

Minutes September 18, 2014 Citizen's Forum

Over 40 residents attended the forum on Thursday at 6PM

Lower Westfield Road/Homestead Intersection Project

Verizon needs to remove a utility pole at the edge of Homestead Ave in order for the final paving to be completed. Once the pole is moved, it is anticipated that the final paving will be completed by the end of October.

2) Gary Rome proposed project:

Gary Rome and Tim Ferrera, Operations/website/parts Manager, were introduced as the winners of the bid for the Whiting Farms Road land sale by HG&E. They stated that their intention is to expand their business at the new location and keep their business on Main Street also. They indicated interest and willingness to attend the next forum meeting.

3) Dollar Store Update

The Dollar Store is now completed and open for business.

4) HCC Road Update

The earliest date for completion for the HCC road is the end of October due to delays for approval of the bridge design by Mass DOT.

5) Holyoke Hotel

The ongoing and increasing safety hazards that exist due to the continued and increased use of the hotel for homeless families, most from outside of Holyoke and some from out of state is leading to increased cost for taxpayers for busing students and also a loss of business for surrounding restaurants and stores due to increased crime and police calls. Our State Delegation has been approached on this matter and it is good to see Andrew, Aide to Senator Humason here tonight. We will follow up on this issue with Senator Don Humason. A suggestion put forth is that there be an amendment to State Law that in order to qualify for shelter services in Massachusetts that residency for 6 months needs to be established at a specific address. A petition for a suggested change to the law will be developed in the next few weeks. It was noted that along with the homeless in hotels there is also a program called Community Congregate Sheltering that is going on in apartments. This allows

for three families to live in one apartment and share living room and kitchen space. However, this is a violation of housing codes and public health codes in the same way that sheltering in hotels is in violation of the same codes.

6) Whiting Farms Zone Update

There will be a meeting on September 30th to hear a summary of the survey completed by residents and any other input for the zone change from BG back to IP. The Planning Board will then send a recommendation to the Ordinance Committee for action and recommendation to the full City Council.

7) Other Issues/Geriatric Authority, paving of streets, crosswalk painting and signs

The Geriatric Authority is officially closed and the property will be returned to the city. The plan is to generate a tax paying project at the site. The listed streets to be paved are based on need and requests. Each year DPW prioritizes the streets, but are able to complete fewer streets due to increasing costs of supplies. Requests are forwarded to the DPW each year by me as your Ward Councilor.

Crosswalk painting is scheduled to be completed soon. A request for move signs closer to the crosswalk was made. A concern about cars speeding down Apremont where it turns at the bottom of the hill was raised as a continued safety concern.

Questions raised at a previous meeting included: What is the update on the traffic issue at Richard Eger and Lynn Anne? I have asked Matt Sokop at DPW to follow up on this issue.

I agreed to follow up on these issues and thanked everyone for their interest and participation.

Submitted by,
Linda Vacon
Ward 5 City Councilor