

Ward 5 Forum Minutes of October 13, 2025

Approximately **25 Ward residents** attended my Ward 5 meeting at Dino's.

1) NOVEMBER ELECTION! PLEASE VOTE ON NOVEMBER 4TH

Special guests were welcomed and each spoke for three minutes. Thanks to all for keeping to the 3 minutes, allowing for informal conversation later. Speaking in order of random picks were **Jens Michaelson & Aida Oquendo, running for the open school committee seat & Kevin Jourdain, Howie Greaney & Mike Sullivan running for City Council at Large.**

Jay Whelihan our retiring School Committee member and Chair of the School Finance Committee offered updates on McMahon and Donahue schools, both receiving significant improvements to the buildings including roofs, doors & windows. These important improvements will help to extend the life of each school.

Honorable mentions were made to **Mayor Elaine Pluta**, first woman to serve as Mayor of Holyoke and a wonderful positive role model for all of us & to **Jim Rossmeisl** for stepping up to run for the Ward 5 School Committee seat.

2) City Council Update:

Mayor Garcia has submitted a supplemental budget. We have no free cash this year because required information has not been provided to the state. We received a DLS letter looking for reconciliations for 2023 & 2024. There will be an important Finance Committee meeting on Wednesday October 15th. You can watch it on channel 15 or zoom in or attend in person if you wish.

Of note, the appointment of a qualified Treasurer approved by voters almost one year ago has not yet been appointed. In my opinion we should not be combining the Collector Treasurer positions when the office is in disarray with two years of reconciliations needing completion. We need to appoint a qualified treasurer ASAP.

3) Update on Elmwood Forest: There has been a \$50,000 non-refundable deposit made for the approx. 9 acres of land owned by HEDIC and HG&E. Another larger portion of land in the area is in land court due to unpaid taxes. It is zoned RA and would need to receive approval of a zone change before commercial development takes place. This is a public process with notice and public hearings should the project move forward. There are no definite plans available at this time.

4) Questions & Concerns:

Is **Homestead Ave going to be repaved?** In September I received an email that stated Homestead Ave would be repaved in 2026. However, the street list has changed from time to time, so I will keep checking.

Why has **the work on Schermerhorns** stopped again? I don't know a reason, but as of today Tuesday October 14th work was going on at the site.

Why were **the raised crosswalks removed** from Homestead Ave.? The raised crosswalks were installed in error as the road is a truck route, has too much traffic and a speed limit of 35mph which made the road ineligible for the raised speed humps. **We have established a process so that any new raise crosswalks will require a petition and a public meeting before they are installed.**

Thanks to all who attended and participated in my meeting!

Your Ward 5 City Councilor
Linda Vacon

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