

Village of Lewiston

Ridge Street traffic change; fireworks still a no-go

The Village of Lewiston Board of Trustees on Monday voted unanimously to restrict traffic on Ridge Street. The roadway is now a one-way street, with motorists entering via the Fourth Street corner and exiting onto Fifth Street.

This move was made to create almost two-dozen new striped parking spots on the south side of the road. At 66 feet wide, Ridge Street was too narrow to accommodate two lanes of traffic within this new re-configuration.

Fireworks Still Canceled

Trustee Dan Gibson said a Lewiston business person inquired about paying for the July 4 fireworks. The board voted to cancel the annual ceremony at the May 4 work session.

Though Mayor Anne Welch said a donation to offset the \$9,000 cost would help, she explained the bigger concern is crowd size. New York is still limiting gatherings under Gov. Andrew Cuomo's "PAUSE" order.

"We just can't invite that kind of crowd for fireworks," Welch said.

"We do not want large crowds to assemble," she added. "It's a safety factor. The governor does not want large crowds. ... It's just inviting disaster."



Motorists will travel this way along Ridge Street. These are some of the new parking spaces.

Western New York will likely be permitted to resume holding events that draw crowds of 10-plus when the region enters phase four of Cuomo's "New York Forward" reopening plan. Local leaders have speculated that won't happen until at least mid-July.

The board also voted to approve a re-fund, in the amount of \$100, to Cadillac Cruisers, which decided to cancel its sum-

mer events at Academy Park this year. "We'll just have to look towards next year and having a great season next year," Welch said. "Our main concern right now is just trying to get our businesses back open and doing what we can for them."

Budget Adjusted

Due to a clerical error with Niagara County, the Village of Lewiston tax rate is going up one additional cent per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. When the clerk's office went to file the tax rate, previously set at \$7.65 for fiscal year 2020-21, employees were told the rate had instead been set at \$7.66.

"The difference is because the county website had the figure that we used for the taxes, and then when the water and sewer was supposed to be put on the tax levy ... (the county said it) had a different figure; that they had changed it," Welch said.

Trustees voted to authorize the levy of real property taxes for the year 2020-21 tax warrant directing the clerk to receive and collect taxes in the amount of \$1,188,120; and a re-levy of water and sewer charges in

the amount of \$17,824.08; a total warrant to collect \$1,205,944.08.

Electric Charging Station

Village Engineer Mike Marino of Nussbaumer & Clarke is applying for the Zero-Emissions Vehicle Infrastructure Grant program administered by the Department of Environmental Conservation. The board is looking into installing a pair of dual-pedestal vehicle charging stations for public use, with one at Lewiston Landing and a second on North Water Street.

The estimated cost for each unit is \$30,000. Grant money would cover 80% of the bill, leaving the municipality responsible for \$6,000 per charger. Shared service work conducted by the village's Department of Public Works could further lessen Lewiston's monetary obligation.

"It's the wave of the future," Welch said, later adding, "These are much-needed for the people that want to use them, and I think it's a great idea."

Trustees earmarked \$100,000 in the new budget for matching grants.

Fees can be applied to the charging stations, returning some funds back to the village.

Trustees did not set a rate schedule.

Town of Niagara: Proposed Lockport Road solar project moves forward

SUMMER EVENTS CANCELED

BY MICHAEL DEPIETRO
Interim Tribune Editor

Plans involving a proposed solar energy facility on Lockport Road took a few steps forward at Wednesday night's Town of Niagara regular board meeting. The project first gained traction at last month's board meeting, after board members authorized Supervisor Lee Wallace to sign a non-binding letter of intent. The letter allowed solar energy firm Nexamp Inc. to begin a study for a proposed solar energy project at a former Niagara landfill property owned by the Town of Niagara and located at 4798 Lockport Road.

At the meeting's onset, the board passed a resolution "revising and extending the Public Health State of Emergency as a result of the impact of the COVID-19/coronavirus retroactive from April 17, through June 30." Wallace said the decision was made as a precaution.

