

City of Watervliet sets day for pool, spray ground opening

City of Watervliet Mayor Charles Patricelli announced today that the unveiling of Little Critters Waterpark at the Veterans Memorial Swimming Pool will take place on Thursday and the ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at noon on Monday, June 27, weather permitting. The pool and splash pad are scheduled to open that day.

“This is some amazing news that is such a huge announcement for the residents of the city of Watervliet,” Mayor Patricelli said. “These pads are very popular at amusement parks and many cities have been including them into their inventory. This project has been several years in the making, one in which I envisioned four year ago, and finding the revenue for the project was the key.”

The unveiling of the splash pad, the city’s first major addition to the pool in decades, is possible because of a \$500,000 gift from city native Scott Earl, owner of Prestige Vending and Twin Bridges Waste Management and Recycling. Wizard Works owner Mark Aragona, a relative of a Watervliet resident, offered his services of design at no charge to the project.

“Our youth is worth investing and providing a holistic approach of programs and activities that they can enjoy,” Mayor Patricelli said. “We are not a rich community and it’s difficult to compete with our growing suburban communities that have sprawling fields and the developers’ dollars to create community improvements for their residents. We have little land and barely enough finances to compete, this from Scott Earl and Mark Aragona donation made it all possible.”

Little Critter’s Waterpark and it is themed to capture the wonder of nature’s gifts. It consists of two attractions.

The first attraction is a spray ground that provides 13 whimsical interactive play features that will surely tickle the funny bone of all those little ones under the age of 6. All the play toys are mounted on the ground so that the children do not have to climb tall structures and moms know that their children are safe. The play features are all activated by the participants, so they have full control over their squirts and gushes, and all the sprays are gentle for safe play. The centerpiece is an interactive tugboat clubhouse. Surrounding the tugboat are characters such as a turtle, ladybug, fish and crocodile.

The second attraction is a multi-level play structure, and it features five spacious decks at various elevations, capped off at the top by a big water slide, which older children will certainly enjoy. The play structure is adorned with 17 soaking wet play features such as water blasters, tippy buckets, arch jets, pump stations and water wheels. No-one will escape without becoming drenched in cool water. Wherever you turn, you’ll find another goofy water play toy to spray an unsuspecting participant.

The entire waterpark is uniquely designed for moms to sit in one place and be able to watch their 4-year-old play in the spray ground and their 8-year-old play on the play structure.

“We have been beating the bushes for lifeguards and attendants to properly maintain the level of safety and enjoyment for both the swimming pool and the splash pad,” Mayor Patricelli said.

“We have been working on the pool for weeks and will soon be ready for inspection. This year, we’re bringing back Bob Loya, who ran the pool years ago, and with his experience and knowledge we know it will be in good hands.”

Residents will need to a pass to access the pool and splash pad and spray ground. Passes may be obtained at city hall, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

“We have kept the passes moderately priced so residents can both afford and enjoy the facility,” Mayor Patricelli said. “When summer camp is present, we can have nearly 200 children in the pool grounds. We’re expecting many more with the addition of the splash pad.”

This year has been an incredible year for Watervliet. The city received grants from Senator Breslin and Assemblyman McDonald for several City Hall improvements that were desperately needed and honestly a higher priority. The generosity of Scott Earl and Mark Aragona made the new waterpark for children a reality.

“Our dream has come true beyond our expectations,” Mayor Patricelli said. “This spray area will be located at the south end of the pool. His generosity and his commitment to the city is overwhelming. I had approached Scott several months ago and asked him if he would be interested in helping with this project and he immediately said yes. I didn’t at that time have any idea on what was planned or how to get it on paper. I sought out ideas and plans from municipalities that have water parks, but then ran across Mark Aragona, the owner of Wizard Works. After a few meetings with Mark, we presented a design to Scott, and he felt it wasn’t adequate enough and he offered a larger donation to increase the size to include children from infant to 8-9 years old. This is the project we are opening on June 27.”