

Supervisor Brian Kulpa's - October 2022 Column

Last weekend as I stood shivering at my son's fall ball game, reminding myself that it wasn't long ago that we were competing under the blazing summer sun. And although we still have (probably a long) winter to get through, it won't long before spring brings a flurry of youth sports activity and the Town will be ready to welcome them.

The Town has increased access to safe fields of play, improving and expanding facilities for several programs. Our Engineering and Youth and Recreation departments, in partnership with youth sports organizations, have been working diligently throughout the year to complete several projects as we look ahead to the end of 2022. The Town has been extremely busy building more athletic fields than probably anybody in Western New York right now.



Over on Maple Road, Amherst Girls Softball League's new diamonds are nearing completion. The Town is building four new fields, bringing the total to eight. In our climate, wet diamonds are always a challenge, especially in the spring, and the new fields have improved drainage in hopes of getting the athletes back on dry fields quicker. Both and Town and AGSL are excited for the 2023 season, fielding the first teams who will play on the four brand new diamonds.

Across Town, at SUNY Erie's North Campus, it was recently announced that Amherst is working in collaboration with SUNY Erie and Erie County to buildout North Campus with build new athletic fields, including community baseball and soccer fields. Currently, the space isn't being used to its full potential and the goal is to develop underutilized land into world-class recreational facilities. When complete, a new complex would benefit the college while also supporting youth athletics and active community recreation.

From active to passive green space, last week the curving trellis was delivered to the new Gateway Park at Niagara Falls Boulevard and Kenmore Avenue. With this anchor piece now in place the contractor can complete the final concrete work around the shade structure. When complete, the park will provide a safe bus stop for nearby residents and students. An eyesore since the late 1990s, Gateway Park is an improved entrance into the town after getting blight cleared. Parks are an equally important part of the Town's effort to enhance quality of life, not just for youth but all residents.

Throughout Town, we are investing \$1 million in playgrounds in the coming year. We have marked Dana Heights, Bedford/Willowridge Park, Creekwood Park, Briarhurst Park and Audubon Library Park as top priorities. By investing in these parks, we create a safe community gathering space, and through play, kids can develop physical, social and imaginative skills.

It was an exciting day when Williamsville Jr Football and Cheer kicked off its 2022 season at its new home at the North Amherst Recreation Center. The new complex has two lighted fields, one game field and a practice field, with underdrain and irrigation for extended play. With the bleachers, scoreboard, press box and sound system in place, the final step is completing the concession stand, which includes restrooms, locker rooms and storage space. This is very similar to the new facility erected at Amherst Central Little League to better serve volunteers, families and players.

As Williamsville Jr is enjoying its new home, it is also mourning the loss of a leader. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of Russ Morley Sr. He was a true champion for youth football and his contributions will have a long-lasting impact. The Town honors him for his effort and passion.

My team and I are passionate about delivering outstanding facilities for youth sports. We are proud to work with these organizations to meet their needs and serve young athletes as best we can.