

More changes coming to Academy Park

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It was about two years ago Welch said Academy Park wasn't being used to its full potential. She formed a committee to formulate plans to increase usage, add art and bolster amenities.

Soon after, DiMino said he would cover the cost of moving the bandshell.

"My father, who was a pillar of the community, needed something for people to remember him by," DiMino said. "He was very active in the Rotary Club. He was very active in a lot of things. And he supported this village, just like our family has supported this village since 1964."

DiMino explained, "It wasn't being utilized. And the reason they were saying was that it was faced the wrong way. If you had a band, that they would not be able to see their music or whatever, and so, obviously I built the bandshell originally so it could actually be utilized; so that's why I moved it."

The green bleacher seating area was torn down in late May 2020, but the pandemic slowed further progress last year.

Foundations for the new bandshell site were set into the ground in recent weeks. The structure was driven across the field Tuesday. Work continued Wednesday, as FTH Enterprises of Amherst oversaw installation.

DiMino said the new stage "is going to be actually twice the size of what it was before. So, it would

be accommodating not only for the Peach Festival. ... You know, how they always had to extend the stage. They won't have to extend the stage. The stage will be a larger size.

"That's what I originally wanted, because I felt that I wanted a stage big enough to have the Buffalo Philharmonic on. But it really was not enough space. I think we should be able to accommodate that now.

"And we've doubled the size of the staging area in the back for not only storage, but for larger venues that needed more space in the actual staging area."

DiMino hoped to have the bandshell relocated by Memorial Day, but "The COVID thing has not made it easy.

"This move is two weeks behind our schedule. So now everything else is behind. We've had to modify our original plans three or four times because of the lack of the materials that we envisioned using. We're trying to work around and get this thing done for summer use."

The Lewiston Council on the Arts recently announced its "Summer of 69" and "Blue Mondays" concert series would move from Hennepin Park to the larger Academy Park.

"I know the Council on the Arts is going to be putting a temporary stage up. And then, if everything goes right, we should be done by the end of July," DiMino said of the possibility LCA could use the

bandshell this season.

Welch thanked DiMino for his contributions.

"I am so grateful for him to actually do this bandshell, originally, and now to move it at his expense," she said. "I mean, to have somebody like that in the community to step up and do this for us is unbelievable."

"Yeah, because we've never been able to do this on our own," Eydt said.

"I can't even begin to say how grateful I am," Welch said.

What's Next for Academy Park

More changes are coming to Academy Park, some as soon as this summer:

•Former bandshell site:

Once the relocation process ends and leftover materials are collected, Welch said the Department of Public Works will grade and seed the former bandshell site.

Eydt noted, "We are going to leave electrical over here so that, in the future, we're looking at the possibility of putting a shelter up there - a pavilion up there. So, we got all that possibility. And electric and water is already there if we wanted to do that."

Welch said, "I would like one or two pavilions for people, because this is so open now you can have huge events here. And like I say, concerts - you know you can fill this whole park."

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