

'Hometown Heroes' program expanding into Village of Lewiston

Garden Club eyes Hennepin Park improvements

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A Western New York initiative honoring veterans is about to expand into the Village of Lewiston.

On Monday, Town of Lewiston Historian Marjorie L. Maggard and Veterans of Foreign Wars Downriver Post 7487 leaders Gordon Spencer and Vince Canosa updated the Board of Trustees on the "Hometown Heroes" program, which they're looking to implement locally in time for Memorial Day.

"Hometown Heroes" provides banners for sale honoring service men and women who live(d) in or own(ed) a business in Lewiston. Eligible participants served this country as a member of the U.S. armed forces in an active or reserve role, and were honorably discharged, missing in action, or died in the line of duty.

Banners are on display from Memorial Day to Veterans Day.

Maggard said the markers are printed in Medina and should last at least three years.

"You have a lot of veterans here, and I think that they need recognition," she told trustees.

Mayor Anne Welch agreed: "This is something they've been working on to honor our veterans. They want to use the Village of Lewiston to put up some banners."

Canosa brought a sample banner, which was about 3 feet tall by 2 feet wide.

Maggard said the actual banners for sale will be a little bit different in size. However, "We are going to have something you can see as you're driving by."

A previous request was made to hang banners on Center Street. Board members, however, expressed concern about placing banners there, due to the number of items already dotting the roadway.

Canosa said VFW members "questioned why we can't put them on Center Street. To us, that would be a lot more presentable. We would rather do it on Center Street."

Welch said, "We have a lot on Center Street now. We have pots, we have baskets, we have flags. It's a lot in that one-mile stretch down Center Street. So that's why we thought if they came to Fourth Street, and went out River Road, it would be nice."



Vince Canosa holds a sample "Hometown Heroes" banner.

Canosa said, "We sort of felt we would get more visibility on Center Street; that's all. I think - and this is just me speaking; I know it's up to you guys - that you would get a lot more people that would want them, if they could walk down the street every day and see those signs."

Maggard said banners could be placed in the area from Ninth Street to the Creek Road overpass. Welch also offered Fourth and Oneida streets.

Canosa noted there are more than 120 utility poles stretching from the village to the Town of Porter, so there are plenty of potential landing spots for the banners.

That said, "(Although) we have alternate means of doing things ... if we could find a way, we would like to find a way to put them up Center Street."

Trustees will allow the "Hometown Heroes" team to hang a sample banner in front of the late Bruce Sutherland's home on Center and Sixth streets. The former deputy mayor was an Air

Force colonel who retired following a distinguished career.

Depending on how that banner looks, trustees said they might be open to adding more banners on Center Street.

Welch said, "Maybe we could try one to see what it's like? I'm still open. I just didn't want to jam everything on Center Street."

"I'd like to see one of them on a pole," she said. "Pick a spot on a pole and put it up, and then we can take a look at it and say, 'Well, if it's up a little bit higher or something, maybe it's not going to interfere as much.' I mean, it's worth a try anyway."

"I think so," Canosa said. "I have one large banner; we could give it a shot," Maggard said.

Deputy Mayor Vic Eydt asked about upkeep. The answer was it's unclear who will be responsible for hanging, maintaining and removing banners.

"That's something down the

road that we can talk about, if we decide to do them," Welch said.

For those interested in buying a banner, Welch said, "We have applications in the Village Hall."

The cost of a double-sided banner and the hardware to display it is \$190. Customers must provide a photo, which will be returned. Maggard even offered to hand-deliver images to the print shop, so as to preserve them.

Each banner will state the veteran's military rank and branch, years served, era of service, and awarded medals.

Orders are due March 1. Payments can be made to the Town of Lewiston.

"I also have some people that are donating funds for this," Maggard said. "If people can't afford (a banner), there's funds to get in."

"Hometown Heroes" banners have been placed in the Town of Niagara, the City of North Tonawanda and the Town of Newfane.

Garden Club Eyes Hennepin Park Gazebo

Former Village of Lewiston Recreation Director and current Garden Club member Marianne Gittermann provided an update on plans to bolster Hennepin Park via new electrical upgrades.

She explained "What we're trying to do is to make it soft lighting in there, and there's going to be a lot of on/off switches, and some where you can turn all the lights off. And then in the gazebo, we can turn off lights in the gazebo; and then also have lights around the top, if we wanted to."

Gittermann said, "At the same time, we're getting prices for a picnic table - an ADA picnic table at Hennepin - because a lot of people have used it during the summer, during the fall. And we

figured that that would be a nice thing to have there. And hopefully we can tie it down into the ground, so we don't have anything that walks.

"We're hoping we can do that. And we have some other projects we have in mind. We just have to have a good GardenFest" to raise funds.

Welch said, "Thanks, Marianne. The girls have done a great job there so far. ... I think it's great that you're doing this; it's going to really improve that park and put some light in."

Gittermann noted the Village of Lewiston Department of Public Works "will put lights in the steps that are there - kind of like in a theater.

"It should be very nice. We can all go over in early evening and have one for the road and just relax there."

The Garden Club will hold a perennial sale in front of the Red Brick Municipal Building gym on May 19-20. Its annual GardenFest is scheduled for June 17-18.

Peach Festival Returning to Academy Park

Trustees approved a motion granting a facilities use permit to the Kiwanis Club of Lewiston for use of Academy Park to stage, host and then tear down the Peach Festival from Saturday, Sept. 2, to Saturday, Sept. 16. The festival itself is Thursday, Sept. 7, to Sunday, Sept. 10.

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