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Library reopening discussions grow contentious in Youngstown



Resident vents frustrations to mayor, board

BY TERRY DUFFY

Editor-in-Chief

At its April 8 combined work session/regular meeting, the Village of Youngstown announced plans to reopen the Red Brick Youngstown Village Center to the public on May 1, with all state-mandated COVID-19 protocols in place.

Village officials said the announcement followed diligent reviews and planning over past

weeks in order to abide by coronavirus guidelines regarding social distancing and public use of the building.

Still, frustrations over the village's seemingly slow response were voiced by supporters of the Youngstown Free Library, located in the Red Brick. Many visited via Zoom with Mayor Raleigh Reynolds, village trustees

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North Tonawanda celebrates Dyngus Day with Oliver Street parade



BY MICHAEL DEPIETRO

Tribune Editor

A little rain couldn't stop North Tonawanda's first (potentially annual) Dyngus Day parade.

Despite some threatening clouds, hundreds of residents took to Oliver Street to show their Polish pride and celebrate the popular holiday with a parade sponsored by the NT Neighborhood Watch and the city government. Joyful spectators got to cheer on first responders, marvel at some parade floats, and even experience some drive-by polka from the WNY Concertina Club and Mark Swogier. There was even a fun sighting of the "Polish Mandalorian" and his Stormtrooper comrade.

During the April 6 Common Council meeting, members including President Robert Pecoraro extended a wealth of gratitude to the NT Neighborhood Watch, particularly members JJ and Sherri Lynn Marranca, who helped spearhead the event.

"We have a very special family in NT — the Marrancas. ... Thank them for all they do," Pecoraro said.

Council members were also very complimentary of the event itself as well as the public's participation. 3rd Ward Alderman Eric Zadzilka said he hopes this can become a yearly event in the city.

"I thought it was a wonderful event," he said. "It was a great first annual — hopefully to be second, third, fourth annual. I'd like to see it continue perpetually. I think it was done safe and smart; people enjoyed it."

"You know, everybody had the same goal and it was to showcase Oliver Street; to get people down to Oliver Street; see what's down there. It's changing; it's emerging — just like our Webster Street. So it was nice to see people down there. ... Afterwards, people were going to the establishments, the stores, and they were patronizing these places — and that's what we wanted."



Wheatfield explores solar project for disused dump site

BY MICHAEL DEPIETRO

Tribune Editor

While the Town of Niagara deals with a project on its own Witmer Road that has environmental groups outraged, the Wheatfield Town Board passed a resolution Monday that should make environmentalists happy.

Members passed a resolution authorizing Supervisor Don MacSwan to execute a letter of intent to option real property for lease for the town-owned property commonly known as the Witmer Road dump for the development of a community solar farm with Atlas Renewables (subject to town attorney approval.)

"We're dealing with a solar provider, Atlas, and they are looking at leasing the dump and placing their solar panels on top of the dump," MacSwan said. "They wouldn't be

penetrating the cap of the landfill at all. I guess they've done this elsewhere in the country. So we're dealing with them; the potential lease of the property. The site was the Niagara County Dump for years and Wheatfield was given that property, and, of course, it has a cap on it and has never been touched."

MacSwan said the City of North Tonawanda is also negotiating with Atlas about the Witmer Road property, as well, since a portion of the property is in NT. MacSwan said he believes the city will be seeking a PILOT for themselves.

"It's a perfect location; it's not visible from anywhere," he said. "It was a dump for so many years. It was capped, but nothing would threaten the cap as such. So the letter of intent that I'm signing

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