

Brighton-Pittsford Post – “From the Supervisor” column – January 22, 2015 issue
Submitted by Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith

New Canalside Nature Preserve Benefits Entire Town

There’s a saying about government, that “personnel equals policy.” Maybe that’s so.

The Town of Pittsford owns property on the Erie Canal. It’s close by the Monroe Avenue canal bridge, across from The Talbots and Forsythe Jewelers. The Village owns land right next to it, also fronting the canal. Five years ago the Town and Village developed a joint master plan for the two properties. It called for municipal buildings and other facilities on the Town property and residential development on the Village parcel.

I never much liked that idea.

Here are more than 30 acres of woods and wetlands situated between two trails, the Erie Canal path and the Auburn Trail, close to the Village center. So it’s a short, quick walk from a place most Town residents visit frequently, even if we don’t live there. Being able to walk to an area such as this is qualitatively different from a park or preserve you have to drive to. In short, it’s a unique municipal property, whose best and highest purpose seemed to me to involve something other than a construction site.

When I first took on the duties of Town Supervisor last year, I asked Village Mayor Bob Corby if he and the Village government had reconsidered the 2010 master plan for its portion of the property. I was encouraged to learn that they had. We agreed to proceed together to designate our two properties as a nature preserve, with trails for public access and a connection between the Canal Path and the Auburn Trail.

On the strength of this agreement, the Town applied last spring for a grant from the State to proceed with the concept of a nature preserve. The Village wrote a letter in support of our application. In December, the State made us a grant for the project of \$177,000.

We expect to have a design completed by this spring, with work beginning by the fall. Frequently over the years I’ve heard people comment, about open land slated for construction, and have wondered myself, “Why don’t they make it a park?”

Now we have.

Contact Supervisor Smith at bsmith@townofpittford.org or 248-6220.