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AGAWAM

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Santaniello returns

TURLEY PHOTO BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Hope Santaniello, a graduate of Agawam High School and standout in girls and women's soccer, returned to Western Massachusetts after pursuing playing opportunities both abroad and most recently in Tampa, FL. She is back with a familiar group, playing with the New England Mutiny, which regularly plays at Ludlow's Lusitano Stadium. More on the Mutiny is in this week's sports section.

With resident speakers divided, majority of council supports Voter ID legislation

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

AGAWAM – The Agawam city council voted 7-4 to pass a resolution requesting the state require photo ID for voting.

This decision came amongst conflict from town residents, who were divided on the issue.

Many community members supported the resolution but many others raised concerns about the lack of specificity in the resolution.

The resolution does not specify what kind of photo ID would be considered acceptable. Therefore, a new law requiring photo ID to vote could negatively impact minority groups.

"Consideration should be given to those who risk facing disenfranchisement if such laws are adopted, particularly elderly voters who no longer drive, low income voters and people who have recently moved," Karen Sullivan said.

These residents mentioned that if the ID has to match a birth certificate, it could make it difficult for transgender individuals or

even married women to acquire a photo ID.

The community members who supported the resolution did so as they wanted secure elections. They believe these photo IDs could prevent voter fraud.

"My wife and I were voting and she observed our neighbors on the voter roll and they had been deceased for at least three years," Ronald Shein said. "It was highly alarming that anybody could have just walked in and made a vote in their names."

However, other residents countered that there is no evidence of election fraud in Agawam, nor is there evidence of election fraud impacting nationwide elections.

"It is more likely an American will be struck by lightning than that they will impersonate another voter at the polls," Nancy Stenberg said.

Many community members felt that these IDs would not dissuade any real election interference, and would only have a negative impact on voting citizens.

In contrast, other resi-

dents brought up that photo IDs are already required for many common activities, including driving, purchasing alcohol, donating blood and flying.

They also mentioned it is simple to acquire an ID, should someone not already have one.

"There is a one page form to fill out to register to vote," John Bach said. "There are many types of IDs in the range of \$5 to \$10, so it is not expensive and not difficult [to get one]."

To counter, other community members mentioned that these activities, while common, are not necessities. They are also not rights given in the constitution. Voting is.

They do not want to add any potential obstacle to voting, and felt this could be one.

Another community member argued that if this were to become law, Massachusetts is required to make IDs more accessible. Therefore, this would not be an added obstacle.

Residents also raised concerns that this was bringing partisan politics to Agawam, given the resolution's appar-

ent similarity to the SAVE American Act.

However, city councilors countered that this was a safety issue, not a political one.

"This is not democrat, this is not republican, this is America," City Councilor Dino Mercadante said. "You may think Agawam doesn't have a problem but the bottom line is quite frankly the country has a problem and we've got to start somewhere."

Mercadante also addressed concerns about the resolution not specifying what kinds of ID would count as valid.

"That's not really for us to decide, that's for the amendments upon amendments upon amendments in each legislature," he said.

City Councilor Tom Hendrickson was still hesitant due to the lack of specificity regarding ID type.

"We should at least have some specificity around what we're asking the state and the federal government to implement," he said.

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Library hosts Northeast House Historian Marian Pierre-Louis

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – On June 17 at Agawam Public Library, Northeast House Historian Marian Pierre-Louis presented her program, "10 Steps to Researching the History of Your House in Agawam". Pierre-Louis' presentation included examples of documents that could come in handy for the process such as deeds, maps, marriage certificates, and birth certificates. She explained each step in detail.

Pierre-Louis believes making each presentation personal to the town she's presenting is so important.

"Because it really engages the audience," she said. "Because people who aren't necessarily into history, when you post things like census

records and other documents and they see names from in town that they're familiar with, they connect more directly with what I'm talking about when they see the local names. And it's just a way to really captivate them a little bit more. Because my main role is educator, like I do not take clients, so the more I learn about each town the more it helps my overall understanding of house history in Massachusetts and in New England. I find local history to be really fascinating. Each town has its kind of its own personality. Its own development from rural community to an industrial community to whatever.

Pierre-Louis says making history accessible to the public is especially important now.

