

From the Supervisor

Pittsford's Environmental Leadership

Recently I met with our Environmental Board to kick off work on a **Climate Action Plan** for the Town.

As I prepared for this, consulting with the Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and participating in Monroe County's climate action planning, one thing stood out: how far ahead Pittsford is in this area. How many goals required in a climate action plan Pittsford has accomplished already! And it's a great many. We don't just plan. We act.

Putting together a climate action plan represents a logical next step in our program of continual improvement for Pittsford. It builds on our long legacy of environmental stewardship.



Climate Smart Communities
Certified Bronze

A Climate Smart Community

The Town earned State certification in 2022 as a Climate Smart Community. This award recognized Pittsford's

success in completing a series of specific environmentally friendly actions and improvements that materially reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Clean Energy Communities

A Clean Energy Community

Similarly, in 2017 the Town succeeded in winning State recognition as a Clean Energy Community. We earned it by

adopting practices and accomplishing specific goals identified by the State as making a high impact on improving the environment. As an early adopter of the Clean Energy Community program, Pittsford won State grants that funded the electric vehicle charging station at the Community Center and solar panels that power the lodges at King's Bend Park – further reducing energy use and carbon emissions.

Composting Lawn Debris into Mulch

Did you know that **more than half** of what's dumped into landfills consists of organic materials such as yard debris, lawn cuttings and discarded food? Pittsford's Department of Public Works knows. That's among the reasons why for years we've run such an ambitious program of gathering yard debris including branches, grass clippings and leaves. We've been composting leaves since 1980 and recycling yard debris since 1991 – **keeping these items out of the landfill and turning them into free mulch for our residents.**

Pittsford is the only town in Monroe County to have such an extensive yard debris and leaf collection program, with weekly collection. Altogether, a service to residents and to the environment as well.

Recycling Food Scraps and Composting

A logical follow-on to our longstanding program of recycling yard debris, in 2019 the Town started recycling food scraps from our Spiegel Community Center. With at least three Senior Center lunches every week, this practice has produced rich compost for the Town's Community Gardens ever since.

Starting September 18 this year, **we're taking the concept further still.** We've partnered with Monroe County to offer a *residential* Food Scraps Recycling pilot program for Pittsford households. The food scraps collected will produce biomethane

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Bill Smith
Town Supervisor

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- Leaf Collection begins October 17
- Food Scraps Recycling for Clean Energy
- Town's Climate Action Plan Under Way
- Join the Pittsford Pollinator Pathway Challenge
- Save the Date for Family Halloween Fest

Turn Food Scraps into Renewable Energy!



Support an energy-sustainable future and send less refuse to the landfill – sign up for the **Pittsford Residential Food Scraps Recycling Program!**

Find details and register at www.townofpittsford.org/food-scraps-recycling

Food waste drop-off begins September 18.

A pilot program with Monroe County.

From the Supervisor

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gas, a naturally occurring and renewable source of energy, to generate electricity that the program can either use or sell to the grid. Recycling discarded food to make electricity marks another step toward a sustainable future using renewable sources of energy.

Given the background of Pittsford’s leadership in this area, it’s no surprise that when the County sought out just one town as a partner in this program, it chose Pittsford. You can sign up for the Food Scraps Recycling program at www.townofpittsford.org/food-scraps-recycling.

Erie Canal Nature Preserve

When I came into office as Supervisor, **20 acres of Town-owned land along the Canal was slated for development.** This was incompatible with my concept of public stewardship of the natural environment.

Consequently, the Town pursued and won a state grant to create from this land a nature preserve, changing it only to provide public access to the interior of the property, remove invasive species and assure a healthy habitat for the wildlife at the site, including the frog ponds. Eagle Scouts built benches for people to rest while enjoying the natural beauty. The result is our Erie Canal Park and Nature Preserve.

