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NT Common Council

Community Bike ride event approved; engineering firm chosen for bike path expansion

BY MICHAEL DEPIETRO

It was an uncommonly light agenda for the North Tonawanda Common Council this week. Nevertheless, there were a few noteworthy items on the agenda.

The council approved the North Tonawanda Community Bicycle Ride hosted by the NT Neighborhood Watch, which will take place Saturday, Aug. 14, and consist of an approximately 12-mile loop, starting from Manhattan Street and ending on Webster Street.

The schedule for the day begins with sign-up from noon to 1:30 p.m.; the ride itself from 2-4 p.m.; and an "after-party" celebration from 4-8 p.m. Preregistration is available via the event's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/The-North-Tonawanda-Community-Bicycle-Ride.

The block of Webster Street (from Tremont Street to Goundry Street) will be closed from 4-8 p.m. for the celebration, which will include live music, food and beverages. The group said it hopes the ride will become an annual event.

Speaking of bikes, the council also selected C&S Companies to perform design services and assistance for the Erie Canal Bike Path Extension, which would extend the bike path from Mayor's Park to the Botanical Garden. The city had previously been awarded grant funding through the NYSDOS, DASNY and Canal Corp., which the city matched for a total of \$1,029,500.

After an RFP was issued in April, the city received 12 proposals from

professional firms. A review committee was convened with representation from City Engineering, Community Development, Lumber City Development Corp., Parks and Recreation, the Mayor's Office, City Council, and the public to review the proposals and provide a recommendation to the council.

Council President Bob Pecora, a member of the committee, recommended the council accept C&S Companies' bid for the proposed design fee of \$122,000. A letter included in the agenda from City Engineer Chelsea Spahr said, "The review committee felt the team assembled by C&S Companies demonstrated the experience, expertise, and capacity to complete this project for the City."

Elsewhere, the Department of Youth, Recreation, Parks & Seniors had a pair of motions passed this week. The first saw the council award a bid to for the tree inventory and community forestry management plan, something the city had recently been awarded a \$50,000 grant by the DEC to complete. After reviewing bid proposals, the council chose PlanIT Geo to undertake the project for \$47,900. Other bids included \$49,735 from Davey Resource Group and \$48,075 from ArborPro.

Per the agenda, Alex Domaradzki, the department's director said, "After formalizing a tree committee and reviewing the proposals using a scoring matrix, which considers the company's understand-

ing of the project, previous experience, ability to meet the proposed project timeline, cost effectiveness, and New York state credentials, we are recommending the award of the proposal to PlanIT Geo whose proposal offers us the most financial flexibility to potential include additional inventory of park trees or add-ons to the CFMP."

The second item for the Parks Department allows the Youth Board to put up a large-scale "2021" sign at Gratwick Park to serve as a photo opportunity for graduating NTHS seniors. The sign will be 8-feet tall and 16-feet wide. Domaradzki said the numbers will be designed to "create a dynamic backdrop along the mighty Niagara River, perfect for seniors to take a memorable picture for an everlasting keepsake."

The council commended Domaradzki for the effort, noting the difficult time students have faced during the pandemic.

"Last year ... we had a limited ability to have anything for (graduates) due to COVID," 3rd Ward Alderman Eric Zadzilka said. "We did put some events together with a little parade and a little picnic but, you know, it was the best we could do given the circumstances. So, thanks to Alex and his department for trying to help us, get back onto our normal tribute to our seniors who are graduating, and our youth."

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