"Especially right now," she

said. "I mean this is America 250, so a really significant time in our history. And this is the perfect time to try to motivate people to research their home. I wish that everybody was trying to contribute in their way. And this is one small way that they can do it, juts by researching the history of their house."

Agawam Public Library Adult Services Library Associate Kristen Frost provided some insight into the Agawam Historical Association and Commission's role in this program.

"The 10 Steps to Researching Your Home in Agawam Program was cosponsored by the Agawam Public Library, via the Agawam Center Library Association,"

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TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

Marian Pierre-Louis, Kristen Frost, Joe Potter and David Cecchi at APL's presentation, "10 Steps to Researching the History of Your House in Agawam".

Feeding Hills residents raise concerns about possible zone change

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Many Agawam residents came to the June 15 city council meeting to discuss concerns about a zone change.

Chanda Care Inc. came before the city council to request a zone change of the property at 430 North West Street, Feeding Hills from Business B to Residence A-2.

Several Agawam community members shared their concerns for how this zone change would impact the neighborhood.

Rob Levesque came for-

ward on behalf of Chanda Care to explain why they were requesting the zone change.

Chanda Care wants to build three homes on the property that would have four bedrooms each. The goal of the homes would be to provide assisted living care for elderly individuals.

"If this is pursued under Residential they would be restricted to four bedrooms per house," Levesque said. "If this is pursued under the Business B it would be a commercial use and we would have to meet commercial parking requirements and stormwater."

Levesque explained that many of the surrounding properties already zone as Residence A-2, so they would be fitting in with the nearby area.

Additionally, he explained that this zone change would prevent future business from moving in and altering the area.

"Specifically the business B uses include a number of uses like hotels, drive-throughs, gas stations and other things that are really not appropriate to the neighborhood," Levesque said.

Chantal Barnard, CEO of Chanda Care, also came

forward to explain why she wanted to build the care center in Agawam.

"Western Mass, we're facing a shortage of 23,000 units," Barnard said. "Over the next decade the number of adults needing supported housing options will continue to rise[...]. My hope is that Agawam continues to be a community where people can age with dignity."

Many residents agreed that this could be an asset for Agawam. For that reason, they wanted to support the zone change to help the project come to fruition.

"I support this zone

change for two reasons: first, It will provide a service for elder care," Corrine Wingard said. "Secondly: as it is currently zoned for business, we could get something even less desirable in the neighborhood...I believe this will be a good thing for our town."

Community members agreed that there is a growing need for elder care, and that this could help many families in Agawam.

However, other residents were concerned that this zone change wouldn't be right for the community.

"This seems to be an attempt to do an illegal spot

zone where one parcel is being changed in zoning and it doesn't match the ones that are contiguous to it, because we have Business B across the street," Vitaliy Yusenko said.

Julie Brown was another resident who felt the zone change was unnecessary. She felt that as it will be a business facility, the zoning should reflect this.

"I'm not opposed to what you want to do, I'm opposed to the zoning change," she said. "She can do what she

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SPORTS

Gomarlo wins first modified race of career

WINCHESTER, NH - Eddie Gomarlo won his first career Modified victory on the high banks of Monadnock Speedway Saturday.

Other winners on the first round of Monadnock's 2026 Triple Crown Series included Limited Late Model ace JD Stockwell, who won for the fourth time this season, Craig Smith, a first time winner in the Mini Stocks, and Michael Yeaton, who won a three-across thriller to stay perfect at three-for-three in the Pure Stocks.

Matt Robinson became the Pro V8 Sportsman's third different winner this summer, and Young Gun dynamo Dylan Stati scored his track-high sixth 2026 feature win.

Cole Littlewood and Kimmy Rivet sat on row one as the 50-lap Allstates Materials Group 604 Modified main event went green. Littlewood wasted no time in seizing the lead, with previous winner Andrew Brousseau charging up to second as Rivet got hung outside in the top groove.

Brousseau took charge on lap ten, opening some breathing room as Ty Leclerc and Gomarlo battled for second behind him. Gomarlo claimed the duce spot for good on lap 23 and immediately set his sights on Brousseau.

Gomarlo rocketed to the front from the top groove on lap 26, holding strong the rest of the way to earn his first Monadnock Modified feature by three lengths, as a wild finish behind him saw Leclerc explode out of the final turn to edge Modified points leader Tyler Leary for second. Brousseau was fourth under the checkers, with Ben Byrne fifth. Colton Martin, who'd won his Monadnock first a week earlier, was sixth.

