

**FREE**



## Village of Lewiston to save waterfront tree

BY JOSHUA MALONI  
GM/Managing Editor

Trustees in the Village of Lewiston reversed course on Tuesday, and voted to save the approximately 30-foot blue spruce tree adjacent to the Freedom Crossing Monument on North Water Street.

They cited public response to social media posts, and subsequent conversations with locals.

Board members, on Nov. 20, voted 3-2 to have the spruce and a nearby crabapple tree cut down. Mayor Anne Welch and board members Dan Gibson and Tina Coppins voted in the affirmative, while Deputy Mayor Vic Eydt and Trustee Nick Conde dissented.

This time, Gibson said, "I would like to apologize to the taxpayers for not doing my due diligence. I didn't realize it was a healthy tree. It was a miscommunication, and I did not realize that it was a memorial to somebody in the village. And so, I'd like to make a motion that we keep the tree."

The audience applauded as trustees unanimously voted in favor of keeping the tree.

Last week, Welch said, "The Beautification Commission asked if we could take (the spruce) down, because they want to redo the park. It's overgrown ... it's got sharp needles; so, it's not real park-friendly. ... It blocks the view of the Freedom Crossing monument, the view of the river. It's getting too tall to really take care of it."

But after hearing from residents, Welch said, "I think it would be a compromise on our part to just trim up the tree and save the tree. It seems like everybody's in favor of saving the tree."

Resident Trixi Goods started the online call to action with a Facebook post on Feb. 11. She wrote, in part, "This is a healthy, beautiful tree that has been an integral part of our community's



It's a reprieve for the blue spruce tree shown here on North Water Street.

landscape. Its removal would be a great loss and have a detrimental environmental impact. ...

"The Blue Spruce is not just any tree; it is a symbol of our town's commitment to preserving nature."

At the board meeting, Goods said she has seen plans to upgrade the waterfront park – "and they're all good improvements: new benches, new fences – those are all wonderful things. But it takes a village. And I think the village here has made their voices heard and said please don't cut down a healthy tree."

She added, "The tree also has sentimental value. It was planted as a memorial for Ted Beeton by his wife, Evelyn. ...

"I would urge the board to take another look at this and consider a compromise."

SEE TRUSTEES, continued on Page 8



## Special solar eclipse event for families offered by Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare

Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare will host a "Total Eclipse Party" from noon to 5 p.m. Monday, April 8, at its office at 6500 Porter Road.

Event organizers said, "Located in The Town of Niagara, it is the perfect viewing location for the event," which will be highlighted by the solar eclipse at 3:20 p.m."

This free family gathering will include a live band performing in the Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare parking lot; llamas for children to see and pet; and the optical boutique will be open, so shop around for some sunglasses. In addition, there will be free parking, free solar eclipse glasses, and free hot dogs. Attendees are encouraged to bring chairs or a blanket.

Michael J. Endl, M.D., said, "We are so excited about the April 8 solar eclipse that we are throwing a party! Western New York is one of the lucky regions of the country that falls directly in the 'path of totality.' This means we will see the moon completely block out the sun for up to three minutes in the



Pictured, the Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare staff and doctors display their solar eclipse glasses.

middle of the afternoon.

"Not only is this a phenomenon that hasn't happened in WNY for 99 years, it's also important for us to attempt to educate the public on eyewear for safe viewing. We will be passing out ISO-approved safety glasses at our free eclipse party. It is vitally important to your

eyesight not to look at the eclipse without ISO-approved eyewear. If you do, you risk permanent retina injury resulting in decreased vision."

In addition to this event, Endl has been invited to the Buffalo Science Museum to speak about eye safety when viewing the eclipse.

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