

letters

to the Editor

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Balanced government essential for Amherst

Last year Amherst Supervisor Brian Kulpa and the Amherst Town Board voted to sell acres of land to UBMD for a medical center and a huge parking lot. Part of the land sold included town athletic fields used

by children and softball diamonds used by girls ages 5 to 18 for generations. In doing so, the elected officials made no arrangements for the women or kids to play elsewhere.

Now Supervisor Kulpa and the Town Board plan on selling land to Mensch Capital that includes at least three holes of the current Audubon golf course, with again, no alternative
(Continued on page six)

Correction

On the photo page titled “COVID-19 Staying Occupied” that was published on Wednesday, June 30, one of the students was misidentified. The volleyball player at the bottom right of the page is named Angelina Siepierski.

2021 Women of Distinction represent the very best of Western New York

In the wake of a year marked by loss and sacrifice, many outstanding women here in Western New York continued to make a difference in the lives of others. This year's Women of Distinction awards represent an opportunity to honor these remarkable women and recognize their achievements.

Included in our honorees is Jennie Pohl of Williamsville who, at 101 years young, continues to serve her community by volunteering at Congregation Shir Shalom. Similarly, Cantor Arlene Frank is a dedicated clergy person who helped maintain the sense of community at Shir Shalom by providing virtual and outdoor services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As a former village trustee and mayor, Mary Lowther has dedicated herself to making Williamsville the thriving community it is today and continues to volunteer her time to the cause of historic preservation.

Our honorees also include several lauded advocates and educators. Kathleen Maxian of Pendleton is the founder of the Western New York Ovarian Cancer Project. Through her advocacy efforts, the U.S. Supreme Court in 2013 held that human genes could not be patented, thus helping to expand access to genetic testing for various cancers. Nina Blumlein of Amherst is a retired educator, compliance officer and role model whose efforts over a long career in the Buffalo public school system have helped fellow educators, children with disabilities, and their families excel. Kathryn Diebold-Dudzic dedicated her career to helping others by earning her master's degree in social work from Tulane University, mentoring aspiring social work students at the University at Buffalo, and now coordinates care for patients at Ever-

green Health Services. As the founder of the Alankar School of Indian Classical Music, Mamta Bhargava has taught hundreds of students over the past 40 years, in addition to teaching Hindi as an adjunct professor at the University at Buffalo for 13 years.



Karen McMahon

146th DISTRICT
NEW YORK STATE
ASSEMBLY

I am also delighted to honor two women who have distinguished themselves in leadership and executive positions. Rhonda Frederick of Williamsville is the CEO of People Inc., which is the largest nonprofit organization in Western New York. Her commitment and dedication to its mission have helped expand the organization and improve the provision of services for people with developmental disabilities and their families. Sheri Scavone of Getzville is the CEO of the Western New York Women's Foundation, where she

has developed key stakeholder relationships and advocates for policies that empower girls and women within the community.

Whether it's through grassroots initiatives, advocacy for policy, or improving the daily lives of Western New Yorkers, our 2021 Women of Distinction honorees have dedicated themselves to effecting positive change. I'm proud to represent them in the Assembly and look forward to seeing their continued impact on the community.

I received hundreds of nominations for this year's Women of Distinction awards, making the selection process extremely difficult. If you know a woman who has gone above and beyond to help others in Amherst or Pendleton, please consider nominating her for the 2022 awards next spring. As always, feel free to reach out to me at 716-634-1895 or McMahonK@nyassembly.gov if you have any questions or concerns about community issues.

County executive's RENEW plan devoid of fair distribution of funds

Two weeks ago, County Executive Piloncarz unveiled his proposed \$123 million Reinvest in Erie's Neighborhoods and Employ our Workforce plan to fund projects throughout Erie County using federal COVID relief dollars. This will be the largest single investment into Erie County ever. Once he turned over his plan to the Erie County Legislature for deliberation and approval, I went through every detail with a fine-toothed comb. To my utter shock, the entire plan is virtually devoid of any investment in the towns of Clarence, Newstead and Amherst.

Rather than using this as an opportunity to work together for the betterment of all the neighborhoods throughout Erie County, he has chosen to be politically divisive. He has prioritized giving money to politically beneficial private day cares, churches, dance studios and development corporations over the opportunity to expand sewers or address road improvements that have been largely neglected for generations.

With the additional \$89 million earmarked for Erie County in 2022, the total investment dollars from the federal government will be \$178 million. Separately, the City of Buffalo will be receiving over \$330 million from the American Rescue Plan. Yet, the county executive has jumped the gun and chosen to invest \$4.5 in Buffalo parks, community centers and streetscapes that are not owned by the county. That money could be better spent maintaining Akron Falls Park, which is an Erie County asset, and is in desperate need of funding to remove the hundreds of trees that have succumbed to the emerald ash borer and pose a fall risk to the park patrons.

Additionally, while the American Rescue Plan is supposed to address the local COVID-19 impact, the plan fails to address the needs of small businesses, many of which are still struggling. For months, my colleagues and I in the Minority Caucus were told we should wait to see what funding would become available from the federal government. That time has come and the

RENEW plan doesn't even scratch the surface when it comes to providing relief for small businesses.

The bitterly divisive politics that sours people's images of their governments are best left for Washington and Albany. In Erie County, the need for infrastructure improvements spans the entire county. The need to support local nonprofit organizations spans the entire county. The COVID-19 impact on our small businesses spans the entire county. For the county executive to ignore the needs of 10% of Erie County's residents and stoke the flames of

partisanship is an insult to the residents of Newstead, Clarence and Amherst.

I outlined my concerns on the RENEW plan at our finance and management committee discussion last week. This funding presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and the money must be fairly distributed throughout every community in Erie County. I consider it a privilege to represent you in the Legislature and I will continue advocating on behalf of my constituents.

As always, if you have questions, comments, or concerns regarding the RENEW plan or another county-related issue, please feel free to contact my office at Christopher.Greene@erie.gov or by phone at 716-858-8676. I look forward to hearing from you.



Christopher Greene

6th DISTRICT
ERIE COUNTY
LEGISLATOR

EXCLUSIVE

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Last week's question:
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How to reach The Bee

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