

Ward 5 Update January 23rd, 2012

Approximately eighteen residents attended a Ward 5 meeting on January 23rd at Dino's Pizza at the plaza at Homestead and 202 from 6:30-9PM.

Holyoke Community College Road Update: Jeff Hayden, VP of Institutional Development for the Kittredge Center, attended and provided an update on the road. It is currently under review for action at the state level to complete a legal transfer of the land swap between the Water Commission and the school. The funding then needs to be completed. It is intended that the plan would be finalized and construction will occur after these steps are completed.

Geriatric Authority: A citizen's initiative petition has been certified and presented to the City Council. A hearing will be set up for some time in February.

Parking Issue at McMahan School: The neighbors were not in attendance. Follow-up will occur with DPW on the parking problem in front of the school on the school side of the street.

Truck issue on Homestead: A review of the report provided by Chief Neiswanger took place. It was noted that monitoring took place for a 30 day period as staffing allowed (from October 15th-November 15th). Of 21 days, there were 14 violations. Most were between 8PM and 11PM. There were no more than two violations that occurred on a shift. The Chief noted that this will have a short term effect and hopes that this effort eases some of the problems on Homestead Avenue. Please continue to give me feedback on this issue.

Big Y: A public hearing will continue tomorrow night at 6:30 at the McMahan School.

There was a great deal of discussion from those present about the remaining stores and the design with the back of the store visible to the neighbors and there was much discussion about the placement and if it could be offset. It was noted that there had been no revisions from the first plan.

There was much discussion about the traffic, the flow with the addition of a free right turn lane and the likelihood of a traffic light at Homestead at the back driveway exit from the old Atlas Copco site, and the anticipated results that might occur. It is feared that there will be more backups and great difficulty getting out of side streets on to Homestead.

Great objections were also expressed about a fast food drive through restaurant on the site. The general sense of the group was that this was not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. It was noted that no drive through can go in without special approval by the City Council.

A sheet was distributed so that attendees could note their concerns. I will follow up with O'Connell's to see if any modifications can be made. Attendees were asked to provide email contact information and to note the date for the public hearing.

Linda Vacon,
Your Ward 5 City Councilor