

AT TOWN HALL

Board news and notes

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July 4 activities still to be determined

BY MICHAEL J. BILLONI
Contributor

Details of a virtual patriotic Memorial Day celebration from DeGlopper Memorial Park and a decision about the town's annual July 4 parade on Grand Island Boulevard will be made at the May 18 Town Board meeting, the members agreed during their workshop before Monday's biweekly meeting.

Joseph A. Menter, the town's recreation supervisor, presented the board with his department's plan during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. With most Memorial Day celebrations in other communities already cancelled, board members Thomas A. Digati and Jennifer L. Baney will work with officials from the American Legion Post 1346, the Pfc. Charles N. DeGlopper VFW Post 9249 and town leaders to coordinate a ceremony that will be transmitted to Island residents through the town's YouTube channel or Zoom.

Based on his deadline of submitting permits to the county by mid-May, and the challenge of social distancing a crowd of up to 6,000 people with a limited Recreation Department staff, Menter said, "it hurts," before recommending the cancellation of the popular Independence Day parade.

"It hurts all of us," added Supervisor John C. Whitney, P.E.

During the discussion among board members, Councilman Michael H. Madigan pushed for two more weeks before a final decision would be made.

"I am not ready to give up on our July 4 parade yet," he said. "I would be disappointed if they allowed the Bisons to play baseball in July and we could not have a parade, which means so much to the town. I know it is a long shot, but I would hate for us to cancel this today."

Menter also talked about his department creating virtual playground presentations for kids to do while they are home from school.

Superintendent of Highways Richard Crawford Jr. outlined coronavirus building and vehicle protocols for keeping them sanitized and cleaned throughout the work day. The motion to approve the plan, which will be distributed to all town employees, was passed unanimously by the board.

"It is important all of our employees know we are very serious this," councilman Peter Marston Jr. said.

The board continued discussions about proposed virtual public hearings as all council members expressed concern about

giving residents the opportunity to be heard at these hearings.

"Whatever we do, we must clearly define procedures for questions and answers for the public either by a chat on Zoom or via email or mail before these important public meetings," Digati said.

Baney assured the board they would have the opportunity add more than 100 people to a meeting on Zoom if needed.

Also during the workshop, Baney introduced a concern she said she has heard since being elected to the Town Board: the difference in automobile fuel costs on Grand Island as compared to gas stations in Niagara County and over the south bridge. She said last Saturday the difference was 17-18 cents lower at two stations in the Town of Tonawanda and 30 cents lower in Niagara County, which has lower county taxes on fuel.

It was agreed the board would send a letter to managers of the Island's gas station's to bring these concerns to them. Town Attorney Peter C. Godfrey said that, if the board is not pleased with its response, a letter can be sent to the state attorney general, who may consider this price gouging.

Message from Supervisor John C. Whitney, P.E.

Victory is imminent

Try if you might to transport yourself to this day in 1945. So many of you lost loved ones to the scourge of World War II. Maybe you had relatives that fell to Hitler's brutality in concentration camps? The relief of the end of the war in Europe would have been bittersweet.

I know there is no way I can make a comparison to the emotions felt at that time and what we are going through today. I feel that was one of the greatest generations of all time. Now it's our turn to show our mettle.

We are in the midst of a conflict that pales in comparison to that time; however, we must all pull together and face this with the type of resolve our forefathers showed us.

Hopefully, we're on the downside of this COVID-19 pandemic. We are all working to restore our daily operations to our previous normalcy.

Daily operations of town government have already started to return to normal. While we are not allowing public access to town buildings, we are processing transactions at Town Hall.

We are working toward holding advisory board meetings virtually. These will be able to be viewed live via the Town's YouTube channel and on the town's website.

The Town Board is also working toward conducting public hearings virtually. We will not close these hearings until all citi-



zens have had a chance to voice their opinions. We will keep these public hearings open until all residents can be heard, even if we must find a way to offer a safe social distance to hold an in-person public hearing.

I would like to commend the citizens of Grand Island. They have shown so many acts of kindness during this pandemic when we have been sequestered in our homes.

Recently, the River Lea Quilters Guild organized to sew masks and they gave away over 1,000 the past two Sundays!

We have a blood drive scheduled from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, May 12, at the Town Hall parking lot. This is a joint venture between the Town and the Grand Island School District. Please join Dr. Brian Graham,

Ed.D., and myself to donate to this worthy cause. Contact Connect Life at 529-4270 for an appointment.

To paraphrase Winston Churchill: "We shall defend our Island. ...We shall never surrender!"

Victory in Europe was 75 years ago. Victory here is imminent.

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 July 13 - Dolly/Patsy/Loretta - Walters Ranch/Lunch
 July 15 - Grand River Luncheon Cruise/Blaz. Fiddles
 July 22 - Presley/Perkins/Cash/Lewis - Walters Ranch/Lunch
 August 3 - History of Country Music - Walters Ranch/Lunch
 Sept. 27-Oct. 2 - Vermont/N. Hampshire/Maine-Acadia Nat. Park/Train Ride
 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 Lands Holiday - Lancaster, PA "Queen Ester & Christmas Show"
 Nov. 10-12 - "Fest. of Light's-Oglebay Park/Wilson Lodge - Wheeling, WV
 Nov. 27-Dec. 1 - Nashv. Country Christmas/Opryland Hotel/Grand Ole Opry

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