



TOWN OF SOMERSET

Volume 36, Issue 2

Summer 2021

From Your Town Clerk

Hello everyone!

I hope this finds all of you healthy. Many things are finally starting to return to normal and it is good to be able to get out and about. We have a lot of information in this newsletter so please be sure to look through it. Two popular items are our Town-wide yard sale and the annual Tire Drop-Off so be sure to watch those dates.

My staff and I are looking forward to seeing everyone again! Have a safe and healthy summer.

Tracy L. Carmer, RMC

Town Clerk



**ANNUAL
TOWN-WIDE
YARD SALE**

Saturday,
August 7th
9AM - 5PM



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A Word From Your Supervisor

Jeffrey M. Dewart - 795-3575, ext. 3 jeffdewart@gmail.com



Hello Somerset,

I hope all is well with everyone and you are enjoying this summer weather that we're having. It is so great to see our kids out on the ball fields this year after not being able to play last year, now off to soccer.

Rails to trails: we're working with other towns and Beowulf to come up with a plan on how to connect it to the Babcock house and walking trails.

The solar and battery zoning laws that we have been working on are getting close to being done. We will get them out for all to see, hopefully over the next two months.

A huge thank you to the Neal Gordon family. They have donated almost 25 acres of green space that butts up to our town park to add more trails and enjoy nature.

Have a great, safe summer.

Supervisor Jeff Dewart



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Governor Cuomo stipulated in an update to his state of emergency on May 24th that Towns cannot impose late fees on utilities until the state of emergency ends (it ended on June 24th). Because of this, all of the late fees that were imposed on the water and sewer payments that were due on May 12th have been reversed. If you already paid and the payment included the late fee, that amount will be shown as a credit on your account.

In addition, he is requiring all utilities to mail letters pertaining to his executive order on this. To comply with this, for the next two quarters your water bill will be printed on 8-1/2 x 11 paper and enclosed with the letter. Once this time period has passed, we will resume mailing the bills on postcards.

Water/Sewer Department News

Jonathan Dewart, Water/Sewer/Grounds Superintendent
795-9919

Before you Dig – Remember to call 811 before you do any digging. It is the law that you must call at least 2 full business days in advance so that the underground utilities have a chance to mark out their lines.

Park Pavilions – If you are a Somerset resident and would like to use the pavilions in the Somerset Park this season, you can make a reservation by calling the Town Hall at 795-3575 ext. 2 for the Clerk's Office. There is no charge for using them.

Electronic Recycling – This is an ongoing program and items can be dropped off at the Sewer Plant, 8500 Lower Lake Rd, on garbage days from 7am to 3pm.

Backflow Preventers – These are *required* on all new homes, and homes that are being sold. It is your responsibility to install a preventer. Your water/sewer account will not be transferred without this requirement being met.

Tire Drop-off – This year the drop-off will take place September 13-17 from 7am – 3pm, and September 18 from 9am – noon.



Barker Fire Department News

The fire department is in **DESPERATE NEED OF NEW MEMBERS!** Please stop by any Thursday evening after 6:30pm to speak with us. Also, please keep watching our sign for the possible return of our Fall Raffle.

From the Highway Department

Mike Flint, Superintendent 716-795-3866

Greetings from your Highway Crew. Summer is officially here! Updates on what's happening:

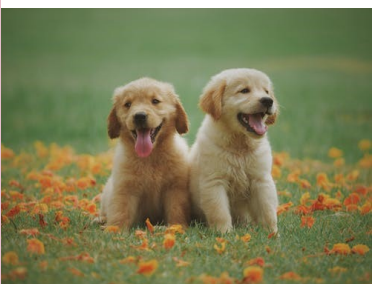
- The first round of roadside mowing on our town roads is done
- We are waiting on the State and County to begin theirs
- North County Line Road to Lower Lake is being repaired and slated to be top coated when it's ready
- Johnson Creek Road and Haight Road between Quaker and Hartland will be coated

As stated elsewhere in our newsletter our tire drop-off week is sometime in September. Drop-off will again be at the Highway garage. Finally, a reminder to be aware of the deer and people who are out and about, and look for motorcycles and bicycles.

Have a great summer.



