

# The Meadville Tribune

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## Good Morning

SERVING CRAWFORD COUNTY FOR 136 YEARS

Thank you  
for subscribing,  
Melissa Fink  
of Meadville



### Don't miss the 2020 Foundations

Foundations magazine,  
Coming Friday

### State reports five new virus cases

The Department of Health reported five new cases of coronavirus in Crawford County on Wednesday.

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## BRAVO!

Due to the uncertainty of many events during the coronavirus outbreak, the Tribune will not publish BRAVO! listings this week.

### CORONAVIRUS CASE COUNT

Worldwide	
Confirmed cases	9.29M
Deaths	478,289

United States	
Confirmed cases	2.35M
Deaths	121,279

Pennsylvania	
Confirmed cases	83,191
Negative	608,217

# GOING GREEN



## Mini park project back on track after delay



SEAN P. RAY/Meadville Tribune

Workers from Meadville Land Services clear concrete and debris from the former site of the Meadville Club recently in preparation for a future community greenspace.

By Sean P. Ray  
MEADVILLE TRIBUNE

After a delay of several months, The Arc of Crawford County's Community Greenspace project picked up again Tuesday as workers began clearing and grading the spot of the former Meadville Club on Market Street.

Local artist Amara Geffen, founder of the Art & Environment Initiative and an Allegheny College professor, is serving as the lead artist for the creation of the greenspace. The end goal is to create something like a miniature park in the middle of downtown Meadville for use by Arc clients

and local residents in general.

The COVID-19 pandemic put a stall on the next phase of the project, which was intended to occur back in March. Funding for the greenspace from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' (PCA)

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# Green

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Creative Communities program was held up, while local businesses that intended to donate their time and efforts to the operation were forced to close due to the statewide shutdown. With Crawford County now in the green phase, those businesses are open once more, while the PCA has indicated funding will be released once more sometime after mid-July.

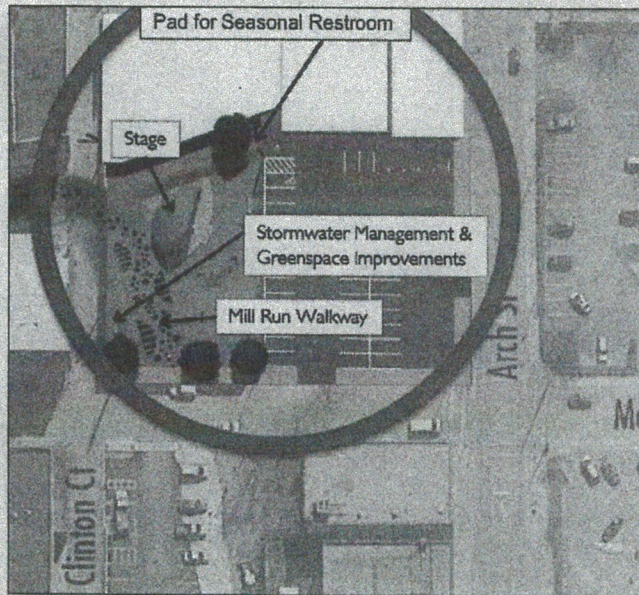
Meadville Land Services (MLS) Inc. is donating labor toward the current stage of the project, with workers clearing the vacant lot of any leftover concrete, rocks or debris. The equipment being used was provided by Lloyd's Rental, while Kebert Construction Company will dispose of the rubble the MLS employees are collecting.

Once the space is clear, MLS will cover most of the area with topsoil provided by Kebert Construction, followed by hydroseeding to encourage the growth of grass. One area of the lot, closer to Clinton Court, will be covered with 10 cubic yards of mulch donated by Powell's Sanitation, and will eventually become a pollinator garden and, later, a stormwater garden. Ashley Porter, CEO and principle engineer of Porter Consulting Engineers, is providing consultation support for the project as well.

These in-kind donations are used as matches for the PCA program funding. Marquette Savings also has provided \$5,000 in support.

The clearing and grading will finish either this week or next week, according to Geffen, depending on the weather.

Initially flowers and three trees were to be planted after the clearing was performed, back when it was planned in March. Due to the delay, Geffen said the planting will now take place in the fall, as summer will soon bring on a dry



ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & DESIGN/Contributed illustration

season.

However, the trees and flowers do not represent the end to the development of the greenspace. Many other ideas are in the works.

One plan in particular is the installation of a stage so the space can be used to host events. Geffen said there are plans to have the Second Saturday Night Live concerts at the greenspace, as well as several other shows and activities such as theatre group performances or movie nights. While it may be some time before the stage is installed, Geffen said such events could start next year, or even this fall.

Murals are also planned to be painted on many of the buildings surrounding the greenspace. Geffen said there is an agreement in place for murals on the Snodgrass Building adjacent to the greenspace, as well as on the back side of Bill Lawrence's Personal Fitness gym across the street.

There are plans of additional murals and art installations on other buildings around the greenspace, though Geffen said talks are ongoing with the owner of those buildings. One particular matter is the fate of the now-closed Park Avenue Cinema. Geffen said it is unknown whether the Cinema will remain standing

or be torn down.

"This is on hold until we get a better idea," Geffen said of plans to have art on the Cinema building. "I mean, if the building is going to come down, there's no point in spending money decorating it."

The relief mural on the Snodgrass building is expected to be installed this summer, sometime in late August. Geffen has worked with a team of local artists on designing the mural, including Heather Fish, Emma Cook, Gretchen Wood, Bonnie Mattocks, Amber Mosbacher, Diehl Edwards, Charmaine Koehler-Lodge and Lee Scandinaro. The mural's components will be cut using Allegheny College's Lab for Innovative and Creativity CNC machine, with assistance from 3D technical specialist and artist Eric Charlton.

Several other amenities are planned, such as a walkway accessible by people with disabilities, umbrella tables and benches for people to rest on, and a water bottle filling station. One of particular note is an idea to allow visitors to the greenspace to view Mill Run, which runs underneath the lot on its way to French Creek.

While exposing Mill Run completely is out of the question — as Geffen said creating a stream bank would take

up the entire space, there is talk on showing the running water in some way, such as by having a grate placed over it. Allowing Mill Run exposure to the sun has multiple benefits, according to Geffen, such as allowing it to collect rain and oxygenate thanks to the open air.

Many of these amenities are reliant on future grant and funding, such as one through the AARP for the benches and tables. Geffen said the success or failure of several grant applications for the project will become known in the fall.

Money for the planned walkway, stage, water bottle filling station and a few other features is anticipated to come through a Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grant, which Porter Consulting Engineers is assisting the Arc and Geffen in applying for.

Further, Geffen and Arc plan to work with Environmental Planning & Design, a Pittsburgh-based firm, starting in the mid-fall to design more formal plans for how the greenspace will look when finished.

"We have a good concept drawing, but we don't have all the fine-tune details," Geffen said.

In all, adding all of the extra features and amenities may take around four or five years, according to Geffen, though the space will be available for use well before that.

"It will take as long as it takes, because if COVID has taught us anything, it's that life is uncertain," she said.

Regardless of the length, Geffen believes the space will have a major impact on Meadville once finished. Not only will it beautify a blighted spot, but she said it will provide a positive economic impact once finished by providing a place for people to visit downtown.

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