

The Albany Waterway, Inc

December 27, 2023

Dear Friends of The Albany Waterway,

Greetings!

We close out this year with gratitude for the many blessings received and progress achieved this year. Thank you for your support!!!

2023 Highlights

This caps a year when we appeared before many local civic, neighborhood and fraternal groups, and city and state agencies.

In the recent past, we have spoken before over 300 people, laying out our vision and listening to their questions. We have been encouraged by their overwhelming support and excitement.

Over 700 individuals have joined us as Friends of the Albany Waterway. Over 2,000 have viewed Len Tantillo's online presentation of "[A Canal for Albany](#)". Our vision was highlighted by the New York State Archives ([Mapping the Erie Canal – Today and Yesterday](#)). We have active partnerships with academic institutions and engineering firms and engagement with economic development interests

This year, NYSDOT selected their consultants for the Fahy study to reconnect Albany to the Hudson River and we have made known our plans for their review and determination as to the cost, feasibility and economic, environmental and social justice benefits.

We have studied other cities who have created blue spaces by maximizing the use of their rivers, including Buffalo, Providence, Ottawa, Chattanooga, Oklahoma City and San Antonio. In each instance, we have seen a tremendous return on the investments as these cities have been reborn in so many ways benefitting their residents.

We have seen the billions of New York State dollars earmarked to revitalize Buffalo, Syracuse and Rochester and understand the large commitment of the federal government to improve infrastructure throughout America. And yet, in the Capital City of the Empire State we continue to experience negative issues we can all identify.

Looking Ahead

We were formed by concerned citizens asking if not now, then when?

And we believe that Yogi was right when he stated: "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

2024 will be a critical year with the Fahy draft study due for release and comment in the Spring with a goal to complete the final report by year's end.

We will be active in seeking input into that report as it could provide a blueprint to provide much needed positive transformative changes to our city. For this we need your help by staying focused, by advocating to our public officials that this not be just another report to be placed on the shelf, and by remaining in touch, encouraging your friends to join our efforts.

We believe we have no other choices but to push for significant change. The other option to do nothing will not only maintain the status quo but lead to further flights of businesses, restaurants and residents.

We are approaching a milestone anniversary of the completion of the Erie Canal which made New York the Empire State and what better way to celebrate than to reenergize its Capital City and the region by opening Lock One and begin to realize our vision downtown by introducing blue spaces with all of the benefits the magic of water will bring!

We believe in our vision. We know that in collaboration with others the city will change for the better, and we know that this will be possible because of individuals like you!

An Ask

And so we move along that fork in the road with plans to significantly enhance our social media, to work with others to achieve sustainable growth, to increase our diversity, community awareness and support, and to continue meeting with engineers, colleges and the Albany Law School as we flesh out issues of concern.

We are composed of volunteers and have been fortunate that many talented persons have contributed their talents to our efforts.

However, we are now at a point where we need your financial support to increase our outreach to impacted communities and to improve our social media efforts to tell our story widely and solicit input .

Please send your donations, payable to The Albany Waterway, to our treasurer:

Eric Simonds

C/O CBRE Upstate NY

210 Washington Avenue Extension

Suite 200

Albany, NY 12203

Again, thank you for you willingness to sustain us with your presence, your time and your financial contributions. Stay well and thank you for your continued encouragement and support!

Much Thanks!

BJ

B J Costello

[Bcostello@hinmanstraub.com](mailto:bcostello@hinmanstraub.com)

Chair, The Albany Waterway, Inc.

www.albanywaterway.org