

# Pavilion plan pondered

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Brittney Knowles, of Lewiston's Pressing Matter cold-pressed juices, said, "I am in favor of the pavilion. For the past two years, I have been a full-time vendor at the Lewiston Artisan Farmers Market. Every Saturday morning of the market season I spend at Academy Park with my fellow vendors, who show up rain or shine, and when I say rain I mean rain. I have sat under my tent in a literal puddle of standing water serving the community while rain comes in sideways. Even though these days are few and far between, the ones with bad weather are quite burned in my memory."

"A pavilion would be nice to have to keep us vendors out of the weather and protected, not worrying if the next gust of wind is going to blow our tents away."

"Another reason I think a pavilion would be good for our market is the accessibility. The concrete floor would be great for people needing less-variable terrain to get around, making these individuals more comfortable coming to our market."

"I also feel it would bring all the vendors closer together, making it easier for people to walk the market and see all the vendors."

"I do know now that a lot of people are opposed to the pavilion, one big reason being the historic charm of Lewiston being compromised. I am not from Lewiston and have only lived here three years, but I feel it would not harm the historic charm, but would bring the community together."

"Lewiston, however historic, also has to have modern amenities to continue bringing new people in."



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

Jess Nyland of Niagara Falls-based Lend a Leaf Tea Co. said, "I think a structure for the farmer's market is a great idea and find it so unfortunate that the voices of those at our local farmers market have not yet been sought out in this matter."

"I have been part of many other area farmers markets throughout WNY that have pavilions such as North Tonawanda Farmers Market and Niagara Falls Farmers Market and others. A large pavilion is an amazing resource that is great for farmers, vendors and shoppers alike. It allows vendors to not have to put up a tent every week, and shoppers to shop comfortably during rainy or windy weather."

"My main concerns with the pa-

vilion are structural or practical in nature, and I'm sure they would have been addressed had local officials reached out to anyone at the Lewiston Farmers Market."

Sonora Miller of Lewiston apary Beegotten Farm said, "Speaking as a market vendor who has been here since the first farmers market six years ago, I am firmly against a pavilion in Academy Park. Our farmers market stands out amongst other area markets because it's not on concrete and not restricted to a pavilion!"

She added, "If the village is truly looking to invest in the farmers market, please build accessible bathrooms to replace the single porta-potty available on site. Or add some dirt down the center path to reduce puddles and mud

during rainy weekends. Or permanently install the parking signs, which were never properly put in the ground and lean precariously in all directions."

"But don't waste money on a building that doesn't take into account the needs of the vendors, the shoppers, or the living trees in the park!"

DiMino Lewiston Tops proprietor Anthony DiMino commissioned pavilion renderings and has pledged to provide an additional monetary amount for the project. He said, "I am in favor of some sort of building next to the bandshell."

He was aware of previous ideas for an Academy Park pavilion proposal that didn't come to fruition when he stepped forward.

DiMino explained, "It's been dis-

cussed on social media as a negative to the village when, if people would actually realize and think about it, it is a great thing to have."

He acknowledged a pavilion would benefit Tops by bringing more people to the village and to the park, specifically, but also "it's multiuse. You could use it for the Peach (Festival) tent. You could use it for Wine Fest. You could use it for the philharmonic. You could use it for 'Summer of '69.' You could use it for the farmers market. You could use it for a skating rink (warming area)."

He added, "It's good for the community. If it wasn't good for the community, I would be against it."

The pavilion's potential size – 6,600 square feet – has given some residents pause. DiMino said, "No one ever said it couldn't be amended" or made smaller.

DiMino financed the Academy Park bandshell named for his late father, Alphonso. He also underwrote the cost of moving the structure to its current corner spot, and has established a yearly concert on the bandshell stage with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Village of Lewiston Mayor Anne Welch said she expects the pavilion to cost upward of \$350,000. To date, she said the municipality has received \$120,000 in donations. The Town of Lewiston, at its Oct. 23 session, voted to provide \$190,000.

The proposal is expected to be presented to the village's Historic Preservation and Planning boards for refinement. No date has been set as of now.

Welch said she's hopeful the pavilion could be built and ready for use by Memorial Day 2024.

## 'LiveNF Makers Market' includes launch of scholarship

The "LiveNF Makers Market," presented by the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, returns

on Small Business Saturday, Nov. 25, as part of Jingle Falls USA. Organizers stated, "LiveNF

welcomes everyone to shop with over 100 local makers and vendors while enjoying live music, concessions and festivities. Once again, we are proud to host the mini makers market as part of the event, featuring the talented Niagara Falls Housing Authority youth entrepreneurship program."

The event will take place from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Niagara Falls Convention Center, 101 Old Falls St. Admission is \$1 per person. Musician Jamie Holka

will perform.

Parking is free in municipal lots, on the street, and in the Niagara Falls State Park lot as part of the 2023 Jingle Falls.

A press release added, "The LiveNF board of directors is proud to announce the LiveNF Maker Scholarship, to be awarded annually to a high school senior from Niagara Falls, administered by the Niagara Falls Education Foundation. LiveNF is committing a total of at least \$25,000 over the next 10 years to the fund."

Proceeds from the annual 'LiveNF Makers Market,' presented by the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, will allow this new scholarship to grow over time, assisting more young people in the process.

"The scholarship will be awarded to an individual interested in entrepreneurship as they begin their postsecondary education or training."

Board President Phil Mohr added, "LiveNF is committed to strengthening our community and creating future opportunities for our young people. When individuals attend or vend at our annual makers market, they will be investing in the youth of Niagara Falls and creating a special legacy of giving."

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