

Ward 5 Update November 16th, 2011

Approximately eighteen residents attended a Ward 5 meeting on November 16th at Mrs. Mitchell's at the plaza at Homestead and 202 from 7-9PM.

Big Y: A meeting for an official update was held with Andrew Crystal and Frank Horacek, Vice President Real Estate & Development for Big Y in attendance.

Andrew reviewed the proposed plan and layout of approximately 100,000 sq. ft. of proposed development. Frank addressed the market study that was done to determine the size of the Big Y. In response to a question he clarified that the store will have a few tables and serve food. Andrew explained that they have positioned the Big Y with the back of the store to the wetlands to diminish noise from the deliveries and the view of the back of the store. He also said there will be a retaining wall on the residential side with plantings done after the road is widened. The land for the additional road lane will come from the development site, not the residents.

The remaining stores (about 50,000 sq. ft.) on the design have the back of the store visible to the neighbors and there was much discussion about the placement and if it could be offset. Andrew did state that there would be a buffer of plantings, and that the building would be visible but not outside mechanical works or dumpsters etc. At the end of the meeting he agreed to re evaluate the design to see if there could be an adjustment made.

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 was noted that the lights will need to be synchronized or there will be more backups. The group was informed that there will be a public meeting. It is expected to occur on Tuesday, December 13th. It was requested that the meeting can be held at McMahon School and that the traffic engineer be present along with the developers so that questions can be answered at the meeting. Linda said she would check with Kathy Anderson to see if that is possible.

The other major issue was concerns about the effect on local businesses in the immediate area with the Big Y offering eat in food and the possibility of other food service businesses going into the development. Linda asked if the O'Connell Group and Big Y, if faced with a choice of more than one possible business would please consider the impact on the businesses in the immediate neighborhood, the two plazas here at Homestead and 202, and if possible, not duplicate those already in existence.

A question was raised about an old water well that is on the property. The concern is that the pipe could be broken during construction and then the aquifer could get contaminated. Andrew stated there is no plan to use it and he would be sure the pipe is capped and that it would be checked to ensure that no problem develops.

Linda checked to sure that everyone had their questions addressed and thanked residents for attending. Attendees were asked to provide email contact information and to note the date for the public hearing. The permit request will be submitted to the planning department on Tuesday and will be available for review.

Linda Vacon,
Your Ward 5 City Councilor