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Godfrey presents checks to Wilson

Niagara County Legislator Dave Godfrey presented checks to both the Town and Village of Wilson to help them meet the local contribution requirement for projects receiving state funding through the New York State Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI).

Godfrey explained the REDI program was designed to fund projects that will help lakeshore communities deal with issues associated with Lake Ontario flooding. As announced by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, the state provides funding for 95% of the project, but the local government must come up with the remaining 5% before work can begin.

"We all know the negative impact Lake Ontario flooding has had on our community and we appreciate the state creating the REDI program to help us battle this problem," Godfrey said. "But the program requires cash-strapped local governments to come up with a portion of the funding when local government budgets are already stretched thin. That is why Niagara County is stepping in with funding to help both the Town and Village of Wilson."

Wilson Town Supervisor Doyle Phillips said the town currently has three REDI-approved projects: the Town of Wilson water tower, Sunset Island west barrier bar, and Roosevelt Beach bridge waterline.

"The Sunset Island west barrier bar and Roosevelt Beach bridge waterline have been scheduled to begin this year once the funding is in place," Phillips said. "The \$10,500 the county is providing, coupled with other dollars identified by town, gets us to where we need to be for everything to move forward immediately. We very much appreciate the efforts of Legislator Godfrey and the entire County Legislature to support our projects."

Village of Wilson Mayor Arthur Lawson said the village has two REDI-approved projects: the Village of Wilson Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Village of Wilson townline pier. Lawson said the pier project is scheduled to move forward this year.

"Legislator Godfrey secured \$19,838 that has been instrumental in helping us meet the local match requirement and we thank him for his tremendous efforts on behalf of the Village of Wilson," Lawson said. "This is just another great example of the way lakeshore communities and the county have continually collaborated and shared resources to battle the flooding problem."

Godfrey, center, is shown with Phillips, left, and Lawson.



Land conservancy files suit against seller; current buyer speaks out

MICHAEL DEPIETRO

Interim Tribune Editor

The story surrounding the sale of a former farmland site in the Town of Niagara took a number of interesting turns this week. The Town of Niagara Farmland Conservancy says it will file a lawsuit against the George Mannoe family, the former owners of a 26-acre parcel located on the east side of Miller Road after they decided to sell to another buyer, Alexis Johnson.

At the same time, Johnson and her partner, Kyle Schmelzle, have charged the conservancy with spreading "rumors and misinformation" about the couple's intentions for the property.

To recap, the Town of Niagara Farmland Conservancy says it entered into a contingency agreement with the Mannoes in January 2019. The group was to purchase the land for \$90,000, with an agreement that payments would be made after the conservancy received grant funding from the Niagara Greenway. However, the agreement also allowed the Mannoes to continue listing the property until the deal was closed.

"I never thought that the Town of Niagara Farmland Conservancy, whose mission statement even states on their website that it was, 'Founded to preserve and protect the increasingly scarce open spaces that give our community a rural feel that we all love,' would try to stop farmland from being used as just that: farmland,"

Kyle Schmelzle

Due to a number of delays, the conservancy didn't receive its first round of Niagara River Greenway funds until August of this year. The initial funding payment they received was for \$146,000 with another \$295,000 already approved by the Greenway Commission.

Unbeknownst to the group, the property's owners made an agreement in July to sell the property to Johnson. The conservancy's vice president Terry Lasher Winslow said the group tried to broker some sort of deal with the Mannoes and Johnson but ultimately, the sale went forward.

Now, with the Greenway funding in jeopardy, the conservancy is filing a breach-of-contract lawsuit against the Mannoes. The group has set up a GoFundMe page to help cover its legal fees at www.gofundme.com/f/ad9gb-nature-preserve-needs-help.

Lasher Winslow clarified that, "Absolutely no Greenway funds can, or will be used for legal funds. That's why we're doing the GoFundMe. We have to account for every penny spent and we

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Lew-Port Community Education goes online for 2020

54 classes available, covering wide range of interests

BY TERRY DUFFY

Editor-in-Chief

As the Lewiston-Porter School District continues the restart from the effects of COVID-19, its Community Education program is taking on a whole new route for fall 2020. While other districts consider their options, Lew-Port announced Community Ed would be going 100% virtual for the semester.

As area residents have now come to understand over past months, Lewiston-Porter, in essence, needed to completely restructure its educational environment.

"COVID-19 hit and all of us were forced to a new reality and new normal in terms of our daily lives," said Paul Casseri, Lewiston-Porter superintendent of schools. "I had thought that Community Education would not be possible this year."

But thanks to what could be truly be called a team effort among Lew-Port administrators, the Board of Education and Community Education Coordina-



tor Anita Muzzi – not to mention the intense cooperation of instructors – the program is online and ready to go.

"When we had to make the switch from in-person to online instruction,

Financial courses instructor and attorney Thomas Cannavo invites readers to consider Lew-Port's online offerings for fall 2020. (Submitted photo).

many of our instructors rose to the occasion and were excited to develop virtual classes for our program. As the COVID-19 virus took its toll and forced the closure of many Community Ed programs in WNY, I was in a position to quickly regroup with the instructors and make the transition seamless," Muzzi said. "Back in March when the district closed, several of our instructors offered to change over to virtual learning to continue their classes that already started. In retrospect, that scenario afforded us the opportunity to move into online-only classes much easier."

For fall 2020, Lew-Port Community Ed will offer 54 classes via the net in such areas as technology; learning and leisure; health and wellness; certifications and test preparations; financial

SEE DISTRICT, continued on Page 2



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