

# Town will receive \$224,592 grant to build park off Champion Road

By AUDREY LEWIS  
Observer-Dispatch

The Town of New Hartford will receive \$224,592 from the state Office of Parks and Recreation in matching funds for the development of a new community park off Champion Road.

The grant is funded under the Environmental Quality Bond Act of 1986.

Supervisor John Kazanjian said he is pleased with the award, but plans for the park are on hold because an adjacent landfill contains materials that could pose a potential health hazard.

The town has been negotiating for the property, but it does not own it yet.

Kazanjian said the new park — proposed as a part of the town's master park plan — would be located on a 40-acre tract between the town garage off Champion Road and the New York Mills School off Burrstone Road. It would provide recreational facilities needed by the community, but which are not currently available. The park would contain softball,

baseball, and soccer fields, bike paths, nature trails, a pavilion, a picnic area and restroom facilities.

Kazanjian said since the grant proposal was submitted, the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has informed the town tests at the inactive New Hartford Village dump located adjacent to the property — now the site of the current Department of Transportation facility on Chango Road — show elevated levels of heavy metal contamination that could be considered hazardous. DEC also said it found similar contamination on a parcel of vacant land adjacent to the old landfill that may belong to General Electric.

Kazanjian said the state is conducting more extensive testing at the site.

"We are waiting for DEC to release the results before purchasing the land or beginning construction on the park," he said. The town would not want to construct a park on the proposed site if the state says the old landfill could pose a health problem, he said.

As for what would happen to the state money if the park is not constructed at the proposed site, Kazanjian said "I don't know. We will have to investigate with our state legislators."

State Assemblyman Ralph J. Eannace, R-116 and state Sen. James H. Donovan, R-47, have both been supporters of the town's grant request and said this week that they were pleased with the grant was awarded.

Two other matching grants for parks in the area included two improvement projects for marina parks along the Barge Canal in Frankfort and Ilion.

Frankfort requested a \$100,000 matching grant for construction of pavilion, bike trails, boat docks, playing fields, ice skating and parking areas.

Ilion has also requested a \$100,000 matching grant to fund establishment of overnight facilities for trailers, picnics areas, "hike and bike" paths and a tourist building, and rehabilitation of bathroom facilities and fireplaces.