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AGAWAM ADVERTISER NEWS

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ZONING CHANGES

Talks renewed about solar restrictions

Council discusses allowing solar farms on agricultural land

By Michael J. Ballway
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With developers reportedly interested in large-scale solar farm projects on "half a dozen" properties in town, the City Council this week returned to its discussion on how to regulate the projects.

The town's zoning code currently makes no reference to solar farms — fields with more than one acre of ground-mounted so-

lar energy panels — leading to confusion about where they are permitted. In May, the council came within one vote of passing a zoning ordinance that would have allowed solar farms in industrial zones only. Those who voted against the zoning change said such a narrow restriction would leave the town open to lawsuits.

The debate picked up right where it left off at a council workshop on July 10.

"If we say only industrial, it won't survive a court challenge because it's too restrictive," said City Councilor Christopher Johnson, echoing the points he had

made earlier this year.

He suggested, as he had earlier this year, that the town's zoning code also allow solar farms in agricultural zones, on a special permit basis.

"We've had this discussion ad nauseam," said City Councilor Robert Rossi. "This thing really isn't a complicated issue, but we make it one. The point of not putting it in agricultural [zones] is because can put residential property in agricultural, and so many residential areas are surrounded by agricultural."

Councilor Richard Theroux, who had proposed the industrial-only zoning earlier this year,

agreed with Rossi. He said he did not oppose solar energy, but wanted to make sure residents' home values were protected.

"It should be in the right areas," Theroux said. "It shouldn't be in the back yard of the biggest investment they make in their lives."

Councilor Paul Cavallo said the town should adopt the zoning it feels is appropriate, and worry about lawsuits only if and when they occur: "I don't think we should be pressured by any of these people coming in to town."

Rossi also said any special

SOLAR | page 6

PERRY LANE

CPA, gifts to pay for play area

Lions Club still fundraising for \$285K 'tot lot'

By Peter Spotts
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Lions Club fundraising for the Perry Lane Park playground continues to surpass expectations, but the lion's share of the cost is expected to be borne by the town's CPA fund.

The club has taken in \$22,000 for the "tot lot" project over the past year, more than double the initial goal of \$10,000. The total cost of renovating the playground will be about \$285,000, however.

Lions Club Secretary Dick Lanier said the club has been overwhelmed by the community support for the project.

"What really surprised us was probably 60 percent of the funds was straight-up donations, which we did not count on," Lanier said. "The level of community support for this project has been absolutely phenomenal. It's very gratifying. I'm confident we're going to exceed" \$25,000.

Lanier said the club is meeting this week to discuss its next fundraiser, but is also shifting some of its focus from fundraising events and toward grant applications. The club recently achieved 501c3 nonprofit recognition from the Internal Revenue Service, and can now receive tax-deductible donations from companies and businesses, as well as apply for grants from charitable foundations.

The work to be done includes replacing worn structures on the large play area, adding poured-in-place rubber surfacing, and

PLAYGROUND | page 6

Heard THE NEWS?



The Bad News Jazz and Blues Orchestra played the opening night of SummerFest 2017, the town's weekly outdoor concert series, on July 5 at School Street Park. More photos, page 9. TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTO BY KATE ANDERSON

ATHLETIC MASCOT

School board votes to back Brownie logo

Local leaders oppose Senate bill to remove Native American imagery

By Mike Lydick
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While legislators in Boston are considering a bill to prohibit Native American logos and team names in high school sports, the Agawam School Committee took its own vote last month.

The board agreed unanimously on

June 27 to adopt Agawam's familiar Native American chief's-head logo as the school district's official mascot. School Committee members Wendy Rua and Shelley Borgatti-Reed, who sponsored the resolution, said the image represents tradition, not disparagement.

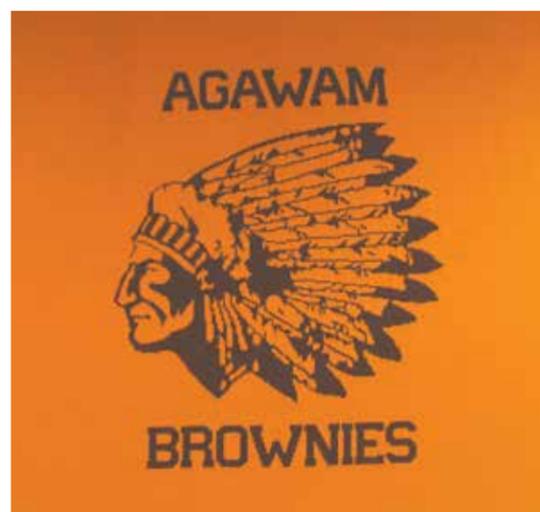
"The Native American has always held a place of honor and been a source of pride" for the schools and the community, the resolution states.

