



Dedication of the Sandra L. Frankel Nature Park and Brickyard Trail Grand Opening

**Elmwood Avenue
June 29, 2016**

Comments by Hon. Sandra L. Frankel

What a humbling and exhilarating day! What a rare privilege! Today's beautiful Brickyard Trail Opening and the dedication of this new 72-acre park in my name is the culmination of two and a half decades of dreaming and doing, of dedication and hard work that translated a shared community dream into reality—the preservation of open space for active and passive parkland and to protect environmentally sensitive land. I am honored, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Let me begin by thanking Supervisor Bill Moehle and Council Members Jim Vogel, Louise Novros, Chris Werner, and Jason DiPonzio for completing our town-wide park system, which was overwhelmingly approved and funded by the voters in a public referendum in 2001, and for the honor of naming this park for me. Parks are for people, and with responsible care, they will last for future generations. Parks touch our souls, lift our spirits, and strengthen us.... And the same can be said for the impact that parks have on a community.

This year marks the 100th Anniversary of the National Park Service and our nation's commitment to protecting true environmental and historical treasures. It is a joy to visit these sites and embrace the wonders of our great country from sea to shining sea. And it is an everyday joy to visit and enjoy our local parks, which we created together.

Inspired by John F. Kennedy's 1961 inaugural speech in which he said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," I applied this to my public service. I believe that government can be a source for good; and when the public and elected officials come together in common cause, we get excellent public safety services, sound

infrastructure, a strong economy, great schools, friendly neighborhoods, and beautiful public parks. This perspective built a strong foundation for our daily lives and has made Brighton a great place to live, work, do business, raise a family, and retire.

We went from the small Brighton Memorial triangle park at 12 Corners, the modest recreation area behind town hall, and Brighton Town Park leased from the NYSDOT for \$1/year in 1992, to about 8 major parks and trails throughout Brighton in 2016. Today, more than 500 acres of active and passive parkland provide venues for playgrounds and sports, lodges for community events, and protection of our waterfall, streams and ponds, woodlands and wetlands, meadows and animal habitats. How lucky we are to have had a shared community vision to preserve open space, create recreation areas for healthy physical outlets for people of all ages, provide respite from our hectic daily lives, and contribute to the study and enjoyment of nature!

Despite climate change deniers, we accept the world scientific community's conclusion that this is a real and present danger to our future. That is why we undertook a planning process to reduce our carbon footprint in our small corner of the planet, and we know that our parks contribute to that effort.

Many people deserve recognition for their tireless efforts:

*From the beginning, the power of the people prevailed. Rick Dollinger, Jan Miller, Judy Schwartz and Lila Bluestone were early advocates for open space preservation and got the ball rolling. Remember SOS? Save Our Space?

*During my 20 years as Supervisor from 1992 to 2012, Town Board members Lynda Garner Goldstein, Jim Vogel, Ray Tierney, Bob Barbato, Jill Vigdor Feldman, Bridget Shumway, Ken Gordon, Sherry Kraus, and Sheila Gaddis shared the vision and played a major role in making this day happen.

*We worked with an incredible professional staff that went above and beyond, and helped us apply policy to practice, and at the end of the day we created Meridian Centre Park, Buckland Park, Corbett's Glen Nature Park, Lynch Woods Nature Park, the Lehigh Valley Multi-Purpose Trail, Persimmon Park, the Lawrence Stowell Nature Conservancy, the Blossom Road recreation area and other small parks throughout town, and now, with the continued commitment of the current town government administration, the Brickyard Trail and our new 72-acre park.

I want to acknowledge Tom Low, Tim Keef, Jerry LaVigne, Ken Rohr, Suzanne Zaso, Ramsey Boehner, Laraine Albers, Mary Ann Hussar, David Dollinger, Tom Voelkl, Mark Henderson, Mike Guyon, Becky Cotter, Matt Beman, Elaine Ainsworth, Mary Jo Lanphear, Laraine Albers, Maryann Hussar, and many others too numerous to name. Each contributed to our planning and implementation from their respective areas of expertise. We couldn't have done it without them or without grassroots support. We also had help from Gay Mills and the Genesee Land Trust, as well as guidance from the Nature Conservancy. Brighton Rotary and Brighton Kiwanis

partnered with us on certain park projects as well. Our state officials, Joe Morelle and Joe Robach assisted with state grants for parks and trails.

Today's park reflects the creative approach that we have taken. We led with an updated Comprehensive Plan that included an Open Space Inventory and Parkland Plan, adopted Incentive Zoning as a new tool to enable us to secure needed amenities for the town like parkland, and had strong community support with a four-to-one public referendum vote in 2001 in favor of acquiring, developing, and funding new parks and trails.

In 2011, Wegman Companies (no relationship to the food markets), and the Town of Brighton presented a proposal to the community that would enable the construction of an assisted living facility for seniors on about 10 acres of the Farash parcel along Westfall Road, and a 72-acre nature park and trail from Elmwood Avenue to Westfall Road. We believed that this would meet current and future community needs. I negotiated the purchase of 32.5 acres for \$650,000, half the amount proposed in a failed referendum in the late 1980s by the prior administration. Wegman Companies donated 40.5 acres through the Incentive Zoning process. This enabled us to save additional funds that could be applied to the development of the Brickyard Trail, bringing us closer to the creation of a "green necklace" linking parks and trail systems not only within Brighton, but also throughout the county and region. I want to acknowledge Joe McEntee of Wegman Companies for partnering with us, and the Farash Foundation led by Nick Robfogel, which was instrumental in enabling our newest park to proceed.

Those were exciting times and today continues that excitement.

In closing, I again want to thank all of you. This is what community is all about. And on a personal note, I want to thank my husband, Neil, for his lifelong support of the work that I do, and to wish him a very happy birthday today!

I look forward to seeing you on the trail. Now, let's take a hike!