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Ice rink returning to Village of Lewiston



The Lewiston Family Ice Rink and its accompanying warming tent. (File photos)

BY JOSHUA MALONI

GM/Managing Editor

The Lewiston Family Ice Rink will return to Academy Park this winter, just in time for the holidays.

Village trustees approved a request from their counterparts in the Town of Lewiston at Monday's monthly municipal meeting. They did so with two conditions: That rink materials be removed in a timely manner after the season, and a more detailed plan be presented for future years of operation.

Though Village Board members have spoken favorably of the ice rink, they've also expressed displeasure over its impact to the Academy Park field – namely, that it produces large pockets of water and turns grass to mud, which takes weeks to fix.

"I like the ice rink. ... But our problem in the past – if we go ahead with this – is that we have to have a commitment," Deputy Mayor Vic Eydt said. "We get so much feedback from people after you guys shut it down and then it sits there for like two, three months. People go, 'What is going on? How come it's still sitting there?' And then we've got to deal with it (repairing the ground) in the spring."

Town of Lewiston Parks & Recreation Director Mike Dashineau said the latest the rink has remained in the park is February – but he noted, "The groundwork takes a little bit more."

The rink was last used in 2019. It was not expected to return to



the village – let alone Academy Park.

"We took it out of our budget last year," Mayor Anne Welch said. She added, "Obviously, we weren't thinking you were coming back this year."

In fact, Welch said Department of Public Works Superintendent Larry Wills planned to remove Academy Park's Portage-side access road following the Peach Festival. She explained the pathway turns into a pseudo dam, resulting in more ground flooding.

That road will remain, for now, with ice rink operations resuming.

Dashineau said, "We weren't really sure if we were going to have this project at all. It was ... a surprise last week when the town instructed me to come and try to achieve your permission here to do that."

He said the ice rink itself is self-contained and water exits directly into attached drainage. Rather,

Dashineau noted, it's disruption of the ground – people walking in and out of the warming tent, but mostly Mother Nature – that impacts the park. Snow mashes up the grass, and icing results in delays moving equipment.

Should ice rink operations continue in Academy Park beyond this year, Trustee Nick Conde said the preferred location is at South Ninth and Cayuga streets – "the southeast corner, where the Boy Scouts manage their (Christmas) trees." This would allow larger mechanical components to be placed on the concrete parking spaces.

For 2021, however, "The issue we have with that is as far as the timing goes," Dashineau said. "We have infrastructure that's going to the original site," which was in between the bleachers (since demolished) and bandshell (since relocated). That's where electrical and

SEE TOWN, continued on Page 8

Local car shows drive fundraising efforts



Steve Barnes, owner of the nonprofit WNY Hot Rods Customs and Classics, gets ready to pull out in his T-Bucket with his son.

BY DANIEL DAVEY

Beyond the mirrored chrome, gleaming parts and shining body of a classic car, there's an engine that pushes it.

At a recent classics car show at the Frontier Firehall on Liberty Drive in Wheatfield, run by WNY Hot Rods Customs and Classics, it was discovered this gathering of gleaming exteriors was, and

has been, the brain child of Steve Barnes, owner of the nonprofit organization.

His idea started generally in mid-2020, as a response to what he saw as difficulties for other nonprofits to raise funds in the heights of the COVID-19 pandemic. He began to organize, and was at first entirely self-funded.

SEE CAR, continued on Page 13

Chuck Barber joins Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce



Chuck Barber is now a member of the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce staff. To contact him, call 754-9500 or email Chuck@niagara-riverregion.com

BY JOSHUA MALONI

Chuck Barber has a new home-away-from-home.

He recently joined the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce as its director of member-

ship. Prior to that, he was co-owner of popular Lewiston restaurant Apple Granny.

Barber said he was looking for something a little less 24-7-365.

SEE BARBER, continued on Page 8

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