The resolution was a reaction to Senate Bill 291, a proposed law being discussed on Beacon Hill. Following a pattern set by similar legislation in Oregon, Minnesota and Wisconsin,

it would ban any "name, symbol, or image that depicts or refers to an American Indian tribe, individual, custom or tradition that is used by a public school as a mascot, nickname, logo, letterhead or team name." Specific examples in the bill include "Indians," "Indianettes," "Chieftains" and "Braves."

Introduced earlier this year, the bill needs to clear several legislative hurdles before a vote in the state House and Senate could take place early next year. Supporters say Native American mascots are offensive and promote a

MASCOT | page 7



An image of a Native American chief in full headdress is used as a mascot and logo for Agawam schools and their sports teams, including on this banner outside the high school athletic office. TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTO BY MIKE LYDICK



SPORTS

BASEBALL

Agawam tops Belchertown in finals

By **Tim Peterson**
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN - "Glory Days" by Bruce Springsteen was one of the songs played over the loudspeaker at beautiful Hulmes-Warner Mini Fenway Park following the District 2 championship game between the Agawam and Belchertown 9/10 year old All-Star baseball teams.

It was certainly a glory day for the Agawam All-Stars, who captured the District title for the first

time ever at this age level, with a 16-8 victory over Belchertown before a large crowd, last Sunday afternoon.

The majority of the Agawam players were also members of last year's 7/9 year old All-Star team, which also defeated Belchertown in the Districts finals.

"At the beginning of the All-Star tournament, all of these kids were individual baseball players, but they quickly jelled and we became one big team," said Agawam manager David Gallerani. "It just

feels great to win the championship game against a very good Belchertown team."

The 13 members of the Agawam championship baseball team, which is schedule to play their first sectional tournament game on Friday, are Landon Ashford, Cole Buffum, Vinny Catellotti, Nick Cecchi, Anthony DePalma, Jonah Higby, Owen Lavelle, Vinny Montagna, Michael Natale, Brady Paul, Aidan Pisano, Adam Ross, and Nate Ukrainets.

"I just love coaching all of these

kids," Gallerani added. "Anytime that your team wins a ballgame its special, but winning a championship game is extra special."

Pisano, who was Agawam's starting pitcher, was the winning pitcher in the championship game. The right-hander hurled the first 3 2-3 innings before reaching the 75-pitch limit. He allowed six runs on five base hits. Ukrainets, who's also a righty, allowed two runs over the final 2 1-3 innings.

Agawam advanced into the

District Finals following a 17-2 semifinal win over Southampton, which was played at Contant Park in Southampton, last Friday night. Eight days earlier, Southampton defeated Agawam 15-5, which was the only setback in their five pool games.

It was a disappointing loss for the Belchertown All-Stars, who entered the championship game with a perfect record for the second consecutive year.

"We've lost in the champion-

FINALS | page 11

BASEBALL

Three-run rally lifts Agawam Legion over East Longmeadow

By **Gregory A. Scibelli**
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AGAWAM - A three-run rally in the sixth inning help the Agawam American Legion Post 185 baseball team get past host East Longmeadow 8-7 last Thursday night at East Longmeadow High School.

Agawam was trailing 6-4 in the top of the sixth inning when the Brownies put some hits together, along with some good baserunning to take the lead.

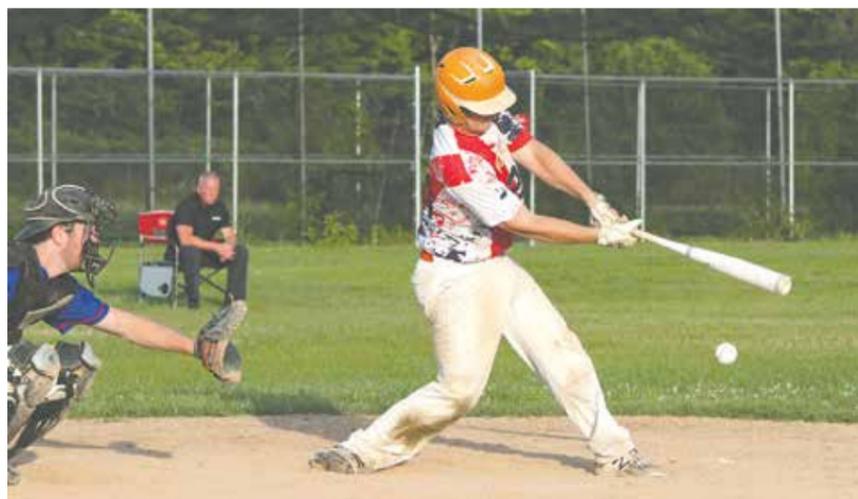
It started near the bottom of the order

with Tym Regnier. He singled to left on the ground between short and third. He would be erased on a fielder's choice, making Eddie Martinez the runner at first base.

