



The Month That Was....

NT Parks & Recreation March Recap



www.ntparksrec.com

It was a beautiful and busy March. With the weather finally breaking, we saw an uptick in the amount of park users walking, riding bikes, playing sports and games, and enjoying the scenic views our parks have to offer. Youth and Senior programs continued to “march” on (PUN intended) and we are excited to have approval to open up more programming with some restrictions lifted by the County. Now, let’s take a look at the March recap of what’s been happening in the Parks & Recreation world in NT!



Youth Programming

Outdoor youth programming kept firing away this month with a host of different activities and programs; but above all else we were most excited and pleased to have the ability to bring back the Easter Egg Hunt. With approval from the County we were able to offer the Egg Hunt at two separate locations (Pinewoods Park & Raymond Klimek Veterans Park), with two different sessions to help maximize the amount of participants while still adhering to the restricted gathering limits. A third sensory friendly and inclusive Easter Egg Hunt was also added to the mix to round out a busy and exciting day. In all 761 people attended, with the event serving 245 different North

Tonawanda families. Special thanks to the number of student and adult volunteers along with Auxiliary police who helped make the day a success, as well as the NT Neighbors Indeed & Special Needs group who helped with donation of prize baskets.

Our weekly Rec Sports program continued to fill-up to capacity with 28 kids playing a variety of sports and guided outdoor games twice per week at Wurlitzer Park. Pick-Up Flag Football took place three days per week serving 95 kids grades 3-8.

With recent approval from the County to proceed with expanded programs including limited indoor programming, we are excited to move another step forward in offering a variety of programs to meet the needs of the youth population. Be on the look out for announcements regarding upcoming programs for your kids!





Adult & Senior Programming

The Senior Center remained open for key programs such as the Nutrition Program, CVAP (Covid Vaccine Assistance Program), legal assistance, and grocery shopping. To date, the CVAP program has assisted 254 seniors in the process of registering and securing vaccine appointments. Other services provided this month included our Care Calls program where staff check in with monthly calls to seniors.

Our team continued providing transportation for our grocery program, assisting seniors with their grocery needs by providing transportation to and from the store every week. We continue to engage seniors virtually with virtual exercise videos, motivational Monday social media engagements, while our arts & crafts drop off program keeps the seniors busy with hands on crafts and activities delivered to their home!

We celebrated Dyngus Day in style serving up delicious Polish meals for pick up, including polish sausage, perogies, sauerkraut, rye bread and a dessert. The community gobbled up the opportunity and many headed to the Dyngus Day parade down the street to celebrate with full bellies.

With recent approval from Niagara County to begin more indoor programming, be on the look out for a slow re-opening as some of your favorite senior programs will be back on tap, including billiards, bingo and exercise. Programs will be staggered, and attendance will be limited to ensure we are meeting all the NYS Safety Guidelines.



Registration has closed for our Adult Softball leagues. This year our slate features a Men's Monday League consisting of 11 teams, Men's Thursday League consisting of 8 teams and a Women's Thursday League with 8 teams. League games will kick off the week of May 10th and run through the second week in August. Best of luck to all the registered teams for a safe and fun season!

Our Thursday Easy Listening Concert Series has been approved, and is set to kick off on June 24th and run through August 26 with weekly performances taking place from 7-8:30pm at Raymond Klimek Veteran's Park bandshell, located at 700 River Road. Special thanks to this year's sponsors: Niagara Regional Federal Credit Union, Kaleida Health, and Senator Robert Ortt. This year's lineup features Kathy Carr and Friends, National Trust, Frankfurters, Special Delivery, Emerald Isle Band, Formula Band, Kokomo Time Band, Bees Knees, and the Buffalo Silver Band.





Parks

It was an end of an era at the Parks Department, as we wished Joe Samol a happy retirement after 32 years of service as the mechanic with his last year serving as the Head Groundsperson. Joe was as dedicated as they come, devoting his time to making our parks a better place for the community. His ingenuity and craftsmanship saved the City a great deal of money as he extended the life of many key

pieces of equipment far beyond their life expectancy. Joe's eye for detail and his drive to get the work done made him the absolute unsung hero for our department over the course of his tenure.

The Parks department remained busy, taking advantage of unseasonably mild weather, getting a jump-start on some spring projects. Benches along Gateway Harbor were repaired and repainted, boat docks at Botanical, Service Drive and Gratwick Park were installed ahead of schedule, kayak launches were repaired and opened for the season and the fence-line along Twin City Memorial Highway was cleared of overgrowth. With the help of DPW, 22 dead trees, previously marked in the fall of 2020, were taken down and removed from Pinewoods Park for the safety of all park users. The team also installed new signage at Raymond Klimek Veteran's Park, which previously lacked any designation for passers by. The sign, which was beautifully created by the local NT company SignTech, includes



reference to the Navy Seabees and Marine Memorials which are housed in the park.

reference to the Navy Seabees and Marine Memorials which are housed in the park.

As we head into spring, the crew will be firing on all cylinders with ball field prep, grass cutting, pavilion cleanups, tree trimmings, and other related park maintenance & cleanups.

More updates on facility upgrades include:

- **Additional Parking Upgrades at Raymond Klimek Veterans Park-** Initial excavation has begun for the addition of parking at the park. 22 additional spaces will be created to provide parking within closer proximity to both the monuments and the pavilions which will be more accommodating to park users. It will also provide more convenient parking for concerts and larger events that take place at the park.



