

Farmers Market to open in Lewiston

Safety precautions in place; first weekend to benefit BBC

BY JOSHUA MALONI

GM/Managing Editor

There will be no festivals in Lewiston until at least September; sporting events are out, and live music isn't looking too good, either.

But there will be activity in Academy Park.

Jamie Symmonds of Willow Consulting is bringing her Farmers Market back for a third summer, starting up again on Saturday, June 6.

"I was happy to hear that NYS was considering farmers markets to be essential and, from that moment on, I have been working diligently with the vendors," Symmonds said. "In particular, Thyme Right Organic Farms, located in Ransomville, has kept me up-to-date with the constant changing guidelines we must adhere to."

"This will be a challenging 2020 market season; however, with the support of my sponsors and vendors, I believe this may be our best year yet. With all we are facing in regard to COVID-19, people are not only looking forward to having something to do, but also I believe people are feeling a sense of security when purchasing directly from a locally owned and operated small business."

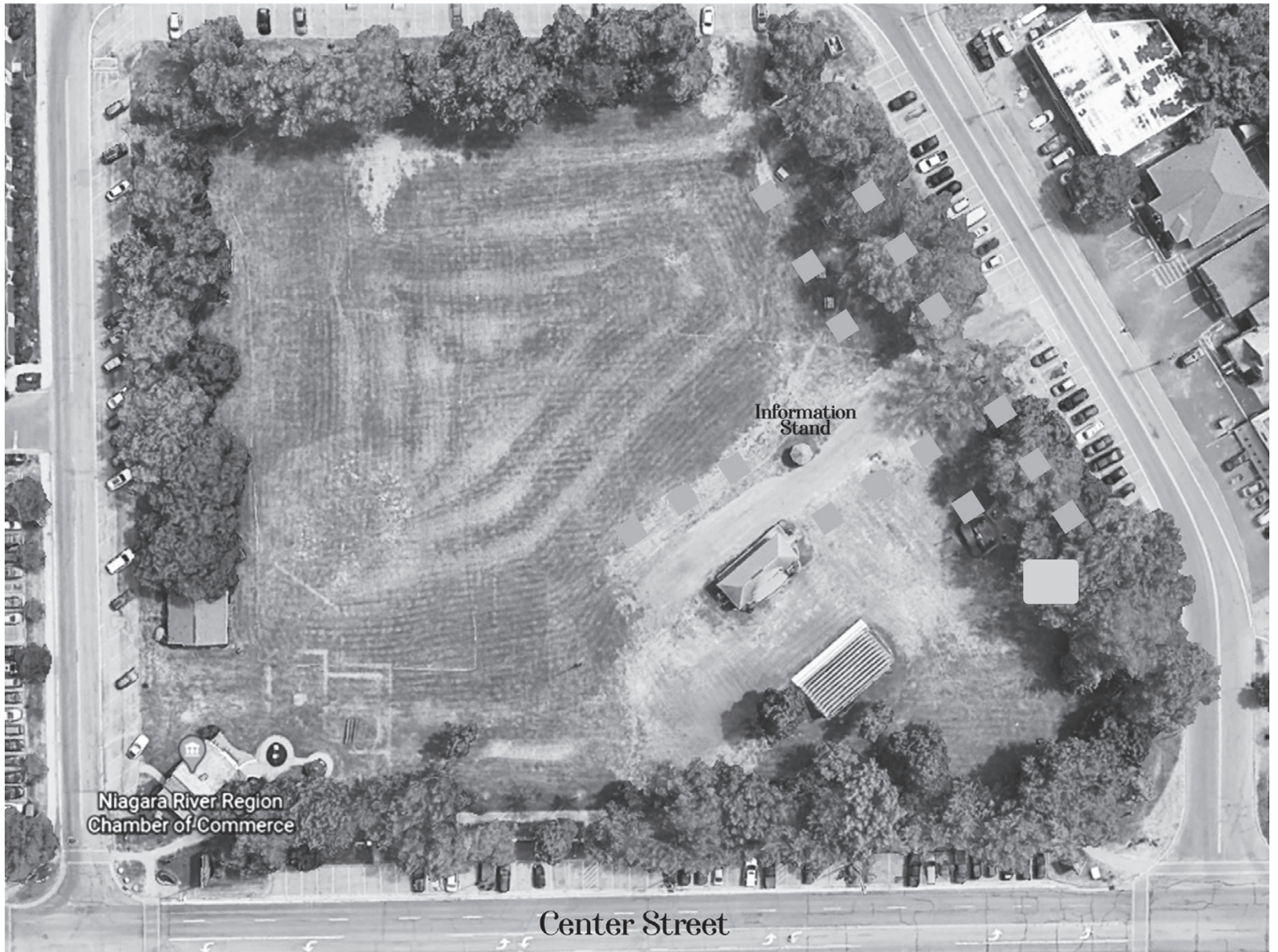
Mayor Anne Welch said, "It's a full park up there that she can spread out on. I'll be glad to see something happen."