Steven Grasso delivered a big blow, sending what seemed like a single down the left field line, but both runners were hustling all the way, as Grasso stretched the hit into a double to put runners on second and third with one out.

Austin Sabadosa would bloop the ball

LEGION | page 11



Matt O'Keefe fouls a ball off while at bat. PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

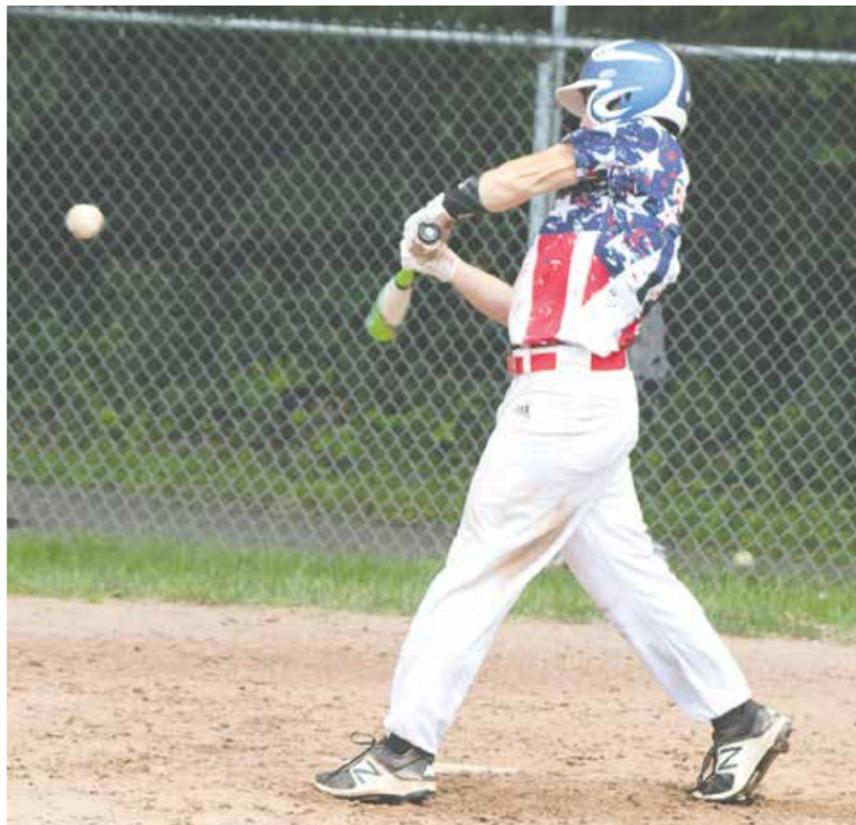


Pitcher Thomas Grenier would get a save with two good innings of relief in Agawam's come-from-behind win over East Longmeadow last Thursday night.



Kian O'Keefe sprints for first base after singling down the left field line.

BASEBALL



Matt Long swings on connects on a pitch. PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Junior Legion comes back to defeat visiting Wilbraham

By **Gregory A. Scibelli**
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AGAWAM - Despite trailing 6-4 in the fourth inning, Agawam's American Legion Post 185 Junior baseball team was able to come back and post a 12-6 win over Wilbraham at St. John's Field in Agawam.

The game almost did not happen as the School Street Park was found to be flooded about 10 minutes to game-time due to thunderstorms, but the teams and umpires were able to re-locate to nearby St. John's in order to get the game in.

Izzo said he was pleased everything worked out because of the need to get all games in before the playoffs are scheduled to start earlier this week.

Wilbraham's big inning came in the top of the fourth inning, when the Falcons would strike for four runs. It started with the pitching, Adam Zebian. He would reach base on a walk to get the inning going.

Back at the top of the order, Sam Dowding also walked. Anthony Izzo and Joe Manning would both get hits to drive in runs, and groundouts would push two

more runs across to make it 6-4.

But things went downhill for Wilbraham in the fifth inning as Agawam struck for a few runs, including a home run off Zebian take a 7-6 lead.

Agawam would add on to the lead in the sixth, taking advantage of the lack of numbers and inexperienced players Wilbraham had.

"It's a really tough thing when you have the two senior legion teams and then try to also field a junior legion team as well," said Wilbraham coach Darren Izzo. "It can be a little difficult because many of these players have not played at the high school level."

American Legion baseball has been played for years, typically with varsity level players taking part in the summer league following the high school season. But a few years back, a Junior Legion league was started, with several teams coming out with their junior varsity talent to keep that group continuing to play.

Agawam closed out its regular season

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