

Bevacqua lays out plan for Village of Lewiston

BY SAVANA BEVACQUA

In a previous issue, I was given the opportunity to introduce myself. I am presently pursuing my Master of Urban Planning at UB and I would like to share some perspective as to why having an urban planner within the village government would be an invaluable resource. Given the short time before the village election (June 21 at Red Brick), I would like to share my platform and ideas for the village rather than rehash a biography.

Did you know that out of four comparable WNY villages (Williamsville, Kenmore, Springville and East Aurora) the Village of Lewiston has the oldest median population? This information is valuable to the village government in terms of social issues, housing, and insight into how the village is utilized by the local community. For example, the village would then understand there is high potential for a population that “ages in place,” and with that comes challenges of residential

upkeep and possible neglect. One of the markers of a healthy community is the number of housing violations issued versus permits pulled. Other issues factor in, such as the need for sidewalks, sidewalk maintenance and pedestrian safety throughout to provide safe space, and access to grocery and convenience stores as vehicle ownership/operability statistically decreases within an aging population.

A simple walking (or “windshield”) survey of the village through residential neighborhoods would bring to light the amount of short-term (or Airbnb-type) rentals that have sprung up. Currently, despite village code on “tourist homes,” these rentals are unregulated. There is no enforcement of permitting, or licensing.

There are several factors the village must consider for the health of the community: integrity of the residential neighborhoods, safety of neighborhoods due to lack of regulation (fire safety, regulating rental group size, etc.), stress



Savana Bevacqua

on infrastructure (DPW, water/sewer) due to higher-than-average use during prime season, decrease in affordable housing stock (as older, affordable-range homes are quickly bought for short-term rental use), decrease in core community population specifically throughout the winter months. The combination of unregulated rentals pricing out young families from affordable

home ownership while decreasing the local community population during the winter months should be at the forefront of the village’s concerns. This massively impacts local businesses that rely on the community to help sustain through our winters.

By requiring licensing, inspection and permitting of every type of short-term rental property, the village can deter the sprawl-style growth of short-term rentals, can also then provide safety assurances to the community (fire inspection, home inspection), can gather funds from fees that can contribute to infrastructure maintenance and improvements, and can help to preserve space for young families to get into the village, which contributes to the sustainability and future growth of the village.

We are seeing significantly more business vacancies on Center Street, and we cannot continue to cross our fingers and hope these spots will be filled. The village needs to support our

business community, and a large part of that is understanding a community needs to be present during the offseason to sustain! Ensuring an offseason community is imperative to filling these vacancies with thriving local businesses.

If you are interested in these issues, and other planning-specific data, I have completed five bachelor’s-level studies on the village, including a demographics profile, master plan analysis, short-term rental property analysis, and a strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats (SWOT) analysis. If you would like to review these documents, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at Savana.Bevacqua@gmail.com.

I ask that you vote for me as village trustee on June 21, as well as Tina Coppins for trustee and Claudia Marasco for mayor, and contribute to the planning of the village’s future!

Eydt: Open letter to citizens of Lewiston

BY VICTOR E. EYDT

Hello, it’s Vic Eydt, deputy mayor and trustee of the village. This coming election will be for my fourth term as your trustee, and I felt the best way to reach you is with a personal letter. I hope my experience, my hard work and efforts as your trustee, and my extensive knowledge of our many village Infrastructure issues will influence your decision on retaining me.

Let me outline the progress that has been made over just the last four years.

Infrastructure: I have been the village point-man for village water to drink, wash, water our gardens, and yes, most importantly, flush our waste. For us, a small village with small and older water lines – many over 100 years old – water issues keep me on my toes.

This ongoing project continues in its various stages of development.

√ Plans completed to “tap into” county water line on Ninth street, where we need supply.

√ Mohawk and Ninth – some of our oldest lines scheduled for replacement

√ Water pressure: Identification

of problem areas in the village have been mapped for replacement.

√ Development of the village’s second water source, to be installed under the parkway in conjunction with Artpark, Niagara County Water and State Parks. \$1.1M grant applied for.

The Waterfront: As co-coordinator with Mayor Welch, I oversaw the actual work of repairing our docks and other waterfront structures after the devastating destruction caused by the high-water levels. I met often with the governor’s REDI commission to secure our share of a \$33M program to rebuild the waterfront along the river and Lake Ontario. This required 2½ years of monthly and weekly meetings with the federal (FEMA) and state (emergency management agency); along with our attorneys, engineers and insurance company to produce a “built-to-last,” state-of-the-art marina.

√ \$1.6M to rebuild the waterfront (completed!)

√ Phase 5 funding secured (\$300,000-plus) to revitalize the fish station, and its lavatories. Our staircases leading to the wa-



Vic Eydt

terfront will be replaced and updated, and a new picnic pavilion will be included along the river.

√ The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP): I am pleased to report that, after six years of hard, behind-the-scenes work and countless meetings, our new LWRP designation – now officially accepted by the state of New York – will save the village thousands of dollars over many years. The program allowed us to adjust our waterfront to include Center Street and all of Academy Park. This allows these areas to be eligible for state and federal Grant programs for which we were previously ineligible. We are now able to expand our local control over the entire waterfront.

√ Expanded our waterfront zone to include all of Center Street, all the way to and including Academy Park.

√ Phase 5 funding (\$300,000) secured to revitalize the fish station and its lavatories as well as repair and replace both staircases to the river and build a new picnic pavilion along the river, expanding opportunities for all our citizens and visitors.

√ Village lighting: As deputy mayor, I was entrusted with the task of replacing all of the village street and public buildings lighting with new LED bulbs. This was a coordinated effort between the village and National Grid to replace high-energy consumption, outdated fixtures with state-of-the-art LED fixtures. This complete relighting of our light infrastructure will save significant money over many years. This project took over two years to study what was needed, solicit and approve completed proposals and select a contractor. As deputy, I oversaw the plan and implementation of LED lighting on our poles; and saved a ton for us taxpayers

√ New LED lighting throughout the village

√ Guaranteed replacement of the lamps for 20 years

√ Saved significant money for power, lowered maintenance costs and more reliable lighting

The All-Inclusive Playground: Organized and chaired the Moose Lodge’s effort to raise funds for the Marilyn Toohey all-inclusive playground.

√ Raised in excess of \$10,000 donated to the village to help fund the playground

√ Worked with a village community group to physically install playground equipment; saving over \$100,000 in the installation costs estimated by the contractor

So, I hope you get the idea. Trustee is an important job. Success requires practical knowledge, experience and hard work. It is not very glamorous and the work is often out of the public’s eye. As the regional construction manager for the Burger King Corporation for many years, I am able to bring that practical knowledge to my role as village trustee.

I ask for your vote on June 21. The polls will be open from noon to 9 p.m. at the Red Brick. Our entire slate – Anne Welch, our cost conscientious and hard-working mayor; myself as deputy mayor; and trustee candidate Jim Fittante, our new candidate for trustee, a longstanding active community volunteer – deserve your support. The village is in excellent shape. New buildings and businesses demonstrate the faith our citizens have in our future. Let us continue to work for you managing this wonderful place to live, work and relax. As my Dad used to say, “Vic, if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

I am humbly asking for your help in continuing this progress. And as our tax base has improved significantly, the village will be able to afford continuing efforts on our water supply and other infrastructure projects.

There is more to being a trustee than ribbon-cuttings and pictures. They are fun, but hard work is what is needed. I want to be able to continue my success working on these improvements and other future issues for our village.

Thank you for considering my record of accomplishments as you vote this June.

**2315 Braley Road,
Ransomville, NY
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