



Main Street First is a nonpartisan group whose interests are to help revitalize our city and to work constructively towards a better future.

PO Box 65  
Little Falls, NY 13365

### THIRD THURSDAYS!

Over 60 Little Falls merchants and service providers are offering discounts and specials. Think Local - Live Local - Live BETTER! For more information, please visit our website or <http://www.shoplittlefallsny.com/>

### MSF'S SHORT-TERM GOALS

- \* Continue to work with local businesses to promote monthly "Third Thursday" events.
- \* Help facilitate the installation of the composting toilet facility on Moss Island.
- \* Expand MSF cleanup projects by participating as a member of the Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful committee.

### MSF'S LONG-TERM GOALS

- \* Continue to expand and improve the "Think Local Little Falls" venture.
- \* Work with city officials to promote residential revitalization through consistent codes enforcement.
- \* Pursue grant opportunities for projects aligned with MSF's mission and principles.

*These are the sorts of things we discuss and plan at our meetings. Join us! Bring your ideas, skills, and energy and help us reach these and other good goals for our community.*

To receive a copy of this quarterly newsletter electronically, please send your request to: [mainstreetfirst@yahoo.com](mailto:mainstreetfirst@yahoo.com).



### HOW TO JOIN MSF

*If you would like to get involved, have questions or ideas, or are thinking of joining, we invite you to come to our meetings—everyone is welcome!*

Email us at: [mainstreetfirst@yahoo.com](mailto:mainstreetfirst@yahoo.com)  
 Visit our website at: [www.mainstreetfirstny.com](http://www.mainstreetfirstny.com)  
 Visit our blog at: <http://mainstreetfirst.wordpress.com/>  
 Facebook: "like" the Main Street

Winter 2013-2014  
Volume 2, Issue 4  
A quarterly publication

# MSF Gazette



### BRAINSTORMING: The Case for Complete Streets

Since parts of downtown Little Falls are under construction or affected by construction, now seems like a good time to talk about what is desirable.

Urban geographers confirm a future of continuing migration from rural and suburban locations

to more densely populated urban centers across America. People favor walkable cities with complete street amenities as better urban places to live in.

Narrowing pavements to slow traffic, adopting firmly enforced pedestrian

right-of-ways, adding bicycling lanes and focusing on place-making all combine to enhance city living.

People are social animals. Creating visually attractive gathering spots with trees and benches can make use of vacant urban lots as inviting spots to linger in.

The reforestation of the urban landscape serves many purposes. Trees clean a considerable amount of pollution from the air we breathe, they cool the hardscape surfaces of the city (often sitting in the shade can be 20 degrees cooler than

*continued on p. 3*

### MSF PROJECT UPDATE: Moss Island's Composting Toilet

MSF is pleased to share that a foundation has provided a donation of \$50,000 to help build and maintain a composting toilet facility on Moss Island.

We are working with the donor, contractors, and the Board of Public Works to get the project underway.

We expect construction to begin before Christmas.

The facility will help keep Moss Island clean and sanitary and will be available to all who visit the island—locals as well as out-of-towners, such as hikers, rock-climbers, and visitors to the lock.

It will be installed at the base of the rocks, near the climbing area.

Moss Island is one of the city's natural treasures. This project will help make it an even more welcoming place to visit. Stay tuned for more details as the project moves forward.

Curious? Have feedback or ideas for us? Want to help? PLEASE JOIN US!

Next scheduled meetings:

- Monday, January 13
- Monday, January 27
- Monday, February 10 @ 6:30 pm
- 690 Main Street, Little Falls

*(For more details about our group, please see the back cover/p. 4)*

## COMING TO TERMS: Reasons To Assess, Reasons Not To...

In our Fall 2013 newsletter, we discussed assessments, what they are and what they mean to property owners.

In this article we will talk about some of the pros and cons regarding the revaluation of the property assessments.

### Pros:

1. New York state law requires all properties within the city to be taxed at an equal percentage of value. By bringing the assessment of all properties up to date, the city would be in compliance with the law.

2. Probably most important is the fairness issue. By having all properties assessed according to their current, fair-market value, each property owner would be paying their fair share of the taxes--no more, no less.

3. When the revaluation has been completed, it can be used to lay the groundwork for future reassessments. By keeping assessments current, it would cut down on large fluctuations. This would reduce the cost of future reassessments.