- **Urban Forestry Grant-** The grant contract was officially signed with the DEC who awarded the City with a \$50,000 grant for a Tree Inventory and Community Forest Management Plan. The RFP has been released to consultants and we are anticipating the submission of proposals to review and move forward on the project this summer.
- **Erie Canal Bike Path Extension-** Request for Proposals for the design of the Erie Canal Bike Path Extension has been released by the City Engineer Department, who has worked in connection with our department, DPW and Community Development. The plan calls for connecting Mayor's Park to the Botanical Gardens Park utilizing NYS DOS and Canal Corps. grant monies. The project will implement the City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) by supporting tourism and improving public access to the Erie Canal and waterfront parklands.

The project will begin at Mayor's Park (987 Sweeney Street) and terminate at the North Tonawanda Botanical Gardens (1825 Sweeney Street) and include a combination of on-street and off-street bicycle paths along the public right-of-way of Sweeney Street as well as land owned by the State of New York under jurisdiction of the Canal Corporation. It is expected that the bicycle path will be 10-feet wide to safely accommodate two lanes of bicycle traffic. The objective of this project is to continue to implement the City's LWRP by connecting two waterfront parks as well as extending safe recreational bicycle access into a previously unserved residential neighborhood. Planned construction will begin in Spring of 2022.



- **Tesla Monument Slated for Gratwick Park-** The Buffalo Niagara Nikola Tesla Council (BNNTC) met up with our department and the City Engineer to discuss location and design of a 13.5 foot tall Tesla Coil monument that also serves as a park bench with 360 degree seating. The stainless steel structure will provide visitors with edification and education of Tesla, his accomplishments and celebrate the "electric" history of North Tonawanda. The statue is slated for placement on the north end of the current pavilion located at the Witmer Road entrance.

- **Pinewoods Improvement Project-** Design is at the 60% completion phase for the addition of a family uni-sex bathroom addition onto the existing structure at Pinewoods Park. The main pavilion will also see cosmetic upgrades on the both the interior and exterior to enhance the users experience when renting out the pavilion for events. Enhancements include upgrading kitchen, flooring, lighting and work to the exterior brickwork.



Plumbing upgrades are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in the fall of 2021 with park users reaping the benefits for the upcoming 2022 rental season.



Golf & More

With the mild weather, the golf maintenance staff has been busy getting the course ready for opening day, slated for April 1. It's been a number of years since we've been able to open this early. This is thanks in part to the weather first and foremost, but also a testament to the preparatory work our staff has put in to addressing the drainage issues and overall course conditions to get us to the point of being able to open.

We've also welcomed our newest member of the maintenance staff, Joe Pisarik, who brings with him many years of landscaping experience, and two years of experience working for the Niagara County Parks Department. Joe's work ethic and knowledge will be a great asset to the team! Our seasonal staff are back and we are glad to add some new faces to the mix this year at Deerwood Golf Course. For more information on the course and staff you can head to www.deerwoodgc.com

With the weather breaking, we've seen an influx in golfer ID/pass renewals, totaling 400 to date. We anticipate another 300 pass/ID renewals in the coming months with ID/Pass holders taking advantage of discounted greens fee rates.

In addition to golf ID's our office has also been accepting [reservations for pavilion rentals](#) as well as processing [boat launch trailer parking permits](#). Both permit stickers and pavilion reservations can be done online or via an in-office appointment. Golf ID's are not available for renewal online as we are issuing new ID cards to all participants as part of a system update. For more information on fee schedules, reservations and [appointments](#) you can head to our website at www.ntparksrec.com or call the office at 695-8520.

What's Coming Up?

Registration is now open for the following activities/events:

[Youth Pre-Season Softball Clinics](#) (May 1-May 22) ages 8-16

[Youth Softball League](#) (June 8-August 12) Divisions for ages 5-7, 7-12 and 12-15

[Youth Soccer Clinics](#) (May 11-June 17) K-2 grade & 3-4 grade

[Youth Summer Basketball](#) (June 7-August 19) Grades 5-6, 7-9, & 10-12. Girls and Boys divisions

[Gross Out Camp](#)- (July 12-16) Grades 1-4

[Little Free Pantry Drive](#) (April 19-April 23)- drop off food at Senior Center

[Outdoor Adult Exercise Classes](#)- Dates and locations TBD

[Senior Fitness Classes](#)- Mondays & Wednesday beginning May 5

[Senior Bingo](#)- Thursdays at 1pm. Call senior center for details 695-8582

[Billiards at the Senior Center](#)- Call for availability

Golf Course:

Bob Kania
695-8529

deerwoodgc@gmail.com
www.deerwoodgc.com
[@DeerwoodGolfCourse](#)

Youth Programming:

Michelle Bernas
695-8520 x5510

mbernas@northtonawanda.org
www.ntyouthcenter.com
[@NTYouthCenter](#)

Main Office:

Director
695-8520 x5500

alexnd@northtonawanda.org
www.ntparksrec.com
[@NTParksRec](#)

Adult & Senior Programming:

Pam Hogan
695-8582

phogan@northtonawanda.org
www.ntparksrec.com
[@NTSeniorCenter](#)