of the historic Dewitt Clinton into a Renaissance Marriott; new units at the previously vacant buildings at the Arcade and Argus projects in Downtown; a creative adaptive reuse of the Philip Livingston Middle School; and a new tech hub at Kiernan Plaza.
- These projects will result in the creation of 431 construction and 344 permanent jobs and the retention of approximately 150 jobs, more than 200 new units of affordable and market rate housing, and over 100,000 square feet of new commercial office space.

Reducing the Budget Gap

- The City has voluntarily undertaken working with the State Financial Restructuring Board to improve the City's fiscal situation and work toward bridging the \$16 million budget gap.
- In recognition of Albany's unique status as the Capital city and the fact that 60% of the property in the City is tax-exempt, the Mayor developed a working group of non-profit organizations leaders in the community to garner support through in-kind services and monetary contributions. Thanks to the leadership of James Barba, CEO of Albany Medical Center, the City's not-for-profit community has embraced a new relationship with the City.
- The 2015 Budget Process is already underway and long-term forecasts are being projected to prevent short-sighted spending and to reach a realistic, responsible, and fiscally sound budget.
- A significant achievement has been reached by reducing the 2014 Capital Budget by \$7.1 million.
- The City will be approaching the Common Council to implement reorganization of the City's organizational structure. Once reorganization is in place, operations will be streamlined and additional cost-savings will be obtained.

Key Issues Impacting Albany

- When Global Partners sought to expand their crude oil operations, Mayor Sheehan took action to protect the safety and well-being of our citizens by demanding that the City's Planning Board issue a positive declaration and undertake a full environmental review of the proposed project. She has also worked closely with state, federal and county officials, as well as with other Mayors from across the country to advocate for our residents who are impacted by increased rail activity.
- On March 17, the City was presented with a proposal to build a casino at Exit 23 in Albany. The Mayor has undertaken a thorough and methodical review and public outreach effort to examine the effects of the casino proposals in our region and the impact on our city. The Mayor is committed to an open and transparent process as the City works with residents and stakeholders to review this proposal.
- The Mayor has developed a strong presence in the community and has participated in many events, from ribbon cuttings for new businesses to engaging with students in our local schools.

"At my inauguration, I placed myself at the service of our City as its 75th Mayor and it has been a privilege to work for you every day to help our city reach its full potential," said Mayor Sheehan. "I am inspired every day by our dedicated workforce and by residents and stakeholders who have stepped forward to help as we undertake new initiatives and move our City forward," she added.

The Mayor was joined by the senior staff members of her administration, along with City Gardener Jessica Morgan, who outlined the City's preparations for Spring, and City Special Events Director, Melli Rose, who highlighted the line-up for the upcoming Tulip Festival and other events.

Jessica Morgan, City Gardener, said, "Celebrating its 66th year, The Tulip Festival is an important part of the fabric of this city and the region as a whole. My crew and I worked hard to honor the heritage of the event, planting approximately 4,500 bulbs a day to present the beautiful array of nearly 200,000 flowers that will be on display throughout the city for Tulip Festival weekend."

Melli Rose, City Special Events Director, said, "I'm looking forward to the year ahead, planning Albany's large scale events and free festivals with our new Mayor. Surrounded by a talented and vibrant workforce, I'm thrilled to lead a team of detail-oriented staff during this exciting time for our Capital City." The City is planning a number of events throughout the year reflecting the history, culture and diversity of Albany, including the Tulip Festival, the Park Playhouse summer theater series, the Alive at Five Concert Series and Capital Pride.

"After a long Winter, Spring is finally here" said Mayor Sheehan, "and I look forward to enjoying all that this season has to offer for our residents and the region."

More information regarding the initiatives and programs referenced above can be found on www.albanyny.org.

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