

Tribune/Sentinel

Niagara County

FREE

November 10, 2023 • Vol. 36 / No. 39 • Vol. 39 / No. 34 • wnypapers.com

FREE Teeth Whitening
with Invisalign Case
\$350 Value
GRACI FAMILY DENTAL
Graci Marra Bax, DDS
5320 Military Road, Suite 101 • Lewiston
716-298-3384 • www.gracifamilydental.com

Academy Park partners weigh in on pavilion proposal



BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

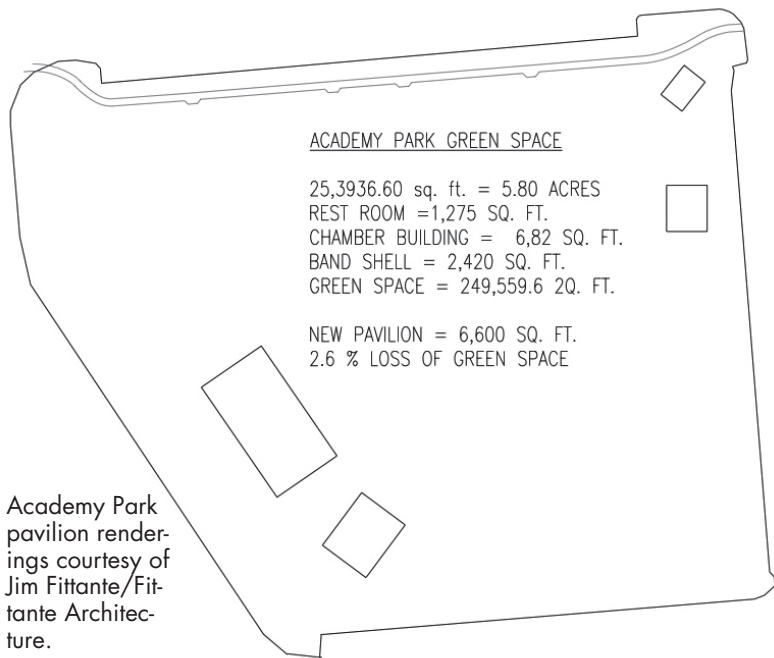
Following the news that the Village of Lewiston intends to have a pavilion built in Academy Park – and the Town of Lewiston’s affirmative vote to provide Greenway funding for the project – park partners have weighed in on the merits of adding such a structure to the site.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Downriver Post 7487 took umbrage with a statement suggesting the VFW has endorsed the proposed project. Former Cmdr. Bill Justyk said the VFW had not seen the pavilion rendering, nor endorsed the proposal, prior to it being presented to Lewiston elected leaders.

He noted VFW isn’t necessarily opposed to the idea, however, nor does it have an opinion with regard to the structure serving as the location of the annual Memorial Day luncheon. A stand-alone village committee now oversees the post-ceremony meal.

Academy Park’s two biggest “tenants” are the Kiwanis Club of Lewiston, which utilizes the site for upward of two weeks each September for the Niagara County Peach Festival; and the Lewiston Artisan Farmers Market, which operates along the Portage Road side of the park each Saturday from late spring until early fall.

Kiwanis Club of Lewiston Past President Marty Pauly said, “Kiwanis does support a proposal for a pavilion as long as it’s in the same location as our peach tent and roughly the same dimensions.”



Academy Park pavilion renderings courtesy of Jim Fittante/Fittante Architecture.

Speaking on behalf of the Lewiston Artisan Farmers Market, Rachel Jolbert said that, like the VFW, neither she nor her vendors had seen the pavilion plan.

“As the market manager, my responsibility is to provide a safe and enjoyable space for local producers, growers and makers to sell their products to our community,” Jolbert said. “The Portage Road side of Academy Park sets a beautiful, tree-covered space for our market that is unlike any others in our area.”

“I understand that the pavilion is not being built for us, but rather for the community as a whole.”

“The market has been publicly named as an organization who is assumed will rent the pavilion. The vendors who participate in the market are part of this com-

munity, so I feel like their voices should be heard for representation.”

Vendor opinions are mixed. Aurora Schul Schunk, owner of Schul Farmstead in Cambria, said she opposes the pavilion, as presented, as “it appears in the photo that it would be where some trees are now in the park. The park does not have that many trees, only around the perimeter, so to think that this pavilion, which is a ‘green-way’ project, would be cutting down trees either for the permanent structure or to eliminate barriers during constructions, frankly goes against the Greenway’s purpose, which, according to the website, is to ‘provide easy access to the natural environment.’”

SEE PAVILION, continued on Page 2



Jessica and Bryce Bilson check out the swing at Unity Inclusive Playground at Fairmount Park. Her twin boys, Sawyer and Levi, also were there to enjoy the grand-opening.

Unity Playground puts ‘Unity’ into comm-unity

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY KAREN CARR KEEFE
Senior Contributing Writer

The Town of Wheatfield has a new playground whose name encompasses the reason for its being there: Unity Inclusive Playground at Fairmount Park.

The playground welcomes children and adults of all ability levels and has special adaptive features for safety and enjoyment.

“It’s a great day and a wonderful day for Wheatfield,” said Supervisor Don MacSwan at the playground’s grand-opening on Nov. 4. He said the town now has a place for kids with special needs to join with others of all abilities in a special place. “It’s a beautiful thing for our community.”

Two community members were unveiled as winners of the naming contest that preceded the grand-opening. Both Jessica Bilson and Jennie Durwald received a \$250 gift card and town proclamation for community involvement because each, by coincidence, chose the same name for the new playground at Fairmount Park.

Funds from the federal government American Rescue Plan covered the cost of the playground. A committee formed to implement the playground’s unique concept included MacSwan, Council member Curt Doktor, Recreation Director Mike Ranalli, and resident and parent Cary Newman, who suggested the inclusive playground

SEE UNITY, continued on Page 9



Unity Inclusive Playground committee members, from left, are Cary Newman, Town of Wheatfield Recreation Director Mike Ranalli and Council member Curt Doktor.

FIND MORE OF YOUR HOMETOWN NEWS @ WNYPAPERS.COM

Is Your Auto Insurance Increasing?
Better Call Paul
PAUL HUTCHINS
INSURANCE AGENCY
245 Portage Road
Lewiston, NY 14092
Office: 716-405-7420
paul@paulhutchinsagency.com
www.PaulHutchinsAgency.com

BUBBLEGUM
Scented Soap
for November
Outlet CARWASH
HOME OF THE
NO-TOUCH WASH
LOCALLY OWNED
AND OPERATED
2727 Military Rd, NF
Across from Colucci Funeral Chapel
ASK ABOUT OUR FUND RAISERS

Serving Niagara
For Over 87 Years
GEORGE'S
APPLIANCE
AND TELEVISION
1422 PINE AVE.
Rte. 62A & 15th St., Niagara Falls, NY
www.ShopGeorges.com • 716-282-2121