The board went on to pass four resolutions regarding the solar project. The first issuing a negative declaration for the "construction of solar energy facility on town-owned property." A second authorized the municipality to enter into a lease option agreement and ground lease agreement with Nexamp for development on the property. That agreement stipulates "the developer will pay the

sum of \$500 upon the signing of the option agreement, \$250 per month during the development and construction period, and \$3,360 per acre once the facility is operational."

The board also approved two more resolutions - the first allowing the town to enter into pilot agreement with a total pilot payment to be distributed to the town, county and school district in the amount of \$23,520 in year one, and increasing 2% per year during a total period of 15 years; and the adopting of a decommissioning plan and bond agreement.

Although a public hearing was held at the start of the meeting, another resolution to approve the rezoning of the property from R-1 (single-unit residential) to H1 (heavy industrial district) was tabled citing legal advice from the town attorney. The item will remain open through next month.

Other resolutions passed included:

- A resolution to approve the combination of lots requested by owners of 9695 Porter Road and adjacent vacant/undeveloped parcel.

- A resolution requiring any developer, contractor, public utility or property owner who commences work on or in a town right-of-way, street or easement to have in place a policy of general liability insurance, with underground hazard coverage, with

the coverage minimum amount being \$1,000,000, and the Town of Niagara cited as an additional named insured on the policy. A certificate of insurance evidencing proof of such coverage shall be provided to the building inspector prior to commencement of the work.

- A resolution to award the Belden Center Drainage Improvement Project phase 2 - Rhode Island Avenue Contract No. 2020-1 to NFP & Sons Inc. in the amount of \$479,425.

The next Town of Niagara board meeting is 6:30 p.m. June 16. Additional location information will be announced in the near future.

Summer Events

The following message was posted on the Town of Niagara Facebook page on May 20.

"A Message to Our Residents, Businesses and Neighbors,

"The Corona Virus/Covid-19 pandemic has taken its toll on every form of government, business and individual throughout our Country. I can think of no other event in modern history that has had such a devastating impact on our entire globe simultaneously. For some this may be illness or loss of a loved one, others may be feeling a financial setback and even more of us are experiencing a loss of normalcy.

"As most of you are aware, Gov-

ernor Cuomo and his staff have established a four phase plan for 're-opening' New York State. At this point, the span between phases is two weeks; in other words, we must move through phase I, which began on Tuesday May 19th, for a period of two weeks, with no major set-backs before we can advance to phase II.

"Unfortunately, large group gatherings, traditional summer events, concerts and festivals, recreation and sporting events, in phase IV create a series of factors making it extremely difficult, if not impossible to keep folks safe while maintaining 'social distancing.'

"Throughout this epic event, the Town of Niagara has and will continue to place the health and safety of our constituents and neighbors as our number one pri-

ority. Therefore it is with a heavy heart that we are cancelling the following events and activities for the summer of 2020:

- √ Trash to Treasure
- √ Music Mania Mondays Concert Series
- √ Pride in the Park (Including fireworks)
- √ Youth recreation programs, including youth baseball and softball
- √ Senior recreation programs including the annual senior picnic.

"We are currently formulating a plan to re-open the town hall using a phased-in approach which will be announced shortly. In the meantime, if you have pressing business, you can contact the office in question and someone will respond to you within a few days."

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Oct. 6 - Spragues Maple Farm/Casino (\$25 free play & \$5 food)
Oct. 10-14 - Greenbrier & Elkins, WV - 2 Trains-Amtrak/Durbin Rocket
Oct. 12 & 13 - Thousand Islands/Boat Cruise/Ron & Nancy Onesong
Oct. 20-26 - Memphis/Graceland/Nashville/Grand Ole Opry
Nov. 2-4 - Amish Holiday - Lancaster, PA "Queen Ester & Christmas Show"
Nov. 10-12 - "Fest. of Light's-Oglebay Park/Wilson Lodge - Wheeling, WV
Nov. 27-Dec. 1 - Nashville Country Christmas/Opryland Hotel/Grand Ole Opry
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