

Ward 5 Update May 25th

- 1) Approximately 15 residents attended a Ward 5 meeting on May 25th at the Kittredge Center from 6-8PM.
- 2) Francesca Maltese from O'Connell Development Inc. joined our meeting to give an update on the Atlas Copco site. She let the group know that the planning board has recommended that the City Council approved the zone change. Linda noted that the committee meeting would take place on June 7th at 6:30PM. Francesca noted that both O'Connell Co. and Big Y have a long history as a local business and a good neighbor where they do business. The Big Y would employ 150-175 people with 25% full time. They will be investing approximately 12M in the site, would plan to begin construction in 2012 and open in late 2012 or early 2013. A question was raised as to how large the entire project would be. Francesca noted that the current building is 140,000 sq. feet. The new project while not exactly known at this time is estimated to be up to 100,000 sq. ft. Ms. Maltese spent almost an hour addressing questions and concerns about traffic, how trucks would enter and exit the site, noise issues and buffer issues. Francesca answered many of the questions and noted the major concerns and let the group know, that if the zoning change is approved, she would take all steps possible to ensure the highest level of satisfaction possible.

There was a discussion on traffic on Homestead with suggestions made by attendees:

- 1) **Enforce the "No Trucks allowed after 6PM" ordinance**
- 2) **Lower the speed limit on Homestead Road from 35 to 30mph.**

Linda let the group know that she has requested Interim Police Chief Seklecki to enforce the truck traffic ordinance and the high rates of speed in ward 5 and that he had notified the patrols to follow up. Linda also stated she would continue to follow up on this issue.

- 3) Linda gave updates on the HCC road and Geriatric Authority.
Re: HCC road, per Jeff Hayden, there are no new updates. They hope to obtain the funding to begin construction in the fall. They plan to have a light at Sunset and the new road at 202. Prior to and following the meeting some neighbors do not want a light at the end of Sunset. As some in attendance in April questioned the need for an additional light at all, these folks also feel it would increase the number of cars cutting through on Sunset.
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Re: Geriatric Authority, Linda emphasized that no one is questioning the care provided and that all residents are guaranteed to receive the needed level and quality of care they require regardless of any changes made to the GA. Linda discussed her order to declare the land purchased from the GA by the city, surplus so that it can be sold and hopefully developed for market rate

housing. Linda stated her position is that each authority needs to be self supporting and that tax payers have the right to know what they are paying for. Sheryl Quinn, Director of the GA was in attendance along with 3 or 4 GA employees. She described the services of the GA and called for the GA to be treated fairly. Employees challenged Linda as to her lack of support for the GA. Linda explained to the group that the GA is a quasi municipal organization rather than a typical “business” and that a discussion on the economics and viability of the GA needs to happen. A new plan must be developed as the status quo of the GA which has been losing money for over 20 years, cannot continue. To argue over which pocket the money comes from is to miss the main point which is the affordability of the service and what changes need to be made such as private development etc. due to the economic difficulties in the city and the state. Linda stated that she sees her role as one that has a main focus on the ward, but an obligation to the entire city as well.

Ward Boundary changes due to new census results. Linda serves on the Redevelopment Committee and it was noted that the ward 5 boundaries have not changed in the proposed revision that was submitted to the state for review. There have been some small changes in the precincts for ward 5, which allow for some folks who live near McMahan School to vote there.

New Agenda Item:

Linda informed the group that a proposal has been made to change RA zoning (residential agriculture) to allow parking by special permit by the City Council. Linda updated the group that this proposal does not include buffer requirements or a minimum amount of land and that for those reasons does not favor this change. A resident in attendance referred to the change as “spot zoning”. This is not favored by planners in general and is not a good thing for Ward 5.

In summary, questions, challenges and ideas and answers were put forth during the meeting. Francesca Maltese earned applause from those in attendance for her forthcoming and open approach to the Big Y project and in particular for listening to the residents.

Linda Vacon, Your Ward 5 City Councilor