

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING OF THE AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL

May 3, 2010

President Rheault – Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the May 3rd, Monday evening Council meeting.

Item 1. Citizen's Speak Time

President Rheault – We have several speakers wishing to address the Council this evening. To remind those that haven't before, you have up to five minutes and the Council Clerk will warn you with a minute to go and state your name, your address and the purpose of your visit. The first speaker is Todd Crevier.

Todd Crevier – Good evening Council, fellow citizens. My name is Todd Crevier. I live at 26 Yale Avenue in Feeding Hills. The reason for my appearance here tonight is to discuss my appointment to the Veterans' Council. It has come to my attention through both the Agawam Advertiser and in discussing this situation with other people who are aware of what went on during the last Council meeting that it was certainly viewed as my appointment was political somewhat in nature and I have come here tonight to address the Council and tell you a little bit about myself hopefully to eliminate the political aspect of this appointment and to talk to you about who I am and what I would bring to the Veterans' Council. As I said my name is Todd Crevier and I do live at 26 Yale Ave. in Feeding Hills. I moved to Agawam when I was in sixth grade and I graduated from Agawam High School in 1994. I left Agawam for college in 1994 and I came back here to live as of December of 2008. I am married to my wife Christina and together we have six kids. Of our six children five are currently in the Agawam Public School system. We have children in the public school system from Perry Lane all the way up to the Jr. High School. I also work here in town. I am a licensed Massachusetts realtor with Keller-Williams Realty on 360 North Westfield Street in Feeding Hills. As far as my military service, I enlisted in the United States Army Reserves 39 days after September 11th happened in 2001. I was activated for deployment to Iraq in December of 2003. I'm a decorated combat veteran from Operation Iraqi Freedom. I've been awarded both the bronze star medal and a combat action badge. I am currently serving in the United States Army Reserves as a staff sergeant in the S Force Supply Section of the second or the three tenth battalion of the 174th infantry regiment up at Fort Devins, Massachusetts. As far as my community service, I have served on the Board of Directors and as the Chief Communications Officer for the Iraq War Veterans Organization since its founding in 2005. I am a member of the Planning Committee for the Agawam Army Community Covenant Signing or I apologize for the Army Community Covenant Signing with the City of Agawam that will take place here in town at the High School on June 12, 2010. I'm actively involved with the Granger PTO and have been nominated to serve as the President of the Jr. High School PTO for the 2010-2011 school year. I am also an active member with the local Keller-Williams Charity "KW Cares". I'm a proud supporter of the Homes for our Troops which is a charity that helps build and retrofit houses to accommodate the living needs of disabled veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. I

certainly want to address the fact that it has been said to me from other people and somewhat hinted at in the Agawam Advertiser that my appointment was type of political payback. I certainly am friends with Mayor Cohen. I know him not very well but I've known him and got somewhat involved in his campaign –

Clerk – One minute please.

Todd Crevier – As far as my politics go, I'm an independent. When I deployed for Iraq in 2003 I grew up as a Republican, I was a Republican at that point in time. When I came back in 2005, I became un-enrolled, I am un-enrolled, I have no political alliances with any political party here in town and I request that you consider all these things about myself and my political position the next time you vote for my appointment to the Veterans' Council. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Aldo Mancini?

Aldo Mancini – My name's Aldo Mancini, 482 South West Street. I am the Chairperson of the Agawam Veterans' Council and I would like to thank you for your service, okay? (Mr. Crevier) You are a veteran. We're all veterans here. I would like to state that I take no pleasure in having to address this issue but I feel it's my duty to represent my fellow Veterans' Council members. I also feel an obligation to our many volunteers, who also are veterans, some having worked with us for many years. We're all veterans here, it's all about the process, and basically it's all about the process of what's going on right now. Point 1 – Chris Sanchez served twelve years on the Veterans' Council. He was a volunteer for three + years before he was appointed. Frank Mazzei – eight years of service, another one with three to four years of volunteer service before he was appointed to the Veterans' Service, not to mention their years of just being there to help. Let's see – they are probably the two most knowledgeable people on our Veterans' Council and I'm constantly going to both of them for advice. I know that by them not being re-appointed they'll still give me advice but I would still like to have them there. Point 2 – as Chairperson of the Veterans' Council I knew nothing of this, of what was going on when this happened. Calls from Chris and Frank when they received their letters stating their services were no longer needed. You'd think I as the Chairman of the Council would know something about it and I didn't. I was not in the loop whatsoever. Point 3 – past practice has been Mayor Cohen included vacancies on the Veterans' Council would be posted, all letters of interest would be brought to the Mayor's office, a list of interested parties would be given to the Veterans' Council for review, Veterans' Council Chairperson would call a meeting and interview each applicant, Veterans' Council choice or choices would be presented to the Mayor for selection and then submitted to the City Council. There have been some variations throughout the years but always the Veterans' Council has always been in the loop when there's been a vacant seat available. I might also add all of our current Veterans' Council members have been volunteers before a seat on the Veterans' Council became available. We all earned our position. We have a number of vets who have put in their time and have earned the right to be considered for appointment on the Veterans' Council and have been robbed of this opportunity because they knew nothing about these seats being open. I also want to mention that in the past,

to the best of my knowledge, no one has ever been not re-appointed; it has been the decision of the individual to step down. I personally find this very insulting to the two dedicated veterans who have given so much to Agawam and its veterans. I thank the City Council for their support and hopefully their continued support in this matter. The City Council has always been here for our veterans –

Clerk – One minute.

