

Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel

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The Tribune and The Sentinel are teaming up to cover Niagara County as the community continues to reflect on, respond to, and ultimately recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to print newspapers, these publications will be available in their entirety – for free – at www.wnypapers.com.

SUMMER EVENTS IN LIMBO, as pandemic has no end date

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Wednesday said there's no immediate end date to social distancing or brick and mortar restrictions put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19. Moreover, though he said there is likely a way to have businesses reopen as people are still taking precautionary measures, he acknowledged the coronavirus would still pose a public danger into the summer months.

So, where does that leave outdoor events and attractions people have been longing for, as patrons remain safe at home and away from friends?

The answer is unknown.

On Friday, Artpark & Company Executive Director Sonia Clark posted an online message that read, in part, "While we remain cautiously optimistic that Artpark's summer season will not be significantly impacted by COVID-19-related restrictions and precautions, it is now becoming clearer that some events will need to be rescheduled or cancelled. We have been in constant contact with artists and their representatives who remain committed to performing at Artpark, but have been forced to change their tours due to current circumstances."

Though the Artpark box office is closed, the venue's website has information for ticketholders.

"Please email artpark@artpark.net for all your questions and concerns and we will be sure to address them," Clark wrote. "We have prepared the most exciting season and cannot wait to share it with you soon. We encourage you to do your part in following the guidance of public health authorities to stay healthy, so that we can all join together again this summer."

"Through these challenging times, we remain committed to our mission as a nonprofit orga-



Tedeschi Trucks Band is scheduled to return to Lewiston and perform at Artpark this summer. (File photo)



Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours President John Kinney is shown in front of one of his vessels. (File photo)

nization to nurture, create and present the arts in our Artpark."

The Castellani Art Museum staff sent out an email Wednesday that noted, "Following directives from elected officials and guidance from leading health organizations, please note that the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University will be closed until further notice."

"To our members and support-

ers: We know this is a difficult time for everyone, with all the major changes we have had to make to our daily lives. We hope you are staying safe and healthy during this crisis, and that you have everything you need. We miss seeing you, and look forward to the day that we meet again. Drop us a line on social media or email to let us know

SEE ORGANIZERS, on Page 15

Town of Niagara

\$600K in Greenway funding for Veterans' Memorial Park

BY MICHAEL DEPIETRO
Interim Tribune Editor

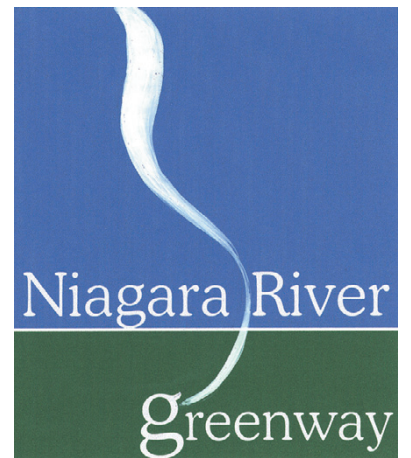
On Tuesday, the Town of Niagara was awarded nearly \$600,000 in Niagara River Greenway funding for a proposed Town Square project for Veterans' Memorial Community Park, bringing the total funds provided by Greenway to upward of \$1 million.

The plan was approved by the Host Communities Standing Committee, which met via teleconference amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The HCSC, which is comprised of the seven members of the Niagara Power Coalition and the New York Power Authority, administers and oversees projects financed by the Greenway Recreation/Tourism Fund in Niagara County.

Per the initial proposal, phase one construction of the project is set to include, among other amenities, a stamped concrete hardscape with three natural-gas lit fireplaces and an overhead wooden pergola, the conversion of a current pavilion into handicap-accessible restroom, and a 30-foot clocktower that is slated to become the park's central focal point.

The HCSC previously awarded the town \$399,870 in July 2017 for the project. At the time, the entire construction budget for the project was estimated at \$647,183. Town of Niagara Supervisor Lee Wallace said those initial cost estimates were compiled by then-town engineering firm Clark Patterson Lee. When the town chose GHD as its engineering firm in 2018, the project was considered "vastly underfunded."

"This is the exact same project; nothing has changed from what we submitted originally. The only change, obviously, is the significant amount of money that we are asking for, in addition to what we had initially asked for," he said.



Wallace explained the town is still committed to the \$250,000 figure it had agreed to put up per the initial Greenway deal.

Beyond phase one of the plan, a number of other recreational ideas have been floated around for the park, including a four-season multisport rink, mini-golf course, and brand-new baseball diamonds. All of these upgrades and ideas come amidst a number of completed developments that have been a boon to the park in recent years, including the Remembrance Square Veterans Memorial and summer splash pad.

Elsewhere in the teleconference, the HCSC appointed Wallace as the interim committee chairman after the position was vacated by former Chairman Thomas O'Donnell, Esq. Wallace was nominated by Niagara Falls City Schools Superintendent Mark Laurrie, and was seconded by Thomas Burgasser, Esq. Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino was selected as vice chair, after being nominated by Wallace and seconded by Laurrie. The positions will be held until the committee's next election on June 16.

The next Host Communities Standing Committee meeting is tentatively set for noon on June 16.



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