

Statement of Andrew J. Shaevel, managing partner, Mensch Capital Partners, regarding comprehensive, new proposed land swap with Town of Amherst

March 15, 2016

Mensch Capital Partners submitted a comprehensive proposal to the Supervisor on January 26, 2016. We are pleased that the Supervisor has shared this fact with the Town Board, albeit six weeks after it was submitted.

Our proposal empowers the Town to solve multiple challenges and satisfy the disparate interests of multiple stakeholders without spending any taxpayer dollars. Our proposal would remediate and preserve 150 acres of green space at the former Westwood Country Club, provide the Town a replacement 18-hole golf course (Glen Oaks), reserve adequate land to enable the Town to expand recreation fields adjacent to the Northtown Recreation Center, as well as expand the Flood Mitigation project adjacent to the Bike Path, while also promoting development adjacent to the University at Buffalo that will add to the social and economic fabric of the Town. This plan is in keeping with the vision established by the Town's own comprehensive plan.

While the Supervisor was initially supportive of our proposal, he later countered with an offer limiting the proposed transaction to 55 acres of Audubon which all parties quickly agreed was not economically viable and fails to address the various interests of the Town, the Westwood neighbors, and Mensch.

The fact is that the Westwood site, without remediation, is a contaminated brownfield and is not suitable for any purpose: recreation, residential, commercial or industrial uses. While the Supervisor has publicly refuted this fact, which is unfortunate, he is now on notice from the State that the site must be remediated before it can be repurposed for any use, including as an active or passive park.

A second fact is that some form of development will be required at Westwood to enable a clean-up of the site and its contamination. There are multiple paths to a solution that address the interests of the various stakeholders, but all will likely require all parties to compromise.

We are in the process of reaching out to Town Board members and we remain hopeful that we can identify common ground to engineer a solution that addresses as many of the interests of the various stakeholders as possible.