Aldo Mancini – and I know you always will be there for our veterans. Contrary to some people I have a number of veterans with me tonight who have no question about - they have no question about your patriotism basically, okay and we're all backing you guys as far as we have to go. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Christopher Sanchez?

Christopher Sanchez – Christopher Sanchez, 36 Hemlock Ridge, Feeding Hills. I'll be brief tonight. The Veterans' Council has been around approximately 20 years. During that time I was a member for 12 years. Eleven of those years as its Chairman. I served during a tenure of three Veterans' Agents, three mayors and dozens of different City Councilors. I was the longest serving member and the longest serving Chairman in the Veterans' Council history. Based on that I feel I am qualified to offer the following opinion. In recent days, many of you have taken criticism for your vote during the last City Council meeting regarding appointments to the Veterans' Council. Some of you have even been labeled as unpatriotic. During my twelve years of service I have never experienced any town official, any town official, to be unpatriotic. To the contrary, they have been nothing but patriotic supportive of veterans and their causes. This town has a long history of supporting the Veterans' Council and the work that they do. This town has become a guide for surrounding towns and how they conduct their veterans' events. Some towns are even envious of Agawam. For anyone to suggest your vote was unpatriotic is simply misguided. It was not about patriotism but about the process and principles. As elected officials, representatives of the people, you saw an issue that was at best highly questionable and said so with your votes. For that you should be commended. Look around this room. The people here tonight are not here to just support veterans. They are also here to express confidence that as a City Council, you will continue to intervene in a questionable process. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Priscilla Peterson?

Priscilla Peterson – I am Priscilla Peterson, World War II veteran of the United States Coast Guard. I live at 51 Monroe Street. I am here to stress the re-appointment of Chris Sanchez and Frank Mazzei. Chris has said it all. They have been wonderful and the reason I was re-appointed was I spent many years on the Veterans' Council. I got up at 7:15am many mornings when we had to meet at the American Legion to put wreaths on the monuments. Also when we had the golf tournaments which Chris conducted, I went all around Agawam soliciting prizes for it and I am happy to be a member of the Veterans' Council because I was brought up to be patriotic. Thank you for your time.

President Rheault – Thank you. Terry it looks like Paige. Is that correct?

Terry Paige – My name is Terry Paige. I live at 11 Corey Colonial here in Agawam. I'm a Marine Corp veteran and I just want to state that I'm here to support the Veterans' Council in their decision. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Joseph Robichaud?

Joseph Robichaud – Hello. Joe Robichaud. I live at 51 Brookline Avenue in Feeding Hills, MA., US Air Force Veteran, Viet Nam veteran that is and I'm here to say the same thing that Mr. Paige had to say. I'm supporting the Veterans' Council and I pay taxes in town and I vote. That's it. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Cecilia Calabrese?

Cecilia Calabrese – Good evening Councilors. Cecilia Calabrese, 75 Wagon Wheel Drive and I'm here today as a member of the Agawam Robotics Education Association to let everyone know that on June 19th the High School Rosie Robotics team will be having its annual golf tournament fundraiser – the Tournament of Rosie. I've left for you at your places a flyer if anyone is interested there will be information in the Town Hall regarding sponsorship and setting up a foursome. It will be a scramble format, \$85.00 per player gets you a golf cart, lunch, dinner and prizes and this is actually an incredibly worthwhile program at the High School. In the news the news of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is just one example of where robotics is really at the fore front. They are using robotics to help with the oil spill. Robotic surgery is now becoming a standard of care so I do hope that everyone will be able to support this program. In closing, I would like to thank all of our veterans for the service that they do for our country, putting their lives on the line to protect the freedoms that we all too often take for granted. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Beverly Follis?

Beverly Follis – Hello. I'm Beverly Follis at 92 Anvil Street in Feeding Hills. I too am a veteran. I served in the Air Force for 24 years and I would like to say that I believe we have mixed blessings here. My experience, I am also on the Veterans' Council, my experience with committees is that volunteers are hard to come by. Now the Veterans' Council has more people than spaces. I first heard of the Veterans' Council shortly after I moved to Massachusetts in 1992. I was soon to be a retired military person and I visited Ruth Bitzas who was then the Veterans' Agent. She and Priscilla Peterson who spoke earlier invited me to march in the parade but there was no place for me in the parade so I marched with the Veterans' Council. This happened for a couple of years and I went to a couple of Veterans' Council meetings. There were no openings to be on the Council but I discovered they could use additional help with golf tournaments, reading names from the Honor Roll at the Memorial Day ceremonies, putting flags on graves, attending church services for memorial services and visiting veterans in nursing homes. I served on the sidelines for about ten years before an opening became available but that was

