



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Tim Kennedy, Mayor Byron Brown, Councilmember Chris Scanlon Join South Buffalo Baseball Association Leadership to Announce \$3.3 Million in Renovations Coming to Okell Park

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY October 16, 2021

| ISSUE: **YOUTH SPORTS, PARKS AND RECREATION**



BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo), City of Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown, and South District Buffalo Common Councilmember Chris Scanlon joined South Buffalo Baseball Association President Joe Inera Saturday to announce substantial state funding that will transform Okell Park’s baseball facilities. Kennedy, who represents South Buffalo in the State Senate, secured \$3.3 million for the extensive renovations. In 2019, Councilman Chris Scanlon secured an additional \$18,000 for a complete topographic and geotechnical survey, along with an environmental review - two essential components for moving the project forward.

As part of the \$3.3 million renovation, a new synthetic turf will be installed, which will not only improve the experience of athletes, but will help cut down on routine maintenance costs at the park. Several baseball and t-ball diamonds will be revamped and relocated, and field lighting, new pathways, and a scoreboard will be installed. Additional improvements will be made to the concession building, including the installation of indoor batting cages, a nearby playground will be renovated, and utilities and drainage on-site will be upgraded. With state and city funding fueling this transformation, the project will ultimately create a state of the art recreational space for children in the City of Buffalo.

“As a kid, South Buffalo Baseball changed my life. The Association not only helps youth build critical skills, but it also builds character and fosters the invaluable experience of being part of a team. Every day, SBBA coaches show up for our young athletes, and today, we’re proud to show up for them by delivering this home run for Okell Park,” said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. “These significant, long overdue renovations will give players and coaches access to an impressive, state of the art home turf, and ultimately help South Buffalo Baseball expand its operations and its ability to engage our youth long-term.”

“As not only president of South Buffalo Baseball Association, and a proud resident of South Buffalo, I cannot begin to express how excited SBBA is to announce these long overdue and very much appreciated upgrades to Okell Park,” said **SBBA President Joe Inera**. “South Buffalo Baseball is a staple within our community. We will now have fields and facilities that our residents, neighbors, players and their families can be proud of. Together we can have Okell to not only develop baseball and softball players, but help make our young people into better citizens of South Buffalo and the surrounding communities.”

“I thank Senator Tim Kennedy for securing this funding which will make Okell Park a premier venue for youth baseball and T-Ball. These \$3.3 million in upgrades will benefit South Buffalo Baseball Association players, while boosting the profile of the youth baseball throughout the City of Buffalo,” **Mayor Byron W. Brown said**.

“On behalf of the residents of South Buffalo, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Senator Kennedy for securing this monumental funding to transform Okell Park into a top-notch facility for youth of our community,” said **Councilmember Chris Scanlon**. “The South Buffalo Baseball Association serves hundreds of families – including my own – by teaching and mentoring our youth, and thanks to the hard-work of Senator Kennedy, President Joe Inera and Mayor Brown’s Parks Department, the organization’s teams will be training and playing on some of the best diamonds in the area. I’m proud to have played a small part in getting this project off the ground and look forward to seeing it come to fruition.”

“This is an exciting time for the future of youth baseball in the City of Buffalo and the Bisons salute the efforts of Senator Kennedy, Mayor Brown, Councilmember Scanlon and the South Buffalo Baseball Association for their efforts to transform Okell Park. Hopefully these fields will become the beginning for hundreds of boys and girls to learn, play and love the sport of baseball and the Bisons look forward to being a resource to grow the sport,” said **Rich Baseball Operations President Mike Buczkowski**.

For more than 50 years, the South Buffalo Baseball Association has provided an opportunity for neighborhood children to learn and play baseball. They field 23 house and 8 travel teams with players

ranging in ages from 6 to 15 each season. In 2021, more than 250 children played baseball for the organization.

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