

Public good approved for Niagara's Belden Center

BY TIMOTHY CHIPP

Residents of the Town of Niagara's Belden Center community can look forward to a savory addition soon.

Town officials on Tuesday approved providing water hookup to a vacant lot in the neighborhood, owned by Tom Tierney, for the purpose of a community vegetable garden, Supervisor Sylvia Virtuoso said.

"I thought it would be nice," he said after addressing the board

during its work session Wednesday. "It could be a little help to the community."

Tierney said his aim is to help the community with some sustainable food, starting small with some tomatoes and peppers.

Making it happen, though, required water hookup to the property, a process that usually requires a few bureaucratic steps before it gets to this point. Water and Sewer Superintendent Brian Beiter said after the work session

that the process usually involves getting permits for these hookups to be installed, which cost money.

Instead, the town will use a spare water meter to get the water flowing to the land. Tierney is still responsible for the piping on the property, starting from the curb.

Tierney said the vegetable garden idea sprung from his own garden. He said his experiences growing those tasty options, along with his family's experience with greenhouses, will help get the

project started.

Once in place, the garden will be accessible to the community to enjoy and eat healthy vegetables, Tierney said following the town's work session Nov. 13.

It will initially take up about one-third of the vacant lot, located at 3015 Savannah St., leaving plenty of room for expansion, Tierney said.

Tierney's current plan is to cover the cost of the water for the garden, allowing the proposed

feature to be free for those in the community.

"I think this is an excellent idea," Virtuoso said after the work session. "It's generous of him to do this for his community on his property. It's amazing."

The Town of Niagara board is next scheduled to meet at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 17, at Town Hall, 7105 Lockport Road.

IN THE NEWS

\$62 million in arts & culture grants awarded by New York State Council on the Arts

Nonprofits with budgets under \$1 million received 70% of organization grants

Brings grantmaking to \$84 million awarded for fiscal year 2025

Submitted by the Office of Gov. Kathy Hochul

Gov. Kathy Hochul announced over 2,000 grants totaling \$62 million by the New York State Council on the Arts. These grants will support 1,497 nonprofit organizations and 509 individual artists, increasing access to arts funding and recognizing the substantial economic and social impact of New York's vital arts and culture sector. With more than \$21 million already awarded as multiyear grants, this funding round brings fiscal year 2025's totals to \$84 million in grants.

"As the unparalleled leader of arts and culture, New York's creativity and innovation inspires the world," Hochul said. "Our continued investment in our dynamic creative sector will further boost tourism, strengthen our local economies and continue New York's success as a rich and vibrant place to live, work and visit."

NYSCA's ongoing efforts to ensure greater access to arts funding also resulted in a 20% increase in applications, with 70% of organization support grants awarded to institutions with budgets under \$1 million across the state. Recipients of four different FY 2025 grant categories were announced: support for organizations, support for artists, targeted opportunities, and regrants and services.

NYSCA is also accepting applications for \$80 million in grants for the Capital Projects Fund until 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2025. NYSCA's Capital Projects Fund invests in capital facilities and expansion projects for cultural nonprofit organizations that promote accessibility, diverse programming, environmental sustainability and more. This funding helps preserve and create jobs that contribute to the growth of New York's arts and tourism sectors.

Visit the NYSCA website for additional details.

NYSCA Executive Director Erika Mallin said, "The continued support from the governor and Legislature is a testament to their dedication to the importance of our sector, which is critical to the health of our communities and economy.

On behalf of the council, we congratulate and thank all the grantees. Their work will continue to ensure our state's influence as the artistic capital of the world."

State Sen. Jose M. Serrano said "Art builds communities, inspires learning and strengthens our connections to each other and the larger world. By supporting this incredible number of nonprofits and artists, we are creating a brighter and more engaging future for New Yorkers across the state. I applaud this year's NYSCA grantees and look forward to all of your contributions and creativity."

Assembly member Daniel O'Donnell said, "As the chair of Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development, I applaud the impressive number of NYSCA grants for our nonprofits and artists and am thankful for the critical support from Gov. Hochul and my colleagues in the Legislature for our hard-working creative sector. Congratulations to all the NYSCA grantees: Your creativity and dedication yields incredible benefits for our residents and visitors throughout New York state."

The mission of the New York State Council on the Arts is to foster and advance the full breadth of New York state's arts, culture and creativity for all. To support the ongoing recovery of the arts across New York state, the Council on the Arts will award \$162 million in FY2025, serving organizations and artists across all 10 of the state's regions. The Council on the Arts further advances New York's creative culture by convening leaders in the field and providing organizational and professional development opportunities and informational resources.

Created by Gov. Nelson Rockefeller in 1960 and continued with the support of Hochul and the New York State Legislature, the council is an agency that is part of the executive branch. For more information on NYSCA, visit arts.ny.gov, and follow NYSCA's Facebook page, on X (@NYSCArts) and Instagram (@NYSCouncilontheArts).

American Legion Band of the Tonawandas Christmas concert

The American Legion Band of the Tonawandas' annual Christmas concert will bring holiday cheer to the Cardinal O'Hara High School Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. Sunday,

Dec. 8. This year's concert will feature vocalists Mary Kofahl and Jeffrey Thompson alongside the 80-member American Legion national championship band as they perform a special Christmas holiday concert program.

The concert will include famous holiday works such as "Poet and Peasant Overture" by Franz von Suppé, "Children's March" by Edwin Franco Goldman, "A Most Wonderful Christmas" arranged by Robert Sheldon, "Sleigh Ride" and "A Christmas Festival" by Leroy Anderson, "Holiday Overture" by Kenneth Soper, "Jingle

Bells Fantasy" by John Wasson, "Christmas Recollections" by John Edmondson, "Cantique de Noël" by Adam Adolphe and "Belle of the Ball" by Leroy Anderson.

Organizers said, "This program is carefully selected to include beloved Christmas classics that resonate with the holiday spirit. Pieces like 'Sleigh Ride and 'A Christmas Festival' are sure to evoke memories of past holidays and create new ones for attendees.

American Legion Band of the Tonawandas President David Abrahamian said, "Our Christmas concert is one of our fa-

vorite events of the year. We love bringing the community together to celebrate the holiday season with music that will bring comfort and joy. Our concert honors the longstanding tradition of holiday music, from classical compositions to contemporary arrangements. This blend of old and new ensures that there's something for everyone to enjoy, from young children to grandparents".

Tickets can be purchased at the door for \$15 on the night of the performance.

Cardinal O'Hara High School is located at 39 O'Hara Road, Town of Tonawanda.

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