okay. I felt needed. I believe the two applicants, Mr. Crevier and Mr. Longtin, are needed too. I would like to invite them to come and join us as I believe they would provide good input to the Council but not as a voting member at this time. They will learn a lot about what we do and when an opening becomes available, they will be ready to step into it. Christopher Sanchez provides a unique expertise to both the veteran standpoint and also from his expertise as a State policeman. He knows the laws pertaining to safeguarding pedestrians and traffic flow and what jurisdiction the town has and what the highway department has especially when it comes to blocking traffic during the parades and so forth. And Frank Mazzei lends a special understanding of when it comes to serving veterans with disabilities. He also is a member of other organizations and he provides valuable interface between them and the Veterans' Council for coordinating successful parades and ceremonies. He was responsible for assembling the flags at his home – the ones that go up along the street. We can't just dump these people from the Veterans' Council – we will lose too much. I recommend that we can keep these people on the Council and if we can at some later time when an opening becomes available or if we can provide two other openings on the Council that we can accept more people –

Clerk – One minute please.

Beverly Follis – Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Frank Mazzei?

Frank Mazzei – Frankie Mazzei, 476 Springfield Street, Feeding Hills. I'd like to thank all of you. I'd like to thank all of the veterans that are here tonight and those of you that are sitting up there on the seats for raising your hand to say I do to put your life in harm's way even if it was whether for the U.S. or if it was for another country, you understand the meaning of what it's like to raise your hand and put everything on the line. I know most every one of you that's up there, the years of service that you have put in, which you have done patriotically and those of you that are children of veterans, I know how much you have done all through your lives for veterans. For anybody to call you unpatriotic is somebody that was uneducational. But I have done an awful lot with the community and all kinds of volunteer activities. I was raised to help out with the community. I don't mind if somebody attacks me, somebody wants to call me names, or cast me aside. They're not the first and they won't be the last. As long as it's just to me, that's fine but when they do it to my family, they do it to my friends and they do it to my community, then I will stand up and do what I was trained to do and that's to fight back – only if I have to. The process that all you folks up here do help out with the process, with that. One of the writers in the recent paper says that I serve on the Disability Commission and a couple others, that was not entirely accurate. The Disability Commission pretty much had fallen to the wayside for various reasons and my letter in for the Veterans' Council was in before it was for Disability Commission. They sent me an email back from the Mayor's office to send in a renewal letter for Disability Commission after I had my letter in for the Veterans' Council which I thought my Veterans' Council term was up next year. Apparently it was the first time I was wrong in

my record keeping but I want to thank all of you for all that you have done for the community in all the various aspects. Not everybody can serve in the military to be a veteran for the various reasons but everybody can be a volunteer and help out with the community and step forth in one way or another. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Brandon Donovan?

Brandon Donovan – Brandon Donovan, 14 Mallard Circle, Iraq War veteran, United States Marine Corp. I'm here to support the Veterans' Council and since I've been back since 2007 when I was discharged I've been volunteering, helping out as much as I possibly could to the community and the Veterans' Council and I would just like the opportunity to be able to put my letter in to get a chance to be a part of the Council. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Jack Kunasek?

Jack Kunasek – I'm out of practice right? My name is Jack Kunasek. I'm at 16 Sequoia Drive in Feeding Hills, Marine Corp veteran – Korean War, 14 months combat duty '51 – '52. I'm here to support the present Council as it stands. I do volunteer work for the Council when it comes to Memorial Day Parade. I've had a few years experience with it so I do help them out there. I'm not around the much but I do support the current association as it is. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Mark Dintzner?

Mark Dintzner – Good evening. I'm Mark Dintzner, 970 Springfield Street, Feeding Hills. I wanted to speak to you briefly about the school reorganization plan that was put forward by the committee to work at the problems at the Early Childhood Education Center and your vote affirming that plan last time. At the last Council meeting a gentleman came and stood here and spoke about ideas stating or at least inferring that the generation of ideas is good and he is right. Criticism without the offering of alternatives can be counterproductive and has the appearance of being simply negative. But all ideas are not good ideas and I thank the two councilors who at least abstained from the vote to move forward on the grand reorganization, the musical building scenario an even more assertive stance however would be simply to vote no. To Mr. Bitzas' assertion that no tax payer money is being spent with this proposal, I'd remind the councilor that several highly paid public employees spent considerable time on this over the top proposal and that costs money. When we have a less than optimum graduation percentage, the concern over bullying such that we need a town wide forum to address it and a drug problem that is rampant, we needn't be concerned with providing a cafeteria to town employees or a new recreation center as part of a school proposal. But ideas in general are good and I'd like to offer an alternative. In 1963, an addition was made to the Granger Elementary School. Not all that much forethought was put into it for its long term future because conjecture has it that as constructed it won't support a second floor. However speaking to someone in construction it's believed that an exo-structure can be built around the existing addition and a second floor constructed supported by that exo-structure which

would then be covered to make an esthetic appearance to the entire building. The second floor would intersect the original building and the school already has an elevator. Then relocate the ECC to the Granger complex. Now the benefits of this are a single office of administration for both Granger and the ECC, one cafeteria, one infrastructure. The only ECC staff required would be the student facing teachers. Maybe with a modest plan put forth, the ECC problem could be solved and the school budget can be TRULY level-funded. And so ideas are good and I look forward to further discussion on this one and/or others. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. John Rutovich?

