FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PENFIELD ACQUIRES PROPERTY ON IRONDEQUOIT BAY
Expansion of LaSalle’s Landing Park

PENFIELD, N.Y., October 23, 2009 – The Town of Penfield has added a new 2.5 acre parcel on Irondequoit Bay to its Open Space portfolio.

This latest acquisition is located at 1140 Empire Boulevard adjacent to the existing LaSalle’s Landing Park on the Irondequoit Bay shoreline. The parcel ranked high on the Town’s Open Space Update “wish list” for park expansions in 2006 and has been a priority land acquisition for the town. The land is environmentally sensitive, with one full acre underwater. The Town purchased the property on September 25, 2009 for $182,000 using Open Space funds.

The property was owned by 1140 Empire Boulevard, Inc. It has a history of industrial use and was formerly the site of a utility contracting company. Like much of the bay area, the property was once the site of dumping of contaminants and debris. While many nearby properties have been remediated and improved, this parcel remained idle. The Town of Penfield has long understood the issues with the parcel and recognizes its potential for restoration and public enjoyment.

“This acquisition has been of great interest. When the timing lined up for the owner and the town, we moved ahead. After remediation, it will expand LaSalle’s Landing Park and add beauty to this gateway to Penfield along Empire Boulevard,” said Supervisor George Wiedemer. “The principal owner, Bill Ruoff, has been a cooperative partner throughout the process.”

An environmental site assessment identified a small dilapidated structure, petroleum-based contaminants, significant debris, and broken asphalt on the property. The Town of Penfield has submitted permit
applications to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for permission to begin the extensive cleanup of the waterfront, land and the removal of the structure. Cleanup may begin as soon as December and will continue well into next year. Soil will be removed from the site to eliminate petroleum-based contaminants and be replaced with clean fill.

Councilman Andy Moore, Committee Chairman of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) Update Committee, comments, “This Open Space acquisition is a rare opportunity to reclaim and restore a scenic natural resource. The project is consistent with the town’s Comprehensive Plan and the LaSalle’s Landing Plan, adding a beautiful setting for passive recreation in Penfield.”

**Town of Penfield’s Open Space History**

Penfield’s Open Space Plan was adopted by the Penfield Town Board in 2001. In February 2002, the Town Board voted unanimously to allow local residents to decide whether or not the community should borrow up to $10 million to purchase properties and development rights targeted for preservation in the Open Space Plan.

While $10 million was authorized by the residents of Penfield by referendum vote, Penfield has successfully won grant funding totaling nearly $900,000, which reduces the total amount the Town is borrowing for its Open Space program.

The Open Space referendum was held on April 23, 2002. The vote created the largest non-election turnout in Penfield history, with voters approving the referendum by a 2:1 margin.

The majority of the acreage already preserved under the 2002 Plan is farmland, where the development rights were purchased. A few properties are being preserved through Open Space Easements, which expire after a certain number of years.

The Open Space Plan Update is available for public review; a copy of the update is also available in the Penfield Public Library and on the Town’s website, [www.penfield.org](http://www.penfield.org).

The Town of Penfield Open Space Plan has been admired, reviewed and adapted by many other municipalities across New York State. The property identification and ranking process is easily described in the Plan and adaptable to the circumstances and needs of other communities. In September 2002, the Town of Penfield received an award from the Upstate New York Chapter of the American Planning Association for its Open Space Plan. The Town was awarded the 2002 Outstanding Planning Project – Implementation, for its efforts toward resource preservation.

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