

Ward 5 Update June 9th, 2012

Approximately eighteen residents attended a Ward 5 meeting on June 9th at Mrs. Mitchell's at the plaza at Homestead and 202 from 2:30-4:30PM.

Budget Review: A general overview of the budget was given. It was clarified that the City Council can only cut the budget, cannot change line items or add. It was noted that the total budget has increased over 3% and taxes will increase by approximately the same amount again this year as last year if things remain the same with the tax split. Residents were encouraged to contact City Councilors **now** with any budget concerns as once the budget is set at the meeting on June 19th, the tax increases are in place then.

Geriatric Authority: New appointees to the board have occurred and a new Chairperson is in place. As a leader of the initiative to address issues at the Geriatric Authority for the last three years, it is encouraging to see a board that is looking into the operations with a goal to recognize and repay the city the money owed. The support of this authority for over 20 years has long been a burden on the taxpayers that is no longer sustainable. The citizen's initiative petition regarding this issue was presented to the City Council at the end of 2011.

Parking Issue at McMahon School: Neighbors were in attendance. They requested that an order be filed to establish "no parking" in front of the school and near the corners so people can drive on the street safely.

Truck issue on Homestead: A request has been discussed with Chief Neiswanger took place to provide some follow-up enforcement since it has been approximately six months since the last intense effort took place. The first time the enforcement occurred a 30 day period there were 14 violations on 21 days. Most were between 8PM and 11PM. One resident attending the meeting state she had seen an officer ticketing a truck using Homestead during the prohibited hours.

Big Y: Although there has been no movement on the project it is anticipated that there will be a public hearing on the traffic improvements sometime around July 22th. It was requested that the meeting be held in the ward with room for a good number of attendees, perhaps, McMahon School.

Other Issues:

Intersection of Westfield Road and Homestead Ave: A number of concerns were raised about the intersection of Westfield Road and Homestead Ave. 1) The yield sign is causing an almost constant stream of traffic, making it difficult for cars to exit from the two plazas safely, for drivers to enter the plazas and for pedestrians to cross from one plaza to another. 2) Drivers are traveling through the yield sign at a high rate of speed. 3) the cross walks are worn and not visible to drivers causing an unsafe situation for pedestrians once they cross at the light and reach the cut off with the yield sign. 3) The back up of traffic at the light down Homestead blocks the driveways to the Fire Station and both plazas.

Homestead Ave crosswalks and caution light for school area (broken)

Enforcement of NO PARKING on Homestead Ave at the field. Residents requested a guard rail or posts be placed so people do not park on the sidewalk straddling the road as it creates a dangerous situation for pedestrians on the sidewalk and in the crosswalk.

Southampton Road and Mountain Road being used as cut-through streets during times when 141 is closed and when other traffic back-ups occur.

Residents are requesting more enforcement for speeding. Some residents present offered their driveways to the Police Department for enforcement purposes. Linda will send the list to Chief Neiswanger. A discussion took place about “local traffic only” signs. It was noted that they are not enforceable.

Sidewalks on Westfield Road going toward the Soldiers Home and on Timber Lane need replacing.

Recycling Bins: While some stated they need the large rolling bin but cannot obtain it, others stated they had been given a rolling bin to use. It was noted that the small bins have a fee while the rolling bin do not. It was requested that Linda follow up on these questions with the goal of encouraging residents to participate in the recycling program by making it easy and affordable without causing litter.

In summary, it was a lively meeting with many questions a good discussion. I agreed to look into some issues, file orders on others and follow up with Ward 5 residents to keep them informed.

Linda Vacon,
Your Ward 5 City Councilor