

# NT: Solar moratorium proposed; Bernsohn named community development director

**BY MICHAEL DEPIETRO**  
Tribune Editor

The North Tonawanda Common Council held a public hearing Tuesday for a proposed six-month moratorium on applications, approvals, and/or construction or installation on solar energy systems and/or solar farms in the city.

During the council's June 8 workshop, Building Inspector Cosimo Capozzi explained the move comes as the Town of Wheatfield explores the possibility of using the property commonly known as the Witmer Road dump for the development of a community solar farm with Atlas Renewables. However, the property borders the City of North Tonawanda, which currently doesn't have any solar law on the books to govern the project.

Attorney Luke Brown explained the city has been meeting with Wheatfield officials regularly. As Wheatfield's own moratorium is set to expire and a new solar law is being reviewed, Brown said the city was basically waiting to see what they do before deciding on anything.

"They have the moratorium in place; they have a solar panel board in place that's been talking about the law. So, I've kind of been waiting for them to come out with their law," Brown said. "No sense in reinventing the wheel, because they seem like they're pretty deep into it. But this moratorium would protect us from the state coming in or anything like that. So, we do have that on the table able to go into effect and then we can sit down and talk about what we want in the actual law."

While no one from the public spoke on the matter during Tuesday's public hearing (which are once again open to the public), the council is urging the public to reach out if they have any thoughts, comments or concerns. Contact info for each member of the council can be found at [www.northtonawanda.org/common-council](http://www.northtonawanda.org/common-council).

## Bernsohn is Community Development Director

The council and mayor appointed Laura K. Bernsohn as



New North Tonawanda Community Development Director Laura K. Bernsohn, Gateway seen last month cutting the ribbon for the new Visitors Center of the Tonawandas located in Gateway Harbor Park.

the city's new community development director. Her starting date will be June 16. The meeting agenda said Wilson's starting pay will be step one of the OPIEU salary schedule, which is \$72,936.

Bernsohn was the planning and development specialist for Lumber City Development Corp. – a nonprofit entity that works closely with the city on economic development. She replaces Michael Zimmerman, who resigned in May to take a position with consulting firm The Harrison Studio.

Elsewhere, the council confirmed a pair of promotions within the North Tonawanda Fire Department. Capt. Brandon A. Werth, 232 Walter Drive, North Tonawanda, was promoted to assistant chief. Firefighter Damian T. Ringler was promoted to captain. A special ceremony for the pair was conducted in the council chambers on Thursday.

Board members, including Council President Robert Pecoraro heaped praise on all three promotion recipients for their dedication to their jobs and to NT.

"In the military, when we promote somebody, we promote people, not based on their past performance. ... But your future potential and what you're going to be doing in the future. And that's the key in any promotions

that we do," Pecoraro said. "So we have full faith and confidence in your abilities to step up to the next level, and we congratulate you and moving forward with that. It's a great thing for you, your family, your community, and the City of North Tonawanda."

## New York Main Street Streetscape Program

The council approved a plan from the community development office to spend a \$20,000 grant recently awarded to Lumber City Development through the New York Main Street Streetscape program.

"Streetscape Enhancement Activities" are determined eligible with a Target Area Building Renovation Program Or Technical Assistance Project. The grant can be a for a maximum of \$60,000 "if the additional requested funds directly alleviate COVID related impacts and further economic recovery and neighborhood and community revitalization," according to the New York state website.

Bernsohn gave an overview of the proposal – a series of public art projects throughout the downtown/Webster Street area.

"We were awarded \$20,000 to assist with COVID relief (and) we kind of pitched the idea if we did public art people could

be outside, enjoy our downtown; It would help you to find our downtown and really help Web-

ster Street; continue to create its true sense of place. So, we have a committee made up of a couple of council members, local arts community, Lumber City staff and somebody from the Historic Preservation Commission. We walked downtown and we identified three locations that we think would be ideal for public art," Bernsohn said.

Two of these identified areas are city-owned property. Plans included a proposed sculpture at Charles Fleishmann Park and a proposed mural for the alleyway between Manhattan Street and Webster Street. The third involves privately owned property – a proposed mural for the side of Pulp 716 Coffee and Comics.

Final concept designs will materialize from a call for artists process, and will be reviewed by the Common Council and North Tonawanda Historic Preservation Commission prior to installation.

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## Nancy Price Scholarships awarded

**SUBMITTED BY MICHELLE DEUTSCHMAN**

Youngstown Recreation Commission

Each year, the Youngstown Recreation Commission awards area graduates with college scholarships in memory of Nancy Price, a 20-year, beloved director of the Youngstown recreation program. These scholarships encourage the youth of our community to stay connected to our recreation programs and honor the memory of Nancy Price.

Congratulations to this year's Nancy Price Scholarship winners: Parker Reisman, Isabella Guerucci, Justin Pavan and Amaris Huang. Parker and Isabella were each awarded \$1,000, while Justin and Amaris will be receiving \$500. The recipients were chosen based on their involvement with Youngstown Recreation, community service and academic achievement.

Parker plans to attend Niagara County Community College as an environmental sciences major. Parker offered memories of participating in Youngstown recreation as a very small child playing in the splash pad at Falkner Park and later participating in and then leading the basketball and floor hockey programs at the Youngstown Red Brick.

Isabella plans on attending the State University at Buffalo for a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in dance. Isabella volunteered at the Nickel carnivals held each year at Falkner Park and the annual Halloween parties that have been attended by families from the area. She volunteered with the Lewiston Porter Builder's and Key clubs with activities at the local library, as well as enjoying the summer theater programs in 2014 and 2015.

Justin will be attending Dartmouth College as a biological

chemistry major. Justin shared memories of enjoying Falkner Park events as a small child with his family. He participated in the hockey program as well as enjoyed fun in the teen center as he grew, playing air hockey and making friends. Participating in hockey as a child helped to start him on his journey to loving sports and is a path he hopes to develop in the future as a sports medicine physician.

Amaris plans on attending the State University of New York at Buffalo as a biology major. Amaris has only lived in the Youngstown area a few years, but in that time has become active in volunteering with Key Club and at the summer theater program in 2019. Amaris is very active with the Lew-Port music program and has shared her talent with young children even through Zoom during the pandemic.

**"Lori & Friends"**

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Council for Older Adults

**hosted by Lori Caso**

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