Toxic-Free Lawn Challenge

For decades, in maintaining its property the Town’s policy has been to use as little in the way of pesticides and synthetic chemicals as possible. To use them only when strictly necessary for public safety or to treat severe and otherwise incurable problems. I’ve encouraged continual reduction. By 2019, we realized that on the entire 3,100 acres of land the Town maintains, we had it down to the point where we used a smaller amount of chemical herbicides and pesticides each year than just two – two – residences with half-acre yards that use a lawn service. Since then we’ve reduced it still further.

The 2019 data showed that it’s residential lawn maintenance that brings into Pittsford the highest volume of synthetics.

So in spring of that year we launched our *Toxic-Free Lawn Challenge*, encouraging residents to forego use of chemical lawn treatments. **Committing to a toxic-free lawn is where the most change can be made**, and our residents are stepping up to the task.

Native Plantings

With the help of community volunteers from Color Pittsford Green, last fall we created a **“Bird Harbor”** at Great Embankment Park. Planting a native shrub and perennial garden at the site provides food and shelter to migrating birds and to species that make their home at the park. With the Town’s support yet another volunteer group cleared a section of the Deblase Open Space, off of Thornell Road, of invasive Autumn Olive bushes and in their place planted all-native species.

Pittsford Pollinator Pathway Challenge

Beyond the Climate Action Plan, our latest initiative is this partnership with volunteers, again from Color Pittsford Green. In recent years the Town has been planting “pollinator gardens” at various Town properties. The purpose is to create corridors of food sources and healthy habitat critical to butterflies, moths, bees and other pollinating insects and wildlife. Now, starting September 2023, we’re taking this a step further: **encouraging residents to plant their own pollinator gardens**, through our Pollinator Pathway Challenge. The Town provides habitat tips and a list of trees, shrubs and perennial plants that can help you establish a pollinator garden in your own yard, adding to the pollinator pathway through the Town. Plant any 10 of the species on the list and you’ll win a sign to post at your garden or in front of your house showing that you’ve met the pollinator pathway challenge!

Planting More Trees

For years it’s been Town policy to plant one new tree for every tree we must cut down, whether due to disease, public safety or to make way for sidewalks and other public improvements. We’ve long since outpaced that, **planting more than one new tree for every tree taken down.**

Energy-Efficient Town Buildings

Making our municipal buildings more energy efficient has been ongoing. Beginning with audits of energy use and energy efficiency, the Town proceeded to obtain grant funding that,

among other improvements, let us retrofit all lighting fixtures including conversion of all Town street lights to LED lighting.

For energy auditing we worked with the NYS Pollution Prevention Institute, headquartered at RIT. At this point you may not be surprised to learn that Pittsford was the **first** municipality to work with the Pollution Prevention Institute to audit energy efficiency of its buildings.

We’ve kept it up. Most recently I’ve met with professionals offering sustainability and performance contracting as I’ve been working on a proposal to Town Board that can let us **pursue further energy efficiency in Town facilities that pays for itself.** Town staff is preparing a bid now.

And we can do this in a way compatible with the historic architecture of our buildings. For example, a major step toward a more energy-efficient Town Hall will involve replacing windows and doors. There’s now the technology to allow rebuilding the existing original windows to make them energy efficient to contemporary standards. And to do this within an overall Town program where the improvements measurably pay for themselves through energy savings.

Energy-Efficiency Residential Housing

In June 2022, we kicked off Pittsford’s HeatSmart community outreach and education campaign, in collaboration with HeatSmart Finger Lakes. It promotes **clean residential heating and cooling technologies** by offering free energy audits to householders and recommending energy-saving home improvements.

Greenprint

Last year we celebrated the 25th anniversary of Pittsford’s pathbreaking *Greenprint for the Future*. Hailed nationally as a model for community open space and farmland preservation, the Town’s Greenprint, enacted in 1996, protected two-thirds of Pittsford’s open countryside at the time. **More than 2,000 acres.** The Town permanently protected this farmland and the ecological resources it contains by purchasing development rights from the landowners. Farmers can keep farming the land, which can never be sold for development.

Our Greenprint is what first got me involved in municipal government. I ran for Town Board supporting it and

was proud to be a member of the Town Board that enacted it. As opportunity arises to expand it today, with the support of the community that’s my goal.