JD Stockwell, dominated the Twin State Truck Services Limited Late Models again Saturday, winning for the second week in a row and fourth time this season.

Michael Lashua and Wesley Stedt sat up front as the 40-lap LLM feature went green. Stedt, bringing previous winner Hillary Renaud with him, would lead the first 15 laps, as Stockwell, charging from row three, closed in.

Stockwell rocketed into the lead on lap 16, with Renaud still good for second, and Robert Hagar closing in. While Stockwell would blast off into another universe to win with ease, the best battle in this one was waged for second by Renaud and Hagar.

Hagar had taken the spot but Renaud, low along the backstretch, took it back on

lap 36 and held strong to score the runner-up finish. With Hagar third, Lashua and Stedt completed the top five.

In one of a handful of wild finishes Saturday on the high banks, Michael Yeaton won by a foot in a three-wide charge to the checkers in a Brattleboro Towing and Recovery Pure Stock thriller.

Rookies Linsey Wenzel and Josh Brigham started up front, with Wenzel setting a fast pace as Yeaton rocketed forward from row five. Yeaton took charge on lap nine, but Kyle Boniface was red hot too.

Boniface got up for second on lap 17, bringing Jimmy Zellman with him, and the stage was set for excitement. A stout whack in the side moved Yeaton up-track on lap 24, and Boniface to the front. Yeaton, though, would have none of it.

Going to work at the top of the track, sometimes finding it more than narrow up there, Yeaton refused to lose. He, Boniface, and Zellman hit the finish line three across, with Yeaton making it three wins in a row, Boniface second by less than a foot, and Zellman riding beside him to come home third and stay atop the points parade, Brigham and Dylan Zullo were fourth and fifth.

A pair of track champions, Jon Fultz the current and Louie Maher the former Keene Towing and Recovery Mini Stock speedway king, went head-to-head in their Triple Crown 30-lapper Saturday, but Craig Smith, in his maiden voyage aboard the Aiken Motorsports entry, had big plans of his own.

Smith made a furious last-lap charge to steal the show Saturday. Fultz was second in the blast to the checkers, with Maher in his shadow for third. A pair of Tims, Paquette and O'Shea, completed the top five.

Matt Robinson led all the way to score his first Beck's Automotive Pro V8 Sportsman victory Saturday on the high banks. Aaron Thompson, gunning for his second score of the summer, was less lucky.

Bouncing off the Stephen LaPlante ride on lap 19, Thompson went heavily into the turn four wall. Ron Burgess Jr., aboard his Bad Bumble Bee ride, was second on the night, and Stephen Dubois third.

Dylan Stati continued his mastery of the Doug's Auto Body Young Guns Saturday, soaring to his track-high sixth win of the season. Maeve Barry was second in the youth division 15-lapper.



Avery Klingensmith tries to get control of the loose ball as the New England Mutiny takes on the Hudson Valley Crusaders.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Mutiny suffers loss to Crusaders

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Following three straight 2-1 road losses, the New England Mutiny were looking to celebrate a home victory versus the Hudson Valley Crusaders.

The Mutiny managed to take a 1-0 lead before the Crusaders responded with four unanswered goals leading to a 4-2 victory in a USL W League match held at Lusitano Stadium, last Saturday night.

"This is a very challenging league," said Avery Klingensmith, who was an outstanding soccer player at Belchertown High School. "We've had several games this season where we had taken an early lead and wound up losing, which is a little bit frustrating. Protecting a lead is something that we need to work on. We really wanted to win tonight's game."

The Mutiny (1-5-2) are first-year members of the USL W League. Their only victory came at home against AC Connecticut, 5-0, on May 30. They lost two close road matches against Hudson Valley, 2-0, and 2-1.

The Crusaders (5-2-2), along with Hartford Athletic and Vermont Green FC, are trying to finish the regular season in first place in the Northeast Division. Only the first place team earns a berth in the league playoffs.

Klingensmith, who wrapped up her collegiate soccer career at American University in Washington

D.C. last fall, is planning to join a professional soccer team in Greece at the end of the summer.