"And people want that 'normal' back. You know, they want to be able to go someplace and that's why I say being outside people feel more comfortable than being closed in. Weather's nice – they want to be outside. So, that's perfect – especially for a reopening. It'll be great."

Symmonds has been reviewing new safety protocols for several weeks.

"As the market organizer, I have taken extraordinary measures, above and beyond what is being asked according to NYS guidelines, to ensure the safety of those in the community – and hopefully give them a certain level of confidence that we are doing all we can to keep everyone safe while they enjoy the market. There will be a hand-washing station, donated by Modern Corporation. Also, the market will have multiple hand-sanitizer pumps placed throughout the market each week, at various locations to add another layer of safety to ensure that everyone who attends the market feels comfortable being at the market."

Patrons are asked to wear a mask when shopping.



Pictured above is the planned layout in Academy Park for the Lewiston Farmers Market. Tables and vendors are socially distanced, and patrons will be asked to adhere to state safety guidelines. At right, apples from Senek Farms.

"The market is requiring anyone in attendance who is unable to practice social distancing – 6 feet – that they please wear a mask for the safety of others," Symmonds said. "If you forget your mask, there will be masks available at the information stand – for a donation."

"The masks, sadly, were not made by me, because I have no idea how to sew. However, once again, the amazing Lewiston community jumps into action when asked. Warren's Village Hardware was kind enough to make the masks as a donation – which I will now pay it forward. The proceeds will benefit the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce's giving table. It has been very popular, according to the chamber office staff. I know how fortunate I am and want to give back anyway I can."



Symmonds explained patrons "will notice a lot of changes, as compared to the first two years at the Lewiston Farmers Market. First, the layout has changed, and will most likely change from week to week based on the number of vendors in attendance – and also as NYS guidelines change, we will change along with it."

"At this time, unfortunately, farmers markets are only allowed to have essential vendors participate, which means many

local artisans who would come and sell their handcrafted items will not be in attendance. We are also unable to allow any type of activities, such as demonstrations, or yoga, like we have had previously at the market. This will, hopefully, change as the season progresses, and we can slowly integrate our artisans back into the market."

Recyclable bags, provided by Stuart Sports, will be available for \$8.

"I would like to discourage the use of plastic bags this season and, instead, encourage shoppers to use their own bags," Symmonds said. "The bags can be purchased at the information stand, too."

Week one at the market will feature a benefit for the Brickyard family.

Owners Ken Bryan and Eric Matthews and GM Steve Matthews have been an integral part of the market's first two years – and Symmonds has staged her annual Holiday Market at their Brickyard Brewing Company.

"This year, one of our own local businesses and vendor at the Lewiston Market suffered a tragic loss. The Brickyard Brewing Co. experienced a fire, which has left them unable to conduct business," Symmonds said. "I was sick about it when I first learned of what happened; I actually cried. The owner/operators of the business I consider friends and my heart broke for them. They have always been a huge supporter of mine and now I want to give back to them."

"Opening day at the market, I will be holding a raffle, \$20 a ticket, for a chance to win a gift basket filled with gift cards from local businesses throughout the entire Niagara River Region. If interested in making a donation to the raffle basket, please send an email to willowconsulting.jls@gmail.com."

Tickets will be available at the information stand.

Market hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, visit the event's Facebook page.

Find additional details on the NFP website, www.wnypapers.com.

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