John Rutovich – Good evening Councilors. My name is John Rutovich, 895 North Street, Feeding Hills. I'm a U.S. Marine Veteran, U.S. Air Force Veteran and I'm here tonight as a witness to the proceedings and I pray that this eleven member Council comes across with the proper decision when it comes time. Thank you very much.

President Rheault – Thank you. Mike Natale?

Mike Natale – Hi. I'm Mike Natale, 155 Pineview Circle and I'm here to support the Council and hope you make the right vote. I'm a Viet Nam veteran, Purple Heart award and I just hope you guys make the right decision and keep it strong. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Paul Wakem?

Paul Wakem – Paul Wakem. I was gonna talk on this issue but it looks like it's being talked out so my next issue would be the responsibility of stewardship to our republic. In our republic right now we're having a political free for all and we as responsible citizens for our republic need to take ownership and responsibility to vote. We have a lot of people complaining about what's happening in government today. I sit and listen to them and when they finally finish, I ask them well did you vote? No, I don't have time or my vote doesn't count. Well, my response to them then you don't have a right to bitch. Not only do you have the right to vote but you have a responsibility to be a steward for the republic. We as citizens of Agawam need to get together house by house, street by street, village by village, precinct by precinct, come together and hold you the elected officials accountable to us. I believe your mandate when you became elected officials and took your oath of office was to be the megaphone FOR the people not a megaphone TO the people. I have seen great work from you people. I have also seen work that I'm not satisfied with but that's life. The only thing that I ask is the people out there in the City of Agawam known as the Town of Agawam be responsible for their due duty of voting. Due diligence. Be active. No matter what party you choose. My cousin Corinne Wingard, she's a strong advocate for the Democrats. I'm a strong advocate for the Republicans. This gentleman right here is a strong advocate for the Independents. That does not mean that we cannot look forward for the betterment of our community – the Town of Agawam. Thank you very much for your time.

President Rheault – Thank you. Forrest Bradford?

Forrest Bradford – Hello. My name is Forrest Bradford. I live at 21 Oxford Street, Agawam, MA. We all have our own stories. I think that this gentleman before me said some very valid points. I would like to point out that there's a lot of heroes and it isn't just vets and it's people that are teachers, policemen, firemen, just the mother who's home taking care of her kids. My father was a World War II vet and earned three Purple Hearts. When he came home my grandmother is recorded in her old Maine accent as stating how he sat in the parlor looking out the window for two weeks and wasn't able to speak – he saw friends shot and killed and he himself suffered wounds – and it's much more traumatic than that. I think anytime someone has to shoot someone it's a life-changing event. I did see what happened two weeks ago here and I would like to state that all vets are important – young vets are important – and I did hear what was said afterwards about being unpatriotic and I would like to just ask people to remember you know the people who are mothers now of vets, they're the ones who are worried about their kids' lives and I think Sue Longtin was right in coming up here and protesting what happened last week. I would say that we all have feelings and I think how it was handled last week was a little bit inappropriate by the Council. It may have been inappropriate by the Mayor. These are just opinions of mine but what I would ask that in the future perhaps an explanation or something. Gina Letellier actually did explain after things had happened but that didn't stop the hurt from what had happened and so my request is you know in the future when there's a sensitive issue perhaps explain to people first because I respect the young people and feel we need to make room for young people. As a matter of fact, I've spoken to veterans who have said about global warming – oh these are people who I swear are the most patriotic and I think they are but they forget that it's not just about them and they actually said well that's twenty years down the road, I'm not gonna be alive anyway. Patriotism is about caring about your neighbor. It's about caring about your children. It's about making room for future and I say sometimes we just have to bite our pride and realize that we're all patriotic I think. You know I'm really proud of Agawam and I would just say that perhaps some of these heated things wouldn't have happened if there had been better explanations about the way things went and I'm defending the person that came up here and was upset. She's a mother. Her son risked a death and I think we need to respect that greatly. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Vinny Tirone?

Vinny Tirone – Vinny Tirone, 396 Meadow Street, Agawam, MA. I'm a former Marine – veteran – and I stand with the current Veterans' Council in their position. I believe the vote came to the City Council and it voted 8 to 1. I applaud all eight of you for standing that position. I hope over the course of time you guys continue to stand that position. There was one individual that did not vote in favor of it. Personally, I'm a little upset on the fact that he actually voted and didn't step down from that particular vote and go with a conflict of interest. As a veteran of the Marine Corp I've helped these gentlemen with regards to parades and certain things of that nature. If they came to me and said Vinny I have the position open for you, I personally wouldn't even accept it because I don't feel that I paid the dues in order to be part of the members on that Veterans' Council. Now having said that there seems to be a process. The two gentlemen submit a letter to the

Town and the Town acknowledges this letter and gives them another year or two or whatever it is. I don't really know the technicalities of it. But these gentlemen put in twenty something years of service in the Veterans' Council unpaid. This is outstanding and the fact that they were not given an ounce of latitude from the Mayor's office and say you know something I didn't receive the letter but we have two gentlemen that are saying that they sent the letter in yet they're being whatever the situation is – not from the City Council – I applaud your position – from the Mayor's office. I think that a certain amount of latitude should have been given to these two gentlemen and say you know something we're gonna give you the benefit of the doubt because of your twenty something years of combined service. Thank you very much.

