**Potential Parks Updates**

If you’re a fan of the park space we have here in the village, I recently came across some information that might interest you. Village administrators are eyeing updates to two of our local parks: Schantz Park on State Road and Veterans Memorial Park (the Gazebo park) on North Ave.

A six-member advisory committee composed of village and local business representatives have come up with a plan to upgrade these parks, and recently an open house meeting was held to present these ideas to members of the public.

The proposed changes to Schantz Park are meant to improve the space and make it more convenient for families to utilize. It would involve removing the tennis courts entirely, due to their lack of use and general disrepair. Instead, the space would be filled with an entirely new and larger parking area, a new pavilion, and a natural play space for kids. The goal is to make the park more accessible and comfortable for local families, especially for those visiting the park to watch ball games at the fields.

The more substantial changes proposed are those for Veterans Memorial Park.

One of the largest improvements on the table is a sidewalk that would wrap around the entirety of the park’s grassy commons, which would connect to a paved area right in front of the gazebo. This would make the park a bit easier to maneuver and provide more usable seating space, along with make it more accessible for those with disabilities.

Other touch-ups in the park would include moving the actual memorial the park is named for to the northeast corner, along with the addition of sculptures, planters, and a decorative gateway that makes everything look good. Also never to fear, the new plans also include a village clock, albeit an updated model that will be easier to maintain while still looking just as pretty.

Overall, the plans for the park intend to make the existing space more efficient and comfortable to utilize for events and a common gathering place. With the number of concerts and films and other events we see in that space throughout the year, I have faith that these improvements would turn the park into a wonderful place to gather and enjoy what makes the village so wonderful.

Plans have been drafted for both parks, but in the meantime the village’s focus is only on Veterans Memorial, for which they will be applying for a state grant. Schantz park will be a project to focus on in the future.

This process still has a ways to go, which is fairly common with these types of proposals. The grant application is due at the end of July, with no news until December as to whether any funds will be awarded. After that, there would then be a year-long process of actually designing the park, which means that construction wouldn’t be until 2020 at the earliest.

For the time being, there aren’t any new information gathering sessions, but keep an ear out as this project develops.

**Movies in the Park**

Coming up more immediately in the parks is the beginning and continuation of summertime traditions, including the beginning of weekly movies in Veterans Memorial park.

Sponsored by the Webster BID, Movies in the Park kicks off on Tuesday the 17th, with the first film of the summer being *Despicable Me 3*. From there, the films play weekly in the park on the big screen, beginning at dusk when it’s dark enough to watch.

Starting times are going to vary from week to week, but approximate times will be posted on the BID’s website before each showing. Free popcorn will also be provided by Hegedorn’s Family Market at each movie night as well.

Each movie on the schedule this year is entirely kid-friendly, so if you’re ever looking for something to do on a warm Tuesday night (if you’re willing to tear yourself away from the A/C), bring the family on down.

**Fireman’s Festivities**

Well, it’s July. Out in Webster, July can mean a few things, but one of the most notable is that the Firemen’s Carnival is upon us once again!

From July 11th to July 14th, the Firemen’s Field is going to be aglow with rides and food and music and everything that makes the carnival one of the biggest and best events of the summer. There’s all sorts of fun going on, something new every night. And the kickoff parade is only the beginning.

*Parade*

The Firemen’s parade is quite literally one of the biggest and brightest events all year, and it’s always a delight simply to watch it go by. It’s always very well-attended, with crowds lining Main Street at least four or five people deep, and it’s not uncommon to see canvas chairs and viewing areas popping up along the route starting as early as 7 or 8 in the morning.

Every year there’s representatives from local businesses from in and around Webster, along with local organizations like Blue Fins and the Webster Marching Band. And of course, there are So. Many. Fire trucks.

Of course our local fire departments are well-represented, but I always find it so much fun to see the trucks that have made their way out to our neck of the woods from departments much further away. I can think of a number of years where I’ve spent a solid 20 minutes after the parade frantically Googling the unfamiliar town names just to find out how far they’d traveled. It’s something small, but I can’t help but admire just how far our community stretches during these events.

Starting at 6:30 PM on Thursday the 12th, I’m sure I don’t have to tell you that the parade is one you don’t want to miss. Come and join in the fun and the family that our town becomes this time of year.

*Kiddie Parade*

Along with the Firemen’s Parade, the carnival is also supplemented with the smaller but no less enjoyable Kiddie Parade.

The Kiddie Parade is likely the smallest parade of the year, quite literally when you consider the short stature of its marchers. It winds its way through neighborhood streets on the south side of the village, and it’s reportedly the cutest thing EVER.

The event provides a chance for folks both young and young at heart the chance to march in a real parade; an experience not many get to have. Families are known to deck out wagons and other forms of transportation in connection to a variety of themes, complete with costumes and streamers and signs. In alignment with the true parade experience, it’s not uncommon to see kids throwing candy to the gathered crowd of spectators, which seems like even more fun than eating it if you ask me.

This year, for the second year in a row, the parade is going to be on Saturday the 14th, kicking off at 12 noon at Spry Middle School on South Avenue. Registration begins at 11 AM, with the parade starting on South Ave, turning onto Dunning, and making its way to Sanford Street and all the way down to the Firemen’s Field to open the final day of the carnival.

*Carnival*

Compared to the parade, the carnival itself is just about as bright and busy and all-around enjoyable. It has something for everyone, with games and rides open every night, along with nightly dinner specials and music performances.

Everything kicks off on Wednesday the 11th, starting at 6 PM at the Firemen’s Field. The beer tent will be serving beer and wine all night, and Wednesday kicks things off with Craft Beer Night.

Local craft breweries will be served for the night, including Blue Toad Hard Cider, Knucklehead Craft Brewing, Whichcraft Brews, and even Casa Larga Vineyard. For five dollars you have the option of one full beer or a tasting sample of five different drinks. This is all alongside the tent’s standard offerings as well, including Labatt’s and Gennesee options.

Each night of the carnival is going to have something different to offer, with nightly dinner specials including Pumper Plates, a fish fry on Friday night, and pulled pork on Saturday. If you’re looking to satisfy your sweet tooth, there will also be plenty of dessert offerings like pies, brownie sundaes, and of course fried dough.

There will be plenty of ride offerings, and each day there will be an option to pay one price at the gate and receive a wristband to ride as much as you like without needing ride tickets. At the gate the price will be 25 dollars, but up until the 11th you can also pre-purchase wristbands at Wegmans, Hegedorns, Schutt’s Apple Mill, or MaMa Lor’s Cafe.

The carnival is open starting at 6 PM Wednesday through Friday, and noon on Saturday with the rides beginning at 1:00. The entire event comes to a close on Saturday night at midnight, with a fireworks show that rivals even those you see on the 4th of July.

There’s always something for everyone at the Firemen’s Carnival, and I’m not exaggerating when I say that it’s one of my favorite events every single year. Come on out, support our local firefighters, you’ll be glad you did.

What are you looking forward to seeing most at the carnival this year? Do you have any special memories you want to share? Let me know! I always love to hear what folks feel makes this event so special. webstervillagebeat@gmail.com