

Niagara County sets green energy example for state to follow

There has been considerable discussion in the Niagara County Legislature about what feels like an explosion of proposed solar and wind projects across Niagara County and how local governments – and, by extension, residents – are being cut out of the decision-making process by New York state. Often, these projects intend to gobble up thousands of acres of prime agriculture land and can

NIAGARA COUNTY LEGISLATURE



Becky Wydysh
Chairwoman

significantly impact the character of a community.

The Niagara County Legislature has been very vocal in our opposition to these projects and has proudly worked alongside community groups on several different policy initiatives. Yet, through this all, we have repeatedly said we are not opposed to green energy projects. To the contrary, we fully recognize the importance of diversifying the state's energy portfolio to rely less on fossil fuels. What we have ultimately sought was to site these projects in locations that made better sense.

Backing up these words, the Niagara County Legislature

passed a resolution earlier this month to award a contract to BQ Energy LLC for the development of the Refuse Disposal District Lockport site (landfill) into a community solar project. This landfill is closed but still must be monitored by the county, which is obviously a cost to us. But now, we will be able to take what has been unusable land and make it productive again.

BQ was chosen from a total of six responses to our request for proposals. BQ was the most experienced company that responded to the proposal and has a highly successful track record in the Northeast in solar panel development on landfills

and brownfields – the exact type of locations that we believe are appropriate for these energy projects. The effort was led by Niagara County Refuse Disposal District (NCRDD) Director Dawn Timm and Senior Planner Amy Fisk from Economic Development. I thank both women for their great efforts to get this done.

There is no cost to the county as BQ develops, builds, owns and operates all aspects of its projects. BQ plans to install 8.125 MW capacity over all three landfills, as the NCRDD will lease it 36.5 acres for development at \$1,375/acre. Niagara County will receive 20% of the

power produced, which will save us about \$15,000 annually. BQ will install a perimeter fence around the entire site for safety and security, and maintain all vegetation.

This is the classic win/win/win situation that sees a green energy project get built with community support, makes unusable land productive again, and creates a revenue source for the county. I hope that New York state takes note and uses this an example to work collaboratively going forward, rather than attempting to ram through projects that local communities do not want.

It takes a village of volunteers ...



As we enter the last month of summer, we enjoy the magnificent display of flowers on Center Street and in several parks. Some people think it is due to the Lewiston Garden Club, and others, the Lewiston Beautification Commission.

Surprise! It is so much more than that. It is a combination of the following:

- The Department of Public Works led by Larry Wills and his dedicated department who have embraced the plants as theirs when they water, weed, plant or mulch.

- Lewiston Garden Club, who takes care of Hennepin Park, the museum garden, and library flowers. This includes watering and weeding. They finance the flowers in these areas.

- Lewiston Beautification volunteers who plant over 150 baskets, over 10 gardens, and 10 planter boxes. These are the same people who decorate at the holidays.

- A group of four women who adopted Femmes en Force (next

to Subway) and faithfully weed and trim the garden.

- The Yankalunas family who, for more than 10 years, has planted, watered and cared for the pots at the Veterans Monument with respect and gratitude.

- The Radford, DeVantier and Talarico families, who plant and maintain gardens on Center Street.

- The Lewiston Museum and Tuscarora volunteers, who weed the Tuscarora Monument garden.

- Claudia Marasco and Jacquie Lodico, who have taken care of the Peace Garden.

- Retailers who donate for the flowers and also plant flowers in pots in front of their stores.

- A new group – Lew-Port Garden Club – students who have already cleaned out a garden in the village.

- Residents who pick weeds on their daily walk.

- Spouses of our volunteers and many more individuals who have not been identified but contribute significantly to the outcomes achieved.

Our village looks great because people care. It's amazing what can be done if we work together. New volunteers are always welcome to join in this work that adds to the beauty of our community.

We are not just the Garden Club, Beautification or garden keepers. We are proud Lewistonians who appreciate the inner peace given by the flowers and the positive impact they have.

Sincerely and thankful,

Marianne Gittermann
Summer Beautification Chair
Past President,
Lewiston Garden Club

Hochul (cont.)

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I will sign an executive order requiring ethics training for every employee of the New York state government – which, shockingly, is not required across the board.

To recap, these are the highest priorities of my administration in its first days: combatting delta, getting direct aid to New Yorkers more quickly, and beginning to change the culture in Albany.

To achieve all of this, and so much more, we must and will work together.

Across every corner of this state, we will have a fresh and collaborative approach. I've already reached out my hand in friendship to many elected officials who, too, are eager for a new relationship with the state.

The Bible tells us there is a time for every purpose under heaven. I believe that.

I believe with every fiber in my body, that this is our time.

Our time to escape the oppression of a deadly virus and make our schools and workplaces safe for return.

Our time to build trust between communities and law enforcement, invest in mental health resources, and address

the root problems of crime and keep our residents and children safe.

Our time to make greater progress in ending the ugly specter of systemic racism.

Our time to help small businesses and create new jobs for New Yorkers hit hard by the pandemic.

Our time to unleash the power of New York's women, and to make sure that any barriers to success and opportunity are eradicated once and for all.

And our time to show the world that "ever upward" is more than just our state's motto. It's who we are. And where we are going.

This is our time to look forward with a powerful sense of optimism and determination.

It will not be easy. And we have a lot of work to do.

One of my favorite inspirations is from a speech by Teddy Roosevelt – it speaks of the man in the arena who is marred by dust, sweat and blood, stark contrast with the timid souls on the sidelines.

Today, for the first time in New York history, a woman will enter that arena as governor. As I undertake the weighty responsibilities before me, know that

I have the confidence, courage and the ability to lead New Yorkers forward. And to make New York's women proud.

You will find me to be direct, straight-talking and decisive.

I will not be deterred, and I'm willing to be bloodied and marred in the pursuit of doing what's right for the people of this great state.

My friends, I invite you to join me in this fight for our future. I only ask for your faith in me and for your prayers. God bless New York. And God bless America.

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THURS 6AM-8PM - Chicken and Broccoli Pasta in a Creamy Parmesan Sauce or Fish

FRI 6AM-2PM - Haddock, Fish Sandwiches, Tuna Melts & New England Clam Chowder

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