

continued from Page 1

Q&A

by hiring consultants and scheduling a public hearing on April 9 in the Grand Island High School auditorium, life as we knew it came to a screeching halt on March 16 when Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo issued the first of two states of emergency that shut down everything except for essential workers because of the COVID-19 pandemic that continues through today.

A week ago, and following the pandemic's safety guidelines, Whitney answered questions about his first quarter as Grand Island supervisor.

What are plans for "Project Olive," a 90-foot-tall, 3.8 million-square-foot structure on a 145-acre vacant property along Long Road?

"As a one sole source project, Project Olive is the biggest project that has ever faced Grand Island. For that reason, the Town Board and myself will make sure every resident who has a comment about this project will be heard. The board is currently discussing plans for a virtual joint public hearing with the Town Board, the town's Planning Board and TC Buffalo. The public can attend virtually and post comments or they can email or mail them to us prior to the meeting. Once that meeting is completed, we would leave the public meeting open until a time when we can have the public attend because not everyone can participate virtually. We want to make sure everyone's voice will be heard, so that is why this will be a multi-staged public hearing with plenty of advertising in advance of these dates. At this point, we have not scheduled those meetings."

What steps have been taken since receiving the 2,202 page application?

"One of our first actions was to retain consulting firms to review their submittals. Clough Harbour & Associates is studying the traffic reports; Wendel Companies is reviewing water and lighting; GHD Engineering Consultants are reviewing the sanitary study and noise and the Advanced Design Group is reviewing the storm water plan. We entered into an agreement with TC Buffalo and they have provided the town with \$50,000 to pay the expenses of the firm's peer review actions. The process has been for the firms we have retained to send their comments to the TC Buffalo engineers, who have responded and sent their comments to the town last week. We have sent that response to our consultants and their final comments will be reviewed by the board. They will also be posted on the town website's home page under latest news for review by the public. The next steps will be the public hearings.

"I can tell you that each board member and myself will review this entire document, the reports from the consultants and comments from the public hearings before we will make our final decision. This is a very divisive project. Residents either like it or they hate it. No matter what the decision will be, we will hear 'Great job' or 'We can't wait until the next election.'"

At the March 2 Town Board meeting, an incentive zoning proposal was presented. What is that?

"This is one of the 11 public hearings that have been stalled because of the pandemic and the hearing is needed before it is placed in front of the board for a vote. Essentially, it will allow the town to ask any developer that requires a zoning change to a planned development district for an amenity donated to the town in order for them to receive this amenity."

How is the town handling the COVID-19 pandemic?

"In a matter of days in mid-March we had to change the ways we are doing town business. I issued a state of emergency (SOE) on March 16 and again on April 15. These stay in effect for 30 days unless rescinded. There are four specific orders included in the SOE that are good for five days and they have been renewed continuously and are in effect today. The SOE is in effect for 30 days unless I rescind it. If the situation warrants, I will rescind the SOE before the 30-day time period expires."

When will town government reopen?

"While Town Hall is closed to the public, we are not out of business, we are still processing payments and vital records through the clerk's office. The assessor, building, engineering and court are also staffed. Some aspects of town government never closed, the water and wastewater plants remained open, their maintenance crews continued to work,

the Highway Department performed essential functions. We are working to fully reopen town government. We are working to allow advisory boards to meet again and we are working to hold public hearings again.

"Many town employees are back working full-time, others are working from home. I assure you that we will bring back our remaining furloughed staff as soon as the governor's guidelines permit. This whole situation is horrible, I hate it. As a new supervisor, we were just getting into a sense of normalcy and this was thrown into or midst. We will do our level best to get past this. We will restore our governmental operations to as close to normal as the new rules allow."

What have you learned through all of this?

"The new normal will forever be evolving and because Erie County has not yet been opened for Phase One it is impossible to put a time line on anything. I really feel for our local town businesses and I encourage residents to visit those that are open and especially restaurants offering takeout. It hurts to see how they have been affected by this."

What are plans for the town's Memorial Day and July 4th events?

"Our Memorial Day event at the DeGlopper Memorial Park is vitally important to our community and especially to our military veterans who have given so much



Town Supervisor John Whitney works in his office at Grand Island Town Hall. (Photo by Michael J. Billoni)

to our country. This pandemic has not only postponed the unveiling of the DeGlopper statue on June 6 until next year, but we are now looking at a virtual, smaller ceremony on Memorial Day. The July 4th parade is also a major event on

the Island. Where else do you see chairs lined up along the route a week in advance. It is also a major fundraiser for the VFW Post so we are looking at all options and will have a decision soon."

Come live in a beautiful one or two bedroom apartment
Applications available on our website www.sagemanagement.com

Lewiston * Middleport * Wilson

Senior * Income Qualifications * Disable

SAGE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION OF WNY
916 Upper Mountain Road, Lewiston, NY 14092
Phone: 716-298-4966 Fax: 716-298-4489 TDD: 1-800-662-1220

Geeks on Site
GET YOUR COMPUTER FIXED IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME

Remote Support for:

- Adware/spyware
- Speed up computer
- Install software
- Email issues
- Pop-ups
- Printer & scanner support

\$40 OFF
FLAT FEE UNLIMITED SERVICE

Must mention code 86407 for promo price

Call Us Now at 844 245 3414

Wagner's Farm Market
Quality Fruits, Vegetables, Groceries & Meats and Grill
Open All Memorial Weekend

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| FLOWERS & VEGETABLES FLAT OF 48 \$17.99 | HANGING BASKETS 2/\$36.00 | PERENNIALS 3/\$11.00 |
| CEMETERY AND PATIO POTS STARTING AT \$9.99 | GERANIUMS TRAY OF 32 \$26.00 | POTTING SOIL, TOP SOIL, COW MANURE & MULCHES |

2672 Lockport Rd., Sanborn • 731-4440
Market Open Everyday 9am-6pm • Grill Open Everyday at 11am

Grand Island American Legion 2020 Annual Flower Fundraiser

May 22nd & 23rd
Friday & Saturday
7am to 6pm
or until sold-out.

DeGlopper Memorial Park at Baseline & Grand Island Blvd.
NEW LOCATION THIS YEAR
Subject to Covid 19 Restrictions

Support Our Veterans!
Sale \$15.00

Any questions call:
Gary Roesch 583-7969
Ray DeGlopper 773-4479
Joe Mesmer 583-2313

Credit & Debit Cards Accepted