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NFMMC expands vaccine effort to Wheatfield

Alice Lange, left, was all smiles upon receiving her initial dose of the COVID-19 vaccine from a Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center pharmacist during a clinic held Thursday at Elderwood Residences at Wheatfield. Lange expressed her excitement to share with her daughter, who is a registered nurse, the news of her vaccination.

Similar to Lange, tears of joy filled the room as close to 100 residents received their first dose of the vaccine. Memorial Medical Center plans to continue expanding its vaccine efforts as larger supply of doses come into the area.



Wheatfield Town Board to return to in-person meetings

Planning board report on solar panel projects

BY MICHAEL DEPIETRO

Tuesday's Town of Wheatfield board meeting revealed the March 17 session will mark a return to in-person gatherings in the council chambers. The board has been meeting via Zoom since November.

Relating to that announcement, members scheduled a required public hearing relating to proposed Local Law 2-2021 (flood damage prevention) for 7 p.m.

Parks and Recreation Director Mike Ranalli said baseball/softball/T-ball registrations have begun for the summer season and, so far, interest is exceeding expectations.

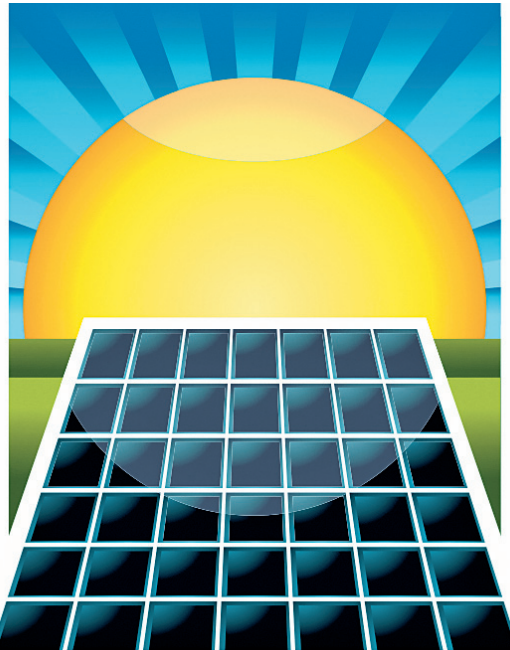
"Our numbers are fantastic, to be honest. People are really excited to get back – and for their kids to get back – into a team sport; playing with their friends," Ranalli said.

"Our numbers are ahead of where they were the last four years. As of Friday, we've had 150 signed up. I don't think we've ever had at this point in time more than 130 signed up."

He said the department is hoping the momentum keeps up until registrations close March 26.

Ranalli also said the department is in the process of planning and coordinating a summer camp this year.

"We fully intend on hosting a summer camp this year. It may look a little different than what it has in the past, but we are going to work with the Niagara County Department of Health and make



sure we can do it safely as possible. That's our goal," he said.

Town Supervisor Don MacSwan also announced the public Shawnee golf course is now open and that he and Ranalli would meet with course officials next week to discuss the allowing of golf lessons.

The board also authorized the Parks Department to make two purchases. The first, for \$2,510.85, is for a snowblower for a John Deere tractor. The second and definitely most fun was a gravity rail swing for Fairmount Park at a cost of \$30,140. Described as a "track ride," the playground piece looks like a combination swing/self-propelled rollercoaster that lets kids swing wildly as they whip through the air.

Ranalli said it may be the first such piece of equipment in

WNY. To see the equipment in action, visit www.miracle-recreation.com/featured-products/gravity-rail/.

A salt spreader purchase for the Water/Sewer Department's dump truck was also approved for \$4,800.

Planning Board Report

Tim Zuber of Wendel Engineers gave the monthly Planning Board report, which featured some updates on a pair of controversial solar projects.

On Feb. 3, the board discussed a proposed solar project at 3636 Mapleton Road, where

Dimension Energy LLC (dba Wheatfield CSG LLC) plans to build a 5 MW utility-grade solar array. Changes to the plan since the project's last appearance before the Planning Board on Nov. 3 were discussed, including residents' concerns about screening. Proposed plantings of varieties yet to be determined will be 5-6 feet high, leaving the 15-foot panels visible until the screening grows much higher. Other items discussed included the equipment pads and whether they provided containment if there was an oil spill/leak from the transformers/inverters.

The Planning Board did not feel enough of the details had been worked out for the project at this point, so members did not recommend the project to the Niagara County Planning Board.

SEE STAR, continued on Page 6



Ice boom in place in Lewiston

The Village of Lewiston Department of Public Works was at the waterfront Wednesday, overseeing installation of ice boom spans.

According to the International Joint Commission, ice booms prevent large blocks of ice from flowing down the Niagara River in the winter. These protective barriers guard property, shoreline and hydroelectric plant operations.

In a prior press release, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers noted ice boom operations began in 1964. Per the IJC's 1999 Supplementary Order of Approval, placement of ice boom spans may begin when the Lake Erie water temperature in Buffalo reaches 39 degrees Fahrenheit, or on Dec. 16 – whichever comes first.

(Photos courtesy of the DPW)



Youngstown PD issues reform collaborative public draft

BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

The Village of Youngstown Police Department has issued its police reform collaborative public draft review to the community and is encouraging all residents to read and comment on the document by March 5.

Release of the draft follows two community engagement meetings the Youngstown Police held with residents in the village earlier this month. The draft is in compliance with Gov. Andrew Cuomo's executive order 203, issued June 12, 2020.

A hard copy of the draft is available for review at the Youngstown Police Department, located in the Red Brick Village Center, 240 Lockport St.

Due to restrictions related to COVID-19, an appointment will need to be made with the Youngstown Police Department in order to review the hard copy.

The hard copy is not available to take home.

Residents are requested contact the Youngstown Police by telephone, leave a message and an officer will return the call to set up an appointment. YPD can be reached at 745-3623.

YPD said a 56-page PDF version of the document is also available online for review at the Village of Youngstown website, www.youngstownnewyork.us. Link to the YPD.

Again, comments are encouraged. A hard copy comment page is available at the YPD office in the Red Brick or at the Youngstown U.S. Post Office station at Lockport and South Second streets.

Comments can be returned to the Village of Youngstown drop-box located at the Red Brick Village Center, or emailed to the YPD at police@youngstownnewyork.us.

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