Eagle Scout Project Helps Irondequoit Honor American Flag

Week of June 10, 2019

I am proud of our Town’s tradition of recognizing our nation’s history and those who have sacrificed to keep American the world’s greatest democracy. To that end, we do a wonderful job recognizing the fallen members of our military during Memorial Day weekend, remembering those we lost during September 11th, and honoring those who have served on Veterans Day.

Of all the “Patriotic” holidays, Flag Day seems to attract relatively less attention than its aforementioned cohorts. Perhaps that is the result of it falling almost directly between Memorial Day and Independence Day. Perhaps we are naturally inclined to show more reverence to days that honor people, as opposed to an enduring object that demonstrates the resiliency of America.

Every evening of June 14th, Irondequoit distinguishes itself as a community that recognizes the need to pay tribute to the flag of the United States. While it isn’t the biggest ceremony to take place on the East lawn of Town Hall, it provides us with a reminder of what the flag means to our nation, and the challenges through which it has persevered. According to Federal Code, the Flag is a “living symbol.” Indeed, through our greatest triumphs and our darkest days, the flag has been a constant, holding together the foundation of America.

During our Flag Day ceremony, the American Legion Post 134 and our local Boy Scouts conduct an appropriate retirement of flags that have grown damaged or worn, which involves burning them in a proper manner. We receive dozens of flags annually from residents and gladly aid with their proper disposal.

Last year, I was approached by Joe Ahlquist, a resident who was in the process of obtaining his Eagle Scout status. Joe requested a meeting with me to explain his idea, which he had developed with our local American Legion Post, to provide a place for residents to drop off retired flags for proper disposal.

Joe came well-prepared with a thorough proposal for the Town to install a mail box-like structure on the Town Hall campus. The American Legion has already agreed to underwrite the cost. Thus, Joe gave me a very easy decision to make and we began planning its installation with Flag Day 2019 as an ideal unveiling.

As fate would have it, the box arrived about a month early, so we elected to place it in its permanent home, near the North entrance of Town Hall. Without much publicity, the box was full within 48 hours and, as I write this, continues to attract good citizens wishing to properly dispose of their personal “living symbol” of our nation.

I am proud to live in a Town where a teenager would work side-by-side with our American Legion - many of whom are veterans of Korea and Vietnam – to ensure that we are doing our part as a community to honor the traditions and customs of our country. On behalf of our community, I am happy to extend gratitude to Joe and his partners at the American Legion Post 134 for providing this gift to Irondequoit.