



**For Immediate Release**

Contact: William J. Aiello  
(716) 376-5615

## **City of Olean Blight Task Force Announced**

**February 6, 2015—Olean**—The City of Olean’s Blight Task Force has met two times in the past month and has made progress in a plan to combat blight in the city. William J. Aiello, Mayor of the City of Olean, announced the Task Force in his State of the City Address in January.

“I established a Housing Committee last year and through our meetings, realized that the City needed a comprehensive plan to curb the problems plaguing Olean’s neighborhoods. Such a plan needs the combined expertise of the City’s department heads and the legislative power of the Common Council,” Mayor Aiello said.

Members the committee include Mayor Aiello, Common Council President Adam Jester, City Attorney Nick DeCerbo, Jr., Fire Chief Robert Bell, Police Chief Jeff Rowley, DPW Director Tom Windus, Assessor Nancy Champlin, Auditor Fred Saradin, City Clerk Alex Utecht, Community Development Director Mary George, Youth and Recreation Director John Anastasia, Codes Supervisor Captain Ed Jennings, and IT Representative Jerry Volz.

“Our meetings have been very worthwhile; each department has something to offer as we explore our options in conquering blight,” Mayor Aiello said. “The members’ knowledge of both Olean and the resources available to the city has been vital.”

“We have analyzed a few case studies or housing issues that have been on our radar for while. The task force examined why action seemed to have stalled on these cases and we are working on a plan to prevent such cases from happening again,” Mayor Aiello explained. “For example, if our Codes or Police Officers need better written legislation to conquer blight, we are going to work to get better legislation for them.”

“We are also in the process of setting up a blight hot line: both a phone line and website where community residents can report blight. The task force has also determined the necessity to establish a community awareness communication plan.” Mayor Aiello continued, “There are so many misconceptions that we need to clarify. There are residents who do not want to paint their house, in the fear that their taxes will increase. This is not the case, permits are not even necessary when a house is repainted. We will be rolling out the phone number, the website and the communication plan in the near future.”

The Blight Task Force is an ongoing initiative in the Municipal Building. More information regarding the hotline and website will be available in the near future.

###