President Rheault – Thank you. Mario Tedeschi?

Mario Tedeschi – Mario Tedeschi, 150 Juniper Ridge Drive, Feeding Hills. I would first like to personally thank all vets here tonight and I'm ashamed to say that I am not a vet and I feel rather small sitting in the corner with such prestigious members of my community. I would just take a moment to personally thank the service of the City Council. I applaud your decision to support the current Veterans' Council. I wish that you would continue to do so. It is nothing to do with anyone new trying to come in to the Veterans' Council. I have no idea who anybody is, any of the players are. I have no vested interest. I just met one of them the other day and listened to his plight and thought I would come to my first town hall meeting and put my two cents in. I also think that there is a process as Vinny had mentioned. People who have put in their time deserve the respect to be on the particular Council and again I applaud that you the City Council members here for having the backbone to if - somebody mentioned that there wasn't any political issues involved – and I hope not but if there were and anybody on the Council who thinks there were, I would hope that they would continue to do the right thing and continue to vote the way they did in the past. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Final speaker this evening is Larry Litton.

Larry Litton – Good evening everyone. I see a lot of familiar faces and a few new ones so welcome to the Council gentlemen. I come to this body yet again to ask for your assistance with the incredibly dangerous situation that has resulted from transient parkers doing business across the street from Six Flags. The fact that the original ordinance put in place by this Council was a failure doesn't mean the problem has been resolved or gone away. In fact, quite the opposite is true. It is not going to go away. It only continues to get worse. The most frustrating issue for me is that there are very few that argue there is a problem, only on what if anything can be done about it. I have recently reached out to members of both the Zoning and Safety Committees of the Council asking to meet with them and it is my hope that they would be kind enough to give me a chance to speak directly to them so they can better inform the entire body. It's very difficult to do that in five minutes. For your information this past winter I went to the State Department of Transportation and expressed my concerns or expressed the concerns we have at Six Flags about the safety and traffic flow issues on Main Street when the park is open. Along with that I gave them copies of a study that I had done by the engineers at

BHB regarding the same. The people at DOT were not only interested; they said that we were not the only party that had expressed concerns to them from Agawam. The result of this has been the state notifying two properties that a permit is required for a change of purpose for having parking on their land. They are currently not parking but it does appear that at least one of the individuals plans on seeking a permit. The simple reality is that the state can only require permitting and grant or deny based on their own observations and most importantly feedback from the town regarding any concerns it has as to the affect, additional curb cuts and potential traffic flow and safety issues that would result. We have also asked the state and the state has agreed to look at current businesses that are parking, that are doing so with complete disregard for public safety and I'm referring specifically to the old A&W used car lot and the video store on the south end of town, or on the south end of our property where you have absolutely no choice to either cross the state highway or to walk in the turn lane – blatant disregard for public safety. The state has made it clear to me and to the town that all enforcement has to come at local level. Let me repeat that – all enforcement needs to be done at the local level. I initiated this action late last year when Sue Dawson was still mayor. I made Mayor Cohen aware of what I was trying to accomplish before he took the oath for his current term. When we met with the Mayor, the Department of Transportation and all the town's department heads last week to discuss this study and the DOT's opinion, quite frankly showing absolutely no leadership whatsoever, the Mayor told me in so many words that the problem was Six Flags' and the Council's to deal with – not his. Ladies and gentlemen, I am again here to ask you for help and more importantly to ask you for leadership. Agawam desperately needs leadership. There is a clear distinction between someone having a tag sale, a church having a trip for seniors, a school or a church having a blood drive and yes, even someone parking cars in their yard for two weeks during the Big E and someone who is running a business on a state highway for seven months without any licensing, regulation and oversight. I know as I know all of you know that right now there's no ordinance in place regarding transient parking. My attorney's opinion is that all this, that this means that all transient parking is illegal currently. At this point the Mayor absolutely refuses to enforce zoning, to address the issue from the point of public safety. In fact at this point, the Mayor and I quote has told us only that he will "take it under advisement". I don't know what that means, well I do know what it means.

Clerk – One minute please.

Larry Litton – There's a desperate need for someone to step up and do the right thing. Please work together and come up with a zoning plan that protects the citizens and visitors of Agawam. Please truly do; please do what is truly best for Agawam. Thank you for your time.

President Rheault – Thank you.

Item 2. Roll Call

President Rheault – Will the Clerk please call the roll?

ROLL CALL – 11 PRESENT, 0 ABSENT

President Rheault – With eleven present, we have a full quorum. First I would like to welcome back our Councilor Jill Simpson and secondly that Bob Rossi's operation was a success and he's back raring to go a week or two later.

