

My father, Pat Casilio Sr. moved to Clarence in October of 1957. The population of the town was just over 4,000 residents. Transit Road was a two-lane street. Main Street boasted history and character, and the town, even back then was one of the best places to live in Western New York.

Almost 60 years later, I could not be more proud to have been born and raised in this town, and now have the opportunity to lead the way in continuing to make our town one of the best places to live. Clarence proudly holds one of the lowest taxes in Erie County, with our General Fund tax rate at .95 cents per thousand and the Highway Fund at .99 cents per thousand. Our property values are up due to our beautiful parks and a fantastic school system.

Unfortunately, within the first few weeks of the New Year, we already faced some challenges with the announcement of Macy's closing at the Eastern Hills Mall. Although it is a significantly smaller store in comparison, it was also announced that Express is closing in that mall as well. Thankfully, it was announced this week that the Eastern Hills Mall is purchasing the Macy's facility, which was previously privately owned, with the plan of aggressively finding another tenant as soon as possible.

It is no secret that the Eastern Hills Mall has seen better days. We thankfully have many new faces on our IDA that will be looking into ideas and plans to help turn around an area that represents such an important entranceway and tax source for our town. Additionally, the IDA has finished a Main Street Economic Redevelopment Study, which will identify areas that need to be addressed with the help of future grants for redevelopment.

The success of revitalizing Main Street and the Eastern Hills Mall area is a major goal during my tenure as Supervisor. These commercial properties will play an important role in helping to keep the tax burden minimal for our residents.

In the few weeks that I have been working with the new board, I am very pleased with the team we have in place to help see this through, as well as other great initiatives for the good of our town's fruition.

We are currently working on the Comprehensive Plan 2025, formerly known as the Master Plan 2015, to help guide us in the right direction, with the goal of preserving the historic character of our town while protecting our future.

The reputation of Clarence as one of the best places to live in Western New York, which attracted my father over 60 years ago, is the same reputation I want to uphold for my children and future grandchildren (coming this summer) to proudly enjoy as well. For my family and your family, this town has a bright future ahead.