"I'm really looking forward to starting my professional soccer career in a different country," Klingensmith said. "It's going to be a different type of experience for me."

Hope Santiniello, who's from Agawam, has been a member of the Mutiny since 2019. She played in her first home match of the 2026 season against the Crusaders.

"The atmosphere at this stadium is always amazing," said Santiniello, who was a starting defender for the first time in last Saturday's match. "It's always been a pleasure playing for this team."

Just like Klingensmith, Santiniello is seeking an opportunity to play soccer at the professional level. She's hoping to join a women's team in Florida.

Another local player listed on the Mutiny roster is Tennessee Murphy, who began her high school soccer career at Monson High School before transferring to the Loomis Chaffee School in Connecticut. She'll be a freshman on the Bucknell University women's soccer team in the fall.

"Being a member of this soccer team is preparing me for the college level," Murphy said. "I'm counting down the days until I leave for college. I'm looking forward to the challenge."

Murphy is scheduled to leave for Pennsylvania on July 27.



Chloe Laizer corrals the ball.

The Mutiny took a 1-0 lead less than ten minutes into the opening half.

Hudson Valley goalie Brianna McDonald attempted to clear the ball, but it went directly to Mila Dillard, who put a shot into the open net for an unassisted goal.

Dillard, who lives in Chiswick, is going to be a senior on the Pope Francis girls' varsity soccer team, which is

coached by her father, Brent. She has verbally committed to playing soccer at the University of Kentucky a year from now.

The Crusaders tied the score during the 18th minute of the opening half with Joy Okonye putting a header into the left corner of the net past Mutiny goalie Chloe Laizer.

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Tough start for Agawam summer soccer squads

AGAWAM - Between the two A Division soccer teams in the Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League, there is just one win to start the summer.

After two weeks of play, Agawam's A Division summer soccer team is out to a just a 1-3 and they well below the top eight in a very crowded A Division. This year's competition includes more than a dozen teams.

In the girls A, Agawam is just 0-3-1, though they are

just outside the top eight.

This is also the first year in many that Agawam has not fielded B squads. B teams for Agawam have typically consisted of JV players or incoming freshman to Agawam High School's programs. But both the boys and girls did not enter those teams in this year's PVSSL.

The A squads were back in action earlier this week with the Fourth of July holiday break coming up soon.

Blue Sox suffer loss to Newport

HOLYOKE - The Valley Blue Sox (7-5-1) were unable to score a run against the Newport Gulls (7-7-1) on Saturday night, suffering a 10-0 loss. This was the second meeting of the season for these two teams, tying their first game 2-2 on Opening Day.

To start the ballgame, the Blue Sox went down 5-0 immediately, after a rough inning from Kaden Kimble in his first start of the summer. Gus Gandy and Devan Zirwas hit back-to-back singles, and Brandon Larson was walked, loading the bases for Newport.

The Gulls' first two tallies

came from Kimble consecutively walking Ryan Novak and Ryan Jaros, which forced in the runs that put Newport up 2-0. With the bases still loaded, Braxton Tramel singled to left field and sent Novak and Larson home to extend the lead to 4-0.

Newport's fifth and final run of the first inning was the result of Adam Broski hitting a RBI single to right field. The Blue Sox going down 5-0 so early on completely knocked the wind out of them as they remained hitless until the bottom of the eighth inning.

In the top of the sec-

ond, the Gulls had the bases loaded once again after Cade Brown and Novak were walked, and Jaros singled. The sixth run for Newport was scored on a fielder's choice play that stemmed from a Cole Johnson at-bat.

The Gull's offense continued to pile on Valley in the fifth as they scored five more runs, solidifying their win long before the final inning. Gandy and Zirwas quickly found themselves on base due to Gandy hitting a double and Zirwas getting walked.

Newport's runners were able to steal second and

third base, but an error from the Blue Sox allowed Gandy and Zirwas to advance, adding another run for the Gulls. Cade Brown then hit a single that sent Zirwas home, increasing the gap to 8-0.

The Gulls continued their hitting by getting two doubles in a row, one from Larson and the other from Novak, which allowed Cade Brown to score the ninth run of the game for Newport.

Ryan Jaros got the RBI single that had Novak scoring Newport's tenth run, slamming the door on any hope of a Valley comeback in just five innings of play.