Residents Continue to Help Shape the Vision of Community Center

Week of March 12, 2018

I have never shied away from stating that a new community center would be a “game changer” for the Town of Irondequoit. It is an amenity we lack, one which other Towns enjoy the benefit. Our community deserves better, and with opportunity knocking at the former Irondequoit Mall, we should seize the moment to better this Town for generations to come.

As we have spent the past several months engaging the residents of Irondequoit – who ultimately will take ownership of this facility in some form – I have been very much pleased to see a resounding level of interest and response to our request for community input. On February 28th, at Bishop Kearney High School, we provided an update on this community engagement effort.

This has been a compressive undertaking. Our survey, which has now been closed to allow for some final analysis, saw great levels of participation: over 1,300 residents completed it. Furthermore, the Town engaged several focus groups with key cohorts such as seniors, young parents, community group and athletic clubs. This provided qualitative feedback to better inform our data. Ultimately, the goal of this community engagement is to develop what is known as “The Program.” This answers the simple question: what are we looking to provide the people of Irondequoit? It focuses less on the physical, and more on the experience.

The feedback we have received has seen one central theme emerge: a desire to bring residents together. Indeed, there will be elements of a fitness center, where residents can work out, walk, take a yoga class and play pickle ball. All of that centers on a desire for people of all ages to congregate, and for that reason I believe the final “Program” will see a blend of fitness, as well as many additional non-fitness activities that serve many different uses for our residents.

The Town Board awaits a final report from the community advisory committee, made up of residents and Town staff. We also will soon receive a report from our consultant as to the impact on Town operations at our March 20th Town Board meeting.

On a much different, more somber note, I join the Irondequoit community in mourning the loss of two people who have certainly left their mark on our Town. Former Supervisor Donald Demming, who served at Town Hall from 1972-1979, passed away recently. Long before his death, his leadership was often referenced in conversations and we are grateful for his service.

Our hearts are aching with the recent loss of Stephanie Squicciarini. A longtime president of our Town’s Library Board, I reflected on Stephanie’s contribution to the Irondequoit community in my column several weeks ago. She was a shining star, who most can agree, poured her heart and soul in advocating for, planning and ultimately managing our new Town library. That building will be forever a legacy to her dream for the people of Irondequoit to have the finest library in the region. Thank you, Stephanie.