

Pittsford Supervisor's column – March, 2020
by Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith

Sustainability Efforts in Pittsford

Spring spurs thoughts to environmental awareness, what with Earth Day (April 22), Arbor Day (April 24) and Save the Frogs Day (April 25) all falling in April. In keeping with this theme, I thought I would provide a recap and update on the Town's recent sustainability initiatives and our commitment to preserving our environment.

Making Our Environment Cleaner

In 2019 Pittsford moved ahead with the **Community Choice Aggregation** program. Undertaken jointly with the Towns of Brighton and Irondequoit, its purpose is to get cheaper electricity for our residents and businesses from 100% renewable sources. Soon the program administrator will solicit bids from electricity brokers in accordance with these twin goals: a lower rate and 100% renewable sources.

Last year we began work to **swap out existing street lights with LED lights**. Doing this reduces the Town's energy use and therefore reduces expenses to taxpayers. Also in 2019 the Town began work with the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute to develop its own **energy consumption benchmarking program**. This will give us a comprehensive analysis of energy use. It identifies opportunities for greater efficiency, in order to reduce the Town's energy consumption and expense still further. Both the LED streetlight project and the energy benchmarking will be completed and begin to yield benefits in 2020.

We'll have **rooftop solar arrays** on the lodges at King's Bend Park installed by this summer as well. Funded by a State grant we earned as a Clean Energy Community, the new solar panels will generate enough power to meet the buildings' electrical needs – making their electricity use energy neutral.

Town Projects Make a More Sustainable Pittsford

We were proud to kick off projects in 2019 to offer residents sustainable options in everyday life. At the Spiegel Pittsford Community Center, we installed a **new electric vehicle (EV) charging station**. To encourage more low-impact transportation, we made life a bit easier for cyclists by installing the Town's first **bike fix-it stations**, one each at the Library and at Thornell Farm Park, and we added new **bike racks** behind the Library.

We also installed seven additional **water bottle filling stations** in Town facilities, including at the Library and a seasonal station at Thornell Farm Park. Last year our bottle filling stations (which include two at Spiegel Community Center) kept tens of thousands of plastic bottles out of the waste stream.

To encourage action for a cleaner and healthier environment, last summer the Town launched its community-wide **Toxin-Free Challenge and Responsible Lawn Care initiative**. We distributed hundreds of lawn care information cards and toxin-free challenge signs throughout Pittsford. We added to the Town website new pages on Toxin-Free and Responsible Lawn Care to assist residents in maintaining a healthy and attractive lawn without using synthetic chemicals. Together, these efforts support Pittsford's long-standing commitment to sustainable practices in our community.

Our new **composting program** at the Spiegel Pittsford Community Center kept 970 pounds of food scraps and other compostable products out of the landfill in just the first six months of its operation.

Expanding Recreation for All Ages

Part of preserving our environment means encouraging residents to go out and enjoy it! 2019 saw the opening of **Pittsford's first Dog Park** – an enjoyable and welcoming spot for dogs and their owners alike at 34 East Street. We also completed a **new playground at Great Embankment Park**, made

improvements to the Auburn Trail and launched our **Trail Passport program** in collaboration with Wegmans, all to expand and improve opportunities for outdoor enjoyment.

Lower Impact Connectivity with East Avenue Sidewalk Completion this Spring

Encouraging walkability and low impact connectivity (without the use of vehicles) is another win for the environment. We completed the major remaining portion of the East Avenue sidewalk before winter's onset halted construction, installing concrete from Kilbourn Road toward the Town line with Brighton. We'll finish it once the weather breaks in the spring. This will complete a **safe and walkable route all the way from Brighton to Pittsford Village** for residents, students and visitors. Walkability is good for the environment and central to quality of life – and to the commercial success of the Village and the entire Town. Our policies to promote it – and bicycle-friendliness – carry forward into 2020 as we finalize our joint **Town-Village Active Transportation Plan** and move forward with its recommendations.

I hope you'll agree the Town's long-time commitment to sustainability has made an invaluable impact on our community. From our proactive storm water management efforts begun in 1994 and our innovative, first of its kind 1996 groundbreaking Greenprint Plan, which permanently protected 2,000 acres of farmland and open space, to our recent efforts outlined above, we've worked tirelessly to protect and ensure a healthy, sustainable and enjoyable future for all those who live, work, and learn here in Pittsford.

As ever, should you have any comments or questions about our sustainability initiatives or other projects and programs, you may reach me directly by phone at 248-6220 or by email at bsmith@townofpittsford.org. My door is open and I answer my own phone. I'm always interested to know what matters most to you as a resident.