Item 3. Moment of Silence and the Pledge of Allegiance

President Rheault – Please rise now for a moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance.

Item 4. Minutes

(a) Regular Council Meeting – April 20, 2010

President Rheault – Moved by Councilor Letellier, seconded by Councilor Messick. Any questions, additions? Councilor Rossi abstains. Voice vote. All those in favor? Opposed? Two abstentions (Councilor Simpson as well).

Item 5. Declaration from Council President

None.

Item 6. Presentation of Petitions, Memorials & Remonstrances

1. **TR-2010-23 - A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Robert Swikalus, 63 Clover Hill Road, Feeding Hills, MA to the Agawam Liquor Licensing Commission to a Term Expiring the First Monday in June, 2015 (Mayor)**

President Rheault – Moved by Councilor Rossi, seconded by Councilor Messick...and Letellier. Any discussion? If not, Clerk please call the roll.

ROLL CALL – 11 SWIKALUS, 0 NO

President Rheault – Eleven yes, you have unanimously confirmed Robert Swikalus.

Item 7. Report of Council Committees

None.

Item 8. Elections

1. **TE-2010-4 - Election of a member of the CPA Committee for a term expiring on April 30, 2013 (Council)**

President Rheault – Floor is open for nominations?

Councilor Messick - I'd like to nominate Corinne Wingard.

President Rheault – Corinne Wingard is now nominated. A second is not necessary. Councilor Perry?

Councilor Perry – Yea, I'd like nominate David Morin.

President Rheault – David Morin has been nominated. Any others? Moved by Councilor Mineo to close, seconded by Councilor Perry. There's two candidates in front of us. State the last name is sufficient. I'm sorry. I see Corinne is here and Dave Morin is here. Would you like to address the Council, you're welcome to. No? Okay. Clerk will now please call the roll. Thank you.

ROLL CALL – 10 WINGARD, 1 MORIN

President Rheault – Ten Wingard, one Morin, you have elected Corinne Wingard. Congratulations.

2. **TE-2010-5 - Reappointment of Christina Thompson representing the Housing Authority on the CPA Committee for a term expiring April 30, 2013 (Council)**

President Rheault – Moved by Councilor Letellier, seconded by Councilor Messick. Any discussion? If not, voice vote should be sufficient on this. All those in favor for the reappointment? Opposed? Unanimous 11-0.

Item 9. Public Hearings

None.

Item 10. Old Business

None.

Item 11. New Business

1. **TOR-2010-1 - An Ordinance regarding Drag Racing within the Town of Agawam (2 readings) (Councilor Magovern)**

President Rheault – Councilor Magovern?

Councilor Magovern – I'd like to ask for a public hearing for our next council meeting on this issue for the ordinance and also an ordinance committee meeting to be scheduled, we'll send a date out.

President Rheault – I think it'll be too quick, we won't have enough time for the next meeting. The meeting after, possibly.

Councilor Magovern – Too meet whenever.

President Rheault – Does that conflict with anything else, Barb?

Clerk – I think, two meetings from now it's probably the first meeting in June which I think is the Capital Improvement public hearing and the Stretch Code public hearing or meeting or something on that.

President Rheault – And then the next one would be the adoption of the budget, right?

Clerk – The next one's the budget, yes.

Councilor Magovern – To put them with those meetings I think would be too long an evening so whenever we can do it at our earliest convenience. If we can't do it at the next meeting, then put it off until after the budgets.

President Rheault – That would be the first meeting and only meeting in July.

Councilor Magovern – Which wouldn't make it passable until –

President Rheault – Well, you've got a second reading so you could pass it that night, after the public hearing.

Councilor Magovern – Two readings? It would be August before we can pass it and then it's gotta go down to the legislature for adoption and they're out of session in the summer.

Councilor Letellier – Point of Order if I may. If we did the first reading next meeting, you could have the public hearing, I don't know if you'd want to, you could have the public hearing after the first reading, table the second reading until the night of the public hearing, then you could vote on it in July and the legislature has some meetings in August but if the goal is to have it in place during the summer drag racing season then maybe a public hearing wouldn't – I mean it's not legally necessary, it would probably good but I don't know that it's legally necessary to pass this.

Councilor Magovern – I think we need a parliamentarian on that one.

President Rheault – Well, the question is –

Councilor Magovern – The earliest we can do it I agree with Councilor Letellier that the-

President Rheault – Who's the requirement by for the public hearing?

Councilor Magovern – Excuse me?

President Rheault – Is a public hearing required?

Councilor Magovern – It’s an ordinance so we probably should have a public hearing.

Councilor Letellier – It’s not required. A zoning ordinance requires it or zone change requires it but a straight ordinance doesn’t.

Councilor Magovern – Oh, okay well then we can do it, we can vote on it at the next meeting, have discussion and vote on it at the next meeting.

President Rheault – I didn’t think we needed a public hearing. All right.

Councilor Magovern - We’ll just put it on at the next meeting and I’ll try to –

President Rheault – It’ll be the first reading next meeting.

