

Colton-DEC Contract Signing Soon

By LARRY ROBINSON

COLTON - A contract between the town of Colton and the New York state Department of Environmental Conservation could be officially signed as early as next week - signaling the final hurdle in a long process aimed at implementing a \$1 million grant promised by state officials to the township more than two years ago.

The sizable state grant is being earmarked by local town officials to help beautify downtown Colton and South Colton and to make improve-

ments to the athletic facilities at Swift Field in South Colton.

Colton Town Attorney Eric Gustafson was given a copy of the final contract this week and is now going over the document, which once signed will release the \$1 million grant for use by the town.

The DEC is the agency that is charged with oversight of the grant and ensuring that the money is being utilized properly. However, town officials were the ones who decided how the money should be used, and later sub-

mitted their plans to the DEC for consideration.

Gustafson told town officials this week the DEC contract looks good, but that he does have some concerns about language contained in the agreement.

For example, he said there is one section of the contract that points out that if any point during implementation of the grant DEC officials do not like the progress - the town could be forced to repay all of the money within 365 days.

"Some of the language

leaves the town a little bit exposed," he said.

The Colton Town Board will hold a special meeting July 16 at which time - if Gustafson recommends - the contract will be signed.

The town has until Aug. 2 to either formally accept or reject the \$1 million grant contract with the DEC.

The \$1 million now being given to the town of Colton has taken years to implement and has its early roots in the administration of former Gov. George Pataki who promised the money to then Colton

town Supervisor Hank Ford in 2006.

Some two years later the money is just now on the verge of being handed over.

The bulk of the money will go to repairing, extending and improving sidewalks throughout the hamlet of Colton as well as repairs and updates to Swift Field in the sister hamlet of South Colton.

Work on some of the streetscape project could begin this summer and will likely be finished by the fourth quarter of 2009, according to town officials.