

Minutes February 11, 2015 Citizen's Forum

Over 30 residents attended the forum on Wednesday at 6PM at Mrs. Mitchell's.

1) Gary Rome proposed project:

Gary Rome and Tim Ferrera, Operations/website/parts Manager, attended the meeting. They stated that their intention is to expand their business at the new location and keep their business on Main Street also. They announced that the request for a zone change to Business Highway had been filed just the day before and will be coming before the City Council. Feedback from those in attendance was mostly positive with some opposition from some.

2) HCC Road Update

The HCC road is ready to open after delays due to approval for the bridge. The road now needs to be named "Doyle Drive" has been recommended and accepted by the City. This should be completed in March. Residents of Sunset asked what will happen if traffic cuts through their street once the road is opened. I shared that HCC is willing to meet with neighbors to address traffic issues if they arise. During past meetings throughout the planning process, residents did not want to make the street one-way, but wanted to see how things go once the road opens first. As the Ward 5 Councilor, residents can contact me if they have issues or they can communicate directly to HCC to Erica Broman or Jeff Hayden.

5) Holyoke Hotel

Chief Neiswanger provided an update on the Holyoke Hotel and stated that the number sheltered there had decreased from 133 to 100 at his last visit. Daily police presence is now being provided by the hotel owner as a requirement by the State due to ongoing and increasing safety hazards at the hotel. The increased cost for taxpayers for busing students and also a loss of business for surrounding restaurants and stores continues and the sheltering law needs to be addressed. Governor Baker has made the homeless hotel issue one of his priorities so we can look forward to some changes. It was noted that along with the homeless in hotels there is also a program called Community Congregate Sheltering that is going on in apartments. This allows for three families to live in one apartment and share living room and kitchen

space. However, this is a violation of housing codes and public health codes in the same way that sheltering in hotels is in violation of the same codes and we are looking into this locally to see the extent of the program.

6) Whiting Farms Zone Update

HG&E has applied for a zone change to Business Highway to allow a new care dealership at this site.

7) Other Issues/Geriatric Authority, crosswalk painting and signs

The Geriatric Authority is officially closed and the property is now officially owned by the city. The plan is to sell the property to generate a tax paying project at the site.

Crosswalk painting was completed, but the lines in front of the fire station were not yet painted. An order has been filed but follow-up from me and the Fire Commissioners will help to get it completed.

Questions raised at a previous meeting included: What is the update on the traffic issue at Richard Eger and Lynn Anne? I will ask Matt Sokop at DPW to get back to me on this issue.

A suggestion was made that the tax work off residents might help by placing reflectors at the hydrants that show above the snow so they can be located to clear after storms.

A question was raised about the new light for HCC: will it be timed to the other light. Per Joe O'Connor it will be timed with the light at Homestead and 202.

The contact information for Officer Manuel Rivera our new Code Enforcement Officer is: 575-5123 E-mail: off.rivera.265@holyokepd.org and our head of traffic, Sgt. Loftus: Sgt.Loftus@holyokepd.org

Thanks to everyone for your interest, ideas and participation.

Submitted by,

Linda Vacon

Your Ward 5 City Councilor