Councilor Magovern – Yea, first reading next meeting and I’ll try to get the Ordinance Committee together to set a date.

President Rheault – Next agenda, first reading next meeting.

2. **PH-2010-2 - (TR-2010-24) Suggest a Public Hearing Date of June 7, 2010 for a Resolution Adopting the “Stretch Energy Code” for the City of Agawam (Councilor Messick)**

President Rheault – Any problems? All right, the public hearing will be called for then.

3. **TR-2010-25 - A Resolution Adopting the Fiscal Year 2011 – 2015 Capital Improvement Program (Suggest a Public Hearing Date of June 7, 2010) (Mayor)**

President Rheault – Any problem with that? No? Okay and we have a sub-committee meeting Gina already set up.

Councilor Letellier – Yup the sub-committee meeting is already set up, yup.

4. **TR-2010-26 - A Resolution Confirming the Appointment of Todd Crevier, 26 Yale Avenue, Feeding Hills, MA to the Agawam Veterans’ Council to a Term Expiring April 1, 2012 (Mayor)**

President Rheault – Back on the agenda.

5. **TR-2010-27 - A Resolution confirming the Appointment of Rielly Longtin, 469 Corey Street, Agawam, MA to the Agawam Veterans Council to a Term Expiring April 1, 2012 (Mayor)**

President Rheault – Back on the agenda.

Item 12. Any other matter that may legally come before the City Council.

President Rheault – And I'll start on my furthest right with Councilor Bitzas.

Councilor Bitzas – I think you started with me the last time, this time I think it's Councilor Perry.

President Rheault – Oh, you don't like being first?

Councilor Bitzas – It's two times in a row, if you'd like me to I'll go first.

President Rheault – All right. Councilor Perry?

Councilor Perry – Nothing this evening, thank you.

President Rheault – All right. Thank you. Councilor Letellier?

Councilor Letellier – Thank you. I'll be quick. There is a nice article in the paper about two teachers from the high school that had won awards for – first was creating the Save Organization that the students participate in which is Student Against Violating the Environment and also for their teaching on green energy and green power and forgive me I forgot to write the names down so I apologize. If anybody remembers the names of those teachers but congratulations.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Messick?

Councilor Messick – I'd like to suggest that in speaking or our holding an Ordinance meeting about the parking situation that we include the Zoning Sub-Committee and the Public Safety Sub-Committee too. So if we could set up a joint sub-committee meeting amongst everyone? Would that be okay?

President Rheault – That's too many people.

Councilor Perry – That would be a quorum. It would break the open meeting laws.

Councilor Messick – No. As long as it's a published meeting it's okay.

Councilor Letellier – It would be a posted meeting. It wouldn't violate any open – nope.

Councilor Perry – Move to the full council's recommendation if it's taken.

Councilor Letellier – You have to take votes of each individual sub-committee.

Councilor Perry – Okay, just want to make sure. We've been down that road before.

President Rheault – Is that it, Councilor Messick?

Councilor Messick – Yes, that was it. Thank you.

President Rheault – Okay. Councilor Cichetti?

Councilor Cichetti – Nothing this evening. Thank you.

President Rheault – Councilor Walsh?

Councilor Walsh – Nothing this evening.

President Rheault – Councilor Rossi?

Councilor Rossi – Yes, thank you. I'm going to be brief and I am going to make a statement in response to a memorandum that was sent to me and other members of this City Council and I make this statement open and publicly because Mayor Richard Cohen chose to make a public statement alleging inappropriate conduct on my part from an email that I sent addressed to the City Council members regarding a recent visit I had made to the Senior High School. The email that I sent on April 22, 2010 to members of the City Council was for informational purpose only. It was prefaced with the caption "FYI". It was not intended to solicit response, exchange of any dialogue nor did it concern any matter that was currently on the Council floor for consideration. Although it was public record, it wasn't meant to be made public at that time. I was merely responding to an email with an attached action plan that was sent to me and other members of this Council by the Superintendent of Schools. The action plan was a plan designed by her and other town officials to correct deficiencies at the high school that were placed on warning status by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. My intent was to share with my fellow councilors my knowledge of the action plan and my first hand observations of some of those deficiencies that exist at the high school. Albeit frustration runs amuck on my part, I felt that we had taken our eyes off the ball by not focusing on our most immediate needs. They could have been better and more directly served through a Statement of Interest to correct those deficiencies at the High School than to address the needs of the Early Childhood Center before considering such a massive and costly undertaking such as a plan to construct a new high school and retrofit our entire school district. As previously stated, this email was addressed to members of the City Council and for their eyes only and again although public record it was my desire that my thoughts and observances were to be shared with the City Council and not made public at this time due to the nature of some sensitive issues. This email had a statement of confidentiality attached and I did not expect that confidentiality statement to be violated. However it was violated by Councilor George Bitzas who forwarded it to Mayor Richard Cohen who in turn disseminated it even further. Additionally Mayor Cohen took it upon himself after receiving this email to launch some sort of an investigation or inquiry as to whether my actions as a City Councilor were appropriate. Under the Charter, the Mayor has no such investigative authority and as an elected

