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'Repose of the Fallen' makes steady progress

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"Repose of the Fallen" plaza concept rendering by Studio A Architecture.

Provided image

LAKE GEORGE – With a month to go before the ceremony on Friday, May 22, construction progresses on “Repose of the Fallen,” a gathering plaza that will feature the reinterment of the historic remains of Revolutionary-era soldiers that were discovered back in 2019 on Courtland Street. Peak Environmental has been contracted for the plaza's construction.

“I was sweating a little bit over the winter, but I feel much better now about where these guys are at in terms of the event next month,” Lake George Planning and Zoning Director Dan Barusch said of the construction progress. “I'm happy it's all coming together. It has been seven years of relatively constant stuff, and the ceremony planning has been quite a lot.”

The Repose of the Fallen plaza will be tucked up on the hill along Fort George Road, where a walking path will guide visitors through a series of historical informative signage with an interactive kiosk, a seating area with granite benches surrounding a flag pole, a center-placed memorial obelisk, and the columbaria where the remains will be kept.

“They are much further along now, but the pavers walkway is almost done. The granite benches, they're done. They're in shop. They look beautiful. The columbaria fabrication is on schedule. They're set for delivery on May 18. Everything inside the circle is almost done with hardscape, a lot of landscape in the middle, there'll be more benches on the inside. The kiosk signage is all designed and DEC-approved. Flagpoles will be going in, in a week or two,” Barusch said.

“Landscaping will be done in the next couple weeks. We elected for hydro seed because it was a fair middle price. They're going to try to come spray at the end of April, so that we get a little bit of growth before May 22, but it's taking shape. Good progress,” Barusch added.

Based on archaeological estimates, the remains that were found on Courtland Street six years ago belong to around 44 Continental Army soldiers who presumably died of smallpox during the summer of 1776.

There will also be a three-and-a-half-foot bronze plaque at the site dedicated to all the organizations and funding efforts for the plaza. The plaque will be built by Consolidus at a cost of \$18,000. “Bronze was worth the extra money to not have to touch it ever; it looks a little classier, the other things in the park are all bronze,” Barusch said.

The reinterment ceremony will be held on Friday, May 22, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Battlefield Park. Dignitaries like Governor Kathy Hochul and U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer are expected to attend. “We have a ton of speakers lined up. There will be a procession of people carrying four caskets from the Father Jogues statue up the hill to the site. There will be fife and drum. There will be re-enactors and color guard, the full gamut,” Barusch explained.

After the reinterment ceremony, a luncheon will be held at the Carriage House at Fort William Henry from 1 to 2:30 p.m. “We're going to be handing out plaques to the large donors — anyone who gave us \$5,000 or more is going to get a plaque,” Barusch said of the luncheon.

Two large donors for the project are the Lake George Steamboat Company and Fort William Henry, which each gave \$25,000, according to Barusch.

Additionally, the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance has made a second donation to the town of Lake George worth \$50,000. The first donation was \$80,000. "The Alliance was collecting donations as the banker, and they were basically donating that money to the town to help subsidize the cost of the project," Barusch said.