Do you need a passport, or is your current passport about to expire? Covid-19 has made the lead times tremendously long! It is currently taking 18 weeks (12 weeks if you expedite it). Many places require your passport to have more than 6 months left on it to visit their location. With this in mind, you will need to renew your passport almost a year before it expires. It is more important than ever to plan ahead!



The Town is conducting a dog enumeration from July 1 - August 31. You will be receiving a postcard in the mail that must be completed and returned. After August 31st the Dog Control Officer will be visiting the residents who did not return their postcard. If you are found to have an unlicensed dog at that time, there is an enumeration fee of \$10 imposed in addition to the license fee.

New York State law requires that all dogs age 4 months or older be licensed within the town where they reside. Please help us out by ensuring that your dog is licensed and return the form by the due date.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.



Councilman's Corner

From the desk of Jon Hotaling and Robin Jansen



There have been a lot of questions about the status of the Somerset Town Park otherwise known as the **MUP**. In the late 1970's, when the power plant was being sited, there was a provision that gave the Town an option to purchase and/or otherwise acquire access to a portion of the power plant land. Supervisor Engert thought it was time to investigate the possibility of establishing the land as a town park and formed a committee that included the both of us. Unfortunately, COVID put a crimp in our ability to continue meeting but the town attorney continued in his pursuit of a deal for the use of the land that was in the Town's best interest.

When the MUP committee was first formed, we had no preconceived notions about what the land was like or what a park would consist of. After our first road trip to the site, we were overwhelmed by the work needed to even consider allowing residents onto the property and our second trip confirmed those observations. Many ideas were offered up during the meetings but after looking at the land we had serious doubts about what we could actually do with the land.

Walking up the ash pile would be an arduous task. It was tough enough just driving up the hill. The DEC will not allow anything to breach the cap – so no stairs, poles or fencing or secured benches or platforms. I'm not even sure the DEC would allow us to mow a path due to the special type of grass that covers the ash pile. The plant staff does not mow the grass on the ash pile. We fear someone stepping on a rock and tripping and rolling down that hill and getting seriously injured because it was not designed for hikers. The biting insects were atrocious. We stayed outside of the car just a few minutes before we raced back in because of the insects. So, we would have to spray which would impact the nesting birds and other animals that use the tall grass as cover on that pile, and the insects for food. Someone threw out the prospect of sledding down the hill – but with the required fencing around the ash pile and retention ponds that is an accident waiting to happen.

The areas surrounding the ash piles would also require a lot of work just to get it safe enough to walk on. We drove over a lot of it and it was rough. It was not developed to be walked by people. It's also not lawn type grass. It would need mowed, tilled, rehabbed and probably fertilized, and seeded, just to make it so someone doesn't sprain an ankle, break a leg or fall into a 'rabbit hole'. We would have to take out a lot of scrub brush and small trees just to see the lake which will cause habitat loss and this is exactly what we don't want other developers doing. We would also have to continually spray for biting insects and ticks – there are a lot of deer on the property so you know there are ticks. We do not want a spike in Lyme Disease or West Nile Virus due to people walking the park. What would all this do to the wetlands and the lake from run off? Additional fencing would be needed to keep people out of dangerous areas. And how do we keep people from destroying wetland areas or harassing wildlife? There is at least 1 eagle nest on the property. How do we prevent people from unintentionally causing the birds to abandon the nest? The plant staff already has to chase off hunters that trespass onto the property and that task would fall to us.

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Hello Readers and Families. It's time for the Barker Public Library's Summer Reading Program. This summer it is all about **Tails and Tales**-stories and animals! Children and teens are encouraged to register for a summer long reading challenge to read as much as they can! Those who record their reading earn great prizes! Questions? Call or stop in at the library to get your first prize just for signing up. Barker Public Library 8673 Church St. Barker. 716-795-3344



Barker Lions: We Serve

On Saturday, June 19, the Barker Lions installed the 2021-2022 officers and presented various awards. The induction ceremony was conducted by Past District Governor Jeff Jarvis. Scott Ecker was installed as President. Other officers include: Vice Presidents, Dale Corwin, Philip Russell and Abe Sullivan. Board Members Wayne Rider, Tom Mallon, Kurt Lutz and Karen Corwin; Secretary Margo Sue Bittner; Treasurer Jim Bittner; Lion Tamer Tina Linderman; Tail Twister Salvador Pagan-Roman.

