

Over 25 residents attended the forum on Thursday at 6:00PM at Mrs. Mitchell's.

**1) Guest Speaker John Brunelle, School Committee Member**

John Brunelle provided an update on the school developments over the last few months. He explained that there had been a community meeting at McMahon school earlier in the year when a plan was put forth to create two middle schools rather than the current 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade that has not been working well. McMahon School may become a pre-school through Kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade. He noted that the city council recently approved a study for the feasibility of this project with 80% reimbursement from the State.

**2) Apremont Hwy intersection at Rock Valley Road**

Our City Engineer Yem Lip has left the city so it is unclear how this project will proceed. In the meantime an order has been filed to add two stop signs to increase the safety where the right of way and the line of sight are not clear.

**3) Solar Update**

Those present were updated with the news that there are currently No solar applications active here in Ward 5. It was noted that the law was changed and they are only allowed by special permit of the City Council in residential zones.

**4) Budget / Free cash update**

In early March with spending requests considered there is approximately \$500,000 remaining. Now with the recent storm and the snow removal required for the parade, it is expected that the free cash is pretty much expended. The city continues to be in a tight budget situation.

**5) Pending issues:** No water shut off agreement is in place yet for failure to pay sewer bills. An order has been filed to let the public know when and where a fire engine is browned out by using the city call system.

**New Issues raised:** Increased truck traffic during restricted hours is occurring: Noonan Energy is one company noted. The stop sign needs to be added at McMahon School at driveway exit to give room for buses and trucks to exit. One resident gave an update about contaminated water in Westfield that may have implication for the Barnes Aquifer in Holyoke potentially affecting wells. Information and key contact people were provided.

Thanks for your interest, ideas and participation.

Submitted by,

Linda Vacon,

Your Ward 5 City Councilor