Too many communities around the country only wake up to protecting open land when their last square foot is about to be paved over. More than 25 years ago, Pittsford got it right. We now live in that future that our *“Greenprint for the Future”* contemplated, in a community renowned among its other qualities for the beauty of its open countryside. In a community whose **carbon footprint is substantially lower, and has been for a quarter-century**, because it protected so much land from development.

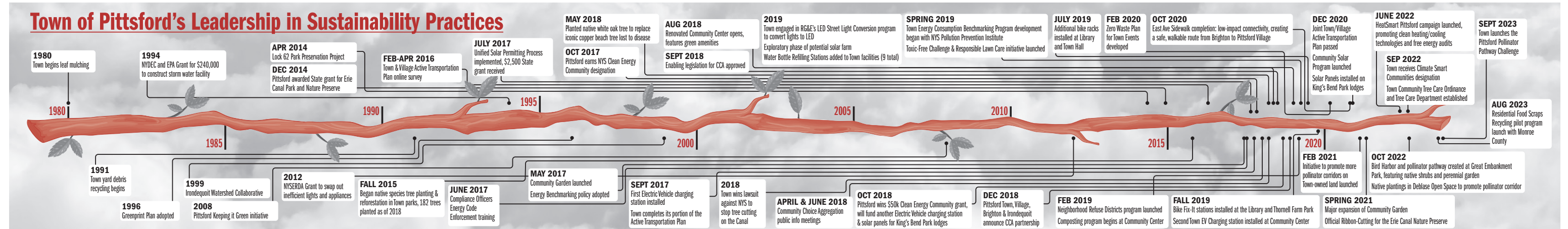
Considering the full compendium of actions, practices, programs, policies and initiatives that comprise this Town Administration’s attention to our natural environment, in this discussion I’ve barely scratched the surface. I could mention as well:

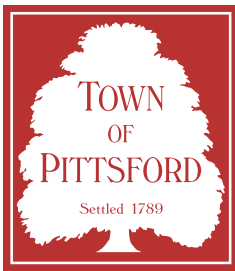
- Electric Vehicle chargers
- Creating wildlife spaces in Town parks
- Water bottle refilling stations at Town facilities
- Community Gardens at Thornell Farm Park
- and much more.

Does this mean there’s not more to do? Far from it. What it means is that Pittsford has a Town Administration and staff that stays not just on top of new opportunities for environmental health and improvement, but keeps ahead of the curve.

You can learn more about Pittsford’s leadership in sustainability initiatives and accomplishments at the Town’s website: www.townofpittsford.org/sustainability.

As ever, in order to do my best for you, I need to hear from you! You can reach me at **248-6220** or by email at wsmith@townofpittsford.org. If you prefer, we can meet personally at my office, where I maintain an open-door policy, or at my monthly *Supervisor Saturday* open house at the library. It’s usually the first Saturday of each month and is always announced on my *Bill Smith Pittsford Town Supervisor* Facebook page and in the Town eNews.





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Stay up to date by following the Town of Pittsford on social media. You can find us on:



The Pittsford Messenger Summer 2023

www.townofpittsford.org

SAVE THE DATE – OCTOBER 22!



Town of Pittsford

Family Halloween Fest

Join us for family fun, treats, activities and more!

Canned goods accepted to support Pittsford Food Cupboard.

Find details as the date approaches at www.townofpittsford.org/halloweenfest

Take the Pittsford Pollinator Pathway Challenge



Help pollinators, help the environment, beautify your yard – and receive a free sign!

Make your yard pollinator-friendly. We'll provide a native tree, shrub and plant list plus habitat tips.

Pollinator pathways provide corridors of critical healthy habitat and food sources for butterflies, moths, bees and other pollinating insects and wildlife. Be part of the Pittsford Pollinator Pathway – find details at www.townofpittsford.org/pollinator-pathways.

Leaf Collection begins October 17

Visit www.townofpittsford.org/leaf-collection#leaf to find guidelines and when crews will be in your area.