Outgoing President Tim Leising acknowledged many who helped make this year a success. Lion Tina Linderman received the Lion of the Year award and Fred Leuer received the Lion of the Year. In addition, the group thanked Matt Costello for his 21 years of service as Club Secretary. Costello regaled the group with fun events from the past and presented the 100% attendance awards.

During the past year, the Lions supported members of the community by installing and maintaining wheelchair lifts, donating to the food pantry, giving college scholarships and providing school supplies for those who could not afford them. 100% of the funds raised during the various activities go back to help the community. This year's fundraisers included chicken barbecues, various raffles and an art show featuring work by Judy Collins.

This coming year will be the Barker Lions 75th year of serving our community. There will be various events throughout the year culminating in a celebratory dinner. If you have been helped by the Lions, participated in their events or have a fond memory of a member or club activity, please email your story to Roar@BarkerLions.org or mail it to PO BOX 123, Barker NY 14012

Meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 PM, each meeting includes dinner and speaker. For more information about Barker Lions and its projects, go to www.BarkerLions.org. Their next meeting will be on September 1. To become involved in one of our projects, to speak at a meeting or to be a guest at a meeting, call 778-7001 or email Roar@BarkerLions.org.



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Water access would be limited due to the number of boulders that would be needed to stabilize the shore. It would end up looking like the Barker Village Park shore line. If we put in steps or some kind of access then we'd have to consider whether we need life guards or put up no trespassing signs to keep people safe.

There would be mowing, road maintenance, garbage removal and litter pick up. How many migratory birds would leave the area due to human activity – which would be a huge loss. The plant has already stated they would be open to mowing the area for us but it's much more than just mowing. It scares me to think of the short term and long-term costs to the town. The cost of insurance would be huge due to it being a brown field and we would have to double the work force of the recreation and grounds employees just for the upkeep, plus additional equipment. Grants are always a possibility but committing to building out a town park that requires so much pre-work without an established revenue stream is scary.

We are exploring other avenues that will open the MUP area to the public without the Town incurring liability and maintenance costs associated with any type of ownership in the property.

Finally, what would all this do to the ecosystem that is already established there. We are not signing away our rights to the land by putting development on hold, but we need to seriously think about what is best for the land and the wildlife that call it home.



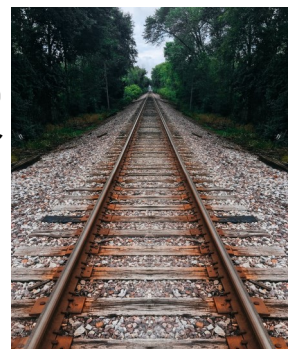
RAILS TO TRAILS

Hi everyone. With the future decommissioning of the Somerset Railroad there has been interest expressed to turn the railway into a trail that would connect the towns of Somerset, Newfane, and Lockport with the existing trail in the City of Lockport.

Because the railroad is going to be used in the demolition of the power plant, it will be two to three years before the rails and ties can be removed allowing the trail construction to begin. Between now and then there will be planning sessions with committee members of the towns and residents of our town about our needs and wants involved with the construction and maintenance of the trail. A large part of the planning will pertain to where the funding will come from to construct, maintain, and insure the trail. We will keep the town residents informed of the progress of the trail planning via the town newsletters and on the town website.

You can learn more about Rails to Trails by going on line to Trails to Trails Conservancy, a non-profit organization that shows how other communities around the country have revitalized their abandoned railways.

Thank you and have a great summer, Councilman Fred Leuer





FOR RELEASE: June 28, 2020

CONTACT: Andrew Dugan | (518) 852-1282

ORTT AND ASSEMBLY PASS VETERANS LEGISLATION

A Newsletter New York State Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt

The 2021 Legislative Session has come to a close, and with it, a long list of legislation was passed by the State Legislature, delivered to the Governor, and signed into law. In the closing days of the session, I am proud to announce that one of the bills I sponsored was passed by both the Senate and Assembly.