4. Current assessments would increase the transparency of property

values, giving owners a better idea of what to expect should they decide to sell their property.

5. A reassessment would be an incentive for the refurbishment of many of the abandoned homes in the city.

6. A reassessment would make the city more inviting for businesses and industry to locate in Little Falls. This would create more jobs and bring more people to the area. This in turn will increase the tax base, thus lowering taxes for everyone.

### Cons:

1. The cost to the city could potentially be as much as \$100,000.

2. No consideration of the ability to pay. The new tax bill may be beyond the means of someone on a fixed income. No one wants to see anyone forced from their home; there are solutions to such a problem.

Please watch for expanded discussions concerning these points beginning in our Spring 2014 newsletter.

*Mike Evans*

*"Our nation will succeed or fail to the degree that all of us -- citizens and businesses alike -- are active participants in building strong, sustainable and enriching communities."  
--Arnold Hiatt, President, The Stride Rite Foundation*

## UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

### DECEMBER

\* Friday, Dec. 13, 8 pm. Olive Branch Ball at the DeCarlo Staffo Post. Listen to favorite local bands, including Dick Solberg (Sun Mountain Fiddler), JAB ... plus some amazing surprise appearances, including a sit-in by famed banjo player Eric Weissberg! Admission is FREE but donations will be accepted for a special local charity.

\* Saturday, 12/14. Annual "Christmas in Little Falls" festival. Holiday shopping and festive family fun at many locations downtown and at Canal Place. Santa Parade, Horse & Carriage rides, scavenger hunt, Red Nose Reindeer 5K run, indoor farmer's market, craft fair, Soup Fest, Christmas cards for soldiers, Victorian Costume contest, and much more. Please visit [www.christmasinlittlefalls.com](http://www.christmasinlittlefalls.com) for full details.

\* Thursday, 12/19. "Third Thursday" at participating area businesses. (Please visit [www.shoplittlefallsny.com](http://www.shoplittlefallsny.com) or the "Think Local Little Falls" Facebook page for full details.)

### JANUARY

\* Tuesday, 1/7. 7 pm. Monthly Common Council meeting at 7 pm. Little Falls City Hall.

\* Thursday, 1/16. "Third Thursday" at participating area businesses. (Please visit [www.shoplittlefallsny.com](http://www.shoplittlefallsny.com) or the "Think Local Little Falls" Facebook page for full details.)

### FEBRUARY

\* Tuesday, 2/4. 7 pm. Monthly Common Council meeting at 7 pm. Little Falls City Hall.

\* Thursday, 2/20. "Third Thursday" at participating area businesses. (Please visit [www.shoplittlefallsny.com](http://www.shoplittlefallsny.com) or the "Think Local Little Falls" Facebook page for full details.)

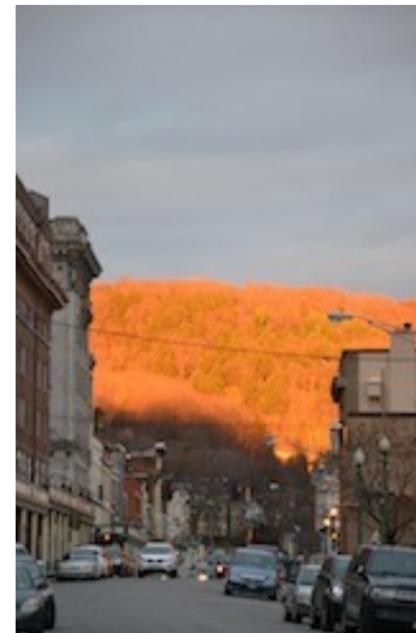
### BRAINSTORMING:

*The Case for Complete Streets  
(continued from p. 1)*

in the sunlight). For cities that compost, tree leaves become a valuable addition to the composting process. Trees also supply food for birds and help absorb heavy rainfall with their roots.

Little Falls is a walkable city. Anything planned as an enhancement to our streets makes it a more inviting place to live, work and play.

*Jayne Ritz*



*photograph of Main Street  
by Elaine Cobb*

*"If you aren't a city where people want to live, you aren't a city where businesses want to invest."  
--Mayor Ron Littlefield, Chattanooga, Tennessee*