TOPIC FOR TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2019:
What is #NoHospitalDowntown and why did it bring legal action?

• #NoHospitalDowntown was founded by two people to challenge the building of the new MVHS Regional Medical Center in Downtown Utica. It is not registered as a tax-exempt organization or business entity in New York State*. It is a small group of local people and the self-appointed “officers” are: James Brock (Co-founder and Speaker of the House), Brett Truett (Co-founder and Deputy Director of Hospital Intelligence), Joe Cerini (Supreme Commanding Sentinel) and Donna Beckett (Sergeant at Arms). These individuals primarily use social media to spread messages.

• Legal action was filed by #NoHospitalDowntown co-founders James Brock and Brett Truett, as well as the Landmarks Society of Greater Utica, Joe Bottini, Frank Montecalvo, Joseph Cerini and O’Brien Plumbing & Heating Supply.

• This legal challenge was brought against MVHS, the City of Utica Planning Board, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and Erik Kulleseid, acting commissioner of the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York. This action, known as an Article 78 proceeding, challenges the process and findings of the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR), which was conducted over an 18-month period.

• The SEQR process was extensive and conducted meticulously. The resulting findings of the Environmental Impact Statement were thorough and approved by the City of Utica Planning Board in April. We believe that the chances of success for this Article 78 challenge are extremely low.

• Work will continue on the new regional medical center as scheduled.

*According to a search of the New York State Department of State database.