Senate Bill 3638, which establishes a task force to study veteran employment opportunities, was passed unanimously by the State Senate and Assembly. This bipartisan legislation would establish a task force to explore the employment opportunities that currently exist for our state's military veterans. It would also develop more meaningful and fulfilling employment opportunities across the state in both the public and private sectors.

As a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, I understand veterans' struggles and difficulties when returning home. After being part of something so monumental and having a daily task or mission to complete, many veterans have difficulty finding a career that fulfills their built-in soldier mentality and determined work ethic. That is why I am proud to have helped craft this legislation and pushed for its passage.

If we can provide more meaningful and fulfilling career opportunities for our veterans, not only will they be a wonderful addition to our state's workforce, but we will also see fewer veterans struggling with rejoining civilian life. When we talk about returning to civilian life, I hope that this legislation will help buck the disturbing trend of 22 veterans per day committing suicide.

Additionally, while many veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress once they return home from service, many also suffer from depression and a lack of belonging. By connecting veterans with meaningful employment, we can directly address a significant issue in the military community.

While Senate Bill 3638 has passed both houses, it still requires the signature of Gov. Cuomo to go into effect. The Governor should sign this important legislation so that we may start studying how to help our veterans better once they return home.

If you or a loved one knows of a veteran who would benefit from the passage of this legislation, I encourage you to reach out to the Governor's office and ask him to sign this bill into law.

SOMERSET CONSERVATION CLUB

2021 FALL CHICKEN BBQ

DATE: SEPTEMBER 12, 2021**TIME:** TAKE OUT ONLY 12 Noon – 1:30PM**COST:** \$11.00 pre-sale

**ONLY 400 DINNERS
WHEN THEY'RE
GONE,
THEY'RE GONE!**

****ROADSIDE PICKUP ONLY******LOCATION:** 1129 JOHNSON CREEK ROAD BETWEEN
LAKE RD. (RT.18) AND LOWER LAKE RD.**TICKETS: AVAILABLE FROM ALL CLUB MEMBERS or CALL:**

PAUL HIGGINS	531-1591	LOUIS DUBOIS	998-1581	MIKE FLINT	417-5154
JEFF HIGGINS	(585)329-7885	DICK HESCHKE	795-3042	JOEL WINTERS	534-0678
DAVE SHUBERT	829-2194	AARON DAVIS	683-8416	BEN SEWARD	525-4711

ALSO AT:

SOMERSET TOWN HALL	795-3575
SPENCER'S COUNTRY STORE	585-765-1049
PERFECT IMAGES SALON	795-3681
SUNSET STYLZ SALON	574-7135

THE BARKER HOTEL

Willis M. McAdam was born in the Town of Pendleton in 1849. He married Mary E. Peck. About 1878 they moved to the Lake Road in the Town of Somerset. About eight years later they moved to the Village of Barker with their two sons Frank W. and Alonzo J. They ran the Barker Hotel and livery stable until it was destroyed in the fire of 1895. They rebuilt the hotel and named it McAdam Hotel.

I don't have much information about the building until the 1970's when Charlie Coulter ran a grocery store there. In the 1980's Dan and Sally Baker ran The Village Store. I don't have the date of when Dan And Sally closed the store but when they did it became an apartment house.

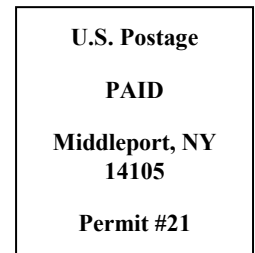
Sadly on May 15, 2021, the old Barker Hotel building was pretty much destroyed by fire. I can't imagine rebuilding it to the way that it was. The cost today would be astronomical.

Fire and economic problems have taken a heavy toll over the past few years but hopefully the things will get better for the Village of Barker and the Town of Somerset.

I wish you all a safe and healthy summer.

Peter J. Devereaux, Historian

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- ♦ August 7th 9am - 5pm, Town-Wide Yard Sale (call the Town Hall before August 3rd to have your address placed on the map; maps will be ready on August 4th)
- ♦ September 12th noon - 1:30pm, Conservation Club Chicken BBQ
- ♦ September 13th - 18th Tire Drop Off (details inside)
- ♦ September 19th 10am - 3:30pm, Old Fashioned Farm Festival at the Babcock House