official I take exception. In response I have a right to confer with my fellow councilors within legal limits in which I followed. I have a right to visit public schools in my district as a tax paying citizen and most certainly as an elected member of this City Council. I have followed proper protocol with my visits to our schools and at no time has there ever been a breach of security. I have made no comment or statement knowing it to be false. All of which can be documented and/or supported by evidence and not rumor, innuendo and hearsay as suggested by the Mayor. In conclusion, I can only conclude that if my questions or actions as a City Councilor are a source of frustration or irritation for the Mayor then frankly it is a concern I do not wish to address. As a citizen and as a City Councilor it is not only my right to question my government, it's my responsibility to question it. I will not be intimidated, harassed in any fashion for me making a statement, disagreeing with a theory or questioning anything of my government and I resent the implication that I had done something inappropriate. And as a footnote and all due respect to the chair, to members of this City Council, although this memo was directed to me specifically I think we all should take heed that if this time it would be me, next time it could be you for some questions you may raise concerning our government or some position you may take that the Mayor opposes. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Mineo?

Councilor Mineo – Nothing tonight.

President Rheault – Councilor Magovern?

Councilor Magovern – I just want to say I applaud Councilor Rossi for the statements that he made. I too read that memo from the Mayor's office and I thought that it was way out of bounds in his criticism of Bob Rossi. He did his due diligence to investigate a situation within the school department. I feel very strongly about this proposal that's been brought forward by the administrators of the school and I would like to see further study on it because I honestly don't think that we've given enough forethought for something that could potentially cost us hundreds of millions of dollars down the road without really anticipation of what our tax base is gonna be. Thank you Councilor Rossi for your comments. The other thing is that, Jill Messick, I think that I'm sorry that your program got cancelled on the Go Green. I went to the one in West Springfield last weekend on the green and it was a very eye-opening and refreshing experience to see their proposal and they did mention the fact that we had had ours scheduled the week before and Robinson State Park although it is in Agawam had a very nice display and a very nice booth and was covered very, very well in West Springfield. So again the West Springfield Day was very good and I hope that you can reschedule it and you'll have my support on trying to get it rescheduled for Agawam. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Simpson?

Councilor Simpson – Thank you. I would just briefly like to thank everyone who showed up Saturday at the Agawam Skate Park to help in the clean-up day. It went really well. The park is looking really nice. I'd also like to thank Theory Skate Shop of West

Springfield for generously donating pizza and ice waters and prizes for competition for the kids skateboarding and biking. It was great to see one of our parks for a different use being so overwhelmingly used on Saturday. There was tons of kids there riding their bikes and skateboarding and the park is really looking good. The kids are really starting to take ownership of the park itself and starting to keep it up nicely so thank you all for participating in that cause.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Bitzas?

Councilor Bitzas – Thank you Mr. President. Two things. First of all I'd like to respond to Councilor Rossi. It's nothing not good between him and the Mayor between those two what I did with my own rights as elected official. I have an email that came from another elected official which makes it public record and I send what many, many questions about and I give you credit if those things were true I would have my own problems or concerns. What I did I forwarded it to the Mayor and I said one thing "Please talk to Mary and let me know about the problems." - period – because I want to know about the problems. If those are problems, then correct the problems. In my opinion, some was not some correct some they not correct some they be waiting for I'm not going to discuss that. It's between Councilor Rossi and the Mayor but it was my rights as elected official every elected officials records it's an open record. So I have no problem with that and it's not my concern. I have a concern about the memo that he sent to us and like to have the answers. Nothing to hide it. Why be afraid of it? It's a public record. Why all this problem we have to have it put under the rug? Nobody knows? They have to go to the horse's mouth to look to see if it's not true. Good for you, Councilor Rossi. Go investigate and find things and let me know too and let the others know and administration know. That's a free country. We're living in a country, it's free, it's not a totalitarian system to be afraid of it. Thank you. And the last thing is I would like to invite you again next, this coming, next week Wednesday we have a forum about the bullying and we're going to have excellent, excellent people here talking to all of us. We're going to have Buoniconti that he's going to explain the new law that I believe Governor Patrick just signed today about bullying. We're to have Bill Corbet an author of Cooperative Kids; Pastor Susan Feurzeig for Agawam United Methodist Church; Lynda Kunasek; Agawam High School coach; Mark Poggi, Agawam High School Resource Office; Peter Donah, School Counselor; Lizz Gloster, Agawam High School student, Project Peace; Haley Muzzy, freshman at WNEC and winner of bullying poster contest and the main speaker is going to be the lady that lost her son a year ago, Mrs. Walker. She was instrumental at the state level and the national level to make and vote legislation against bullying. I promise you it be a great night. Well-informed, very educated because everybody bullying is a problem not only in schools, it's all at work place, in politics, everywhere it's bullying. So you should, we should have those people and should teachers, students, parents know more about it. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. I have nothing this evening. I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. Moved by the Council to adjourn, seconded by the Council. All those in favor? The Council. So we are now adjourned. Thank you very much for coming and good evening. **Adjournment.**