

Holyoke Ward 5 City Councilor Linda Vacon readies for rematch with Guy O'Donnell

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HOLYOKE – The political season has awoken as Ward 5 City Councilor Linda Vacon gears up for a rematch with Guy O'Donnell. Only 18 votes separated the two candidates in the 2021 municipal elections.

The city clerk's office already received nomination papers with familiar names for City Council and School Committee. Candidates must gather the requisite signatures and submit nomination papers by the Aug. 1 deadline.

The 2021 Ward 5 Council race triggered a [recount](#) initiated by O'Donnell. The results stayed the same, and Vacon began her seventh term.

"During the last year, as we all continued to deal with COVID, I served you and our city as chair of the Ordinance Committee and member of the Development and Government Relations Committee," Vacon stated. "We resumed meeting in person while keeping a remote option to deal with health concerns."

Vacon noted that in 2022 she worked to improve neighborhoods, advocated for lower property tax rates, promoted safer communities and led initiatives to increase public safety. In December, Vacon signed a City Council letter that called for incoming Gov. Maura T. Healey to return the Holyoke Public Schools from receivership to municipal control.

According to Vacon, traffic and speeding, spotty road conditions, and crosswalks that need repainting are the top constituent issues. "I continue to bring a high level of energy and commitment to my work as Ward 5 City Councilor and hope I have earned your vote for re-election this November," Vacon stated.

In October, Holyoke Gas & Electric proposed to build a liquid natural gas tank at a facility in Vacon's ward. "The process may take up to two years, but it's a significant development for residents and businesses while HG&E continues to develop green alternatives," she said.

In a statement, O'Donnell said, "It's time for a change" in Ward 5 and that issues he campaigned on in 2021 stayed the same or worsened.

"People still want to reclaim our schools and ensure every child has access to a high-quality education. We still want good jobs and safe, affordable housing for our families," O'Donnell wrote.

He added, "We still want well-maintained roads, parks, and sidewalks. Unfortunately, our current City Councilor is more interested in creating problems than fixing them. That is unacceptable."

O'Donnell said Vacon's slim victory in 2021 proved the ward demanded change and a new direction.

"From volunteering at McMahan Elementary School to organizing against corrupt money in politics, I've committed my life to bring people together and making sure everyone can get ahead. This year let's finally bring fresh ideas and solutions to Ward 5," O'Donnell stated.

If necessary, a preliminary election will be held Sept. 26. The last day to register for the preliminary is Sept. 16. The municipal election takes place on Nov. 7, with the registration closing on Oct. 28.

The City Clerk's Office received nomination [papers](#) from the following candidates (I denotes incumbent):

City Council at-large: Israel Rivera (i), Kevin A. Jourdain (i), Jose Maldonado Velez (i), Howard B. Greaney, and Michael J. Sullivan;

City Council Ward 1: Jenny Rivera (i); and Victor M. Machado De Jesus;

City Council Ward: Anne Thalheimer;

City Council Ward 4: Kocayne Givner (i)

City Council Ward 5: Linda Vacon (i) and Guy O'Donnell;

City Council Ward 6: Juan Anderson-Burgos (i); and

School Committee Ward 5: John Whelihan.