

Approximately 40 residents attended the forum on Thursday at 6PM at Mrs. Mitchell's.

**1) Zone change request Lower Westfield Road**

It was explained that the properties involved include the old Christmas Shop and the home next to it. The owner is seeking to change both to a broader business use. It will be coming up again in April

**2) Apremont Hwy / HCC road-traffic light request**

Our City Engineer reviewed the light and found that it does meet the requirements for a light. However, the cost is around \$200,000.00 and it is unlikely that the funding for the project will be available in the near future. Suggestions from those in attendance included changing Apremont Hwy to one-way from Old Apremont Hwy to 202 so there would be no traffic exiting from Apremont Hwy at the top of the hill. Another suggestion offered at the end of the meeting was to allow right turns only at the top of the hill. It was also requested that the brush at the bottom of the hill on the right as Apremont curves to the right be cleared for better line of sight for traffic.

The new light at Doyle Drive was checked by our Engineer after it was reported that the light is sometime red for no apparent reason. He stated that the light is timed with the light at 202 and Homestead Ave. He is following up on a later report that the walk light is on at times when no one is at the cross-walk

**3) Community Preservation Act**

A brief review of the Community Preservation Act was given and a web site was provided so those present could see how it would affect them. A web site with more information is [www.communitypreservation.org](http://www.communitypreservation.org). In short, this act allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation. The monies are raised by an imposition of a surcharge of not more than 3% of the tax levy against real property. The Community Preservation Act can only be adopted by ballot referendum.

I favor a citizen petition to cause a ballot question to be put on the ballot if citizens want this program here in Holyoke.

**4) Solar Ordinance Change**

An update was provided that public hearings have been held to change the solar ordinance to allow solar projects in residential zones by special permit with roof based projects

remaining as of right in all zones. The Ordinance Committee is waiting for a recommendation from the Planning Board and then will make a recommendation to the full City Council. It was noted that three tax agreements for solar projects in residential areas were denied by the Ordinance Committee and will come up at the next City Council meeting.

**5) Questions: Update on Alcohol Drug detention center/city budget**

A question was raised about the Geriatric Authority property. There is a request to extend the license for the property to the current Alcohol Treatment Program at this time. There is a law suit being filed in Springfield regarding the recommended site there.

Questions were raised about the City budget, but there is no communication from the Mayor yet. There is a five member committee of the City Council ready to meet on the budgetary issues. I am a member of that group and will give updates if the group meets.

Thanks to everyone for your interest, ideas and participation.

Submitted by,

Linda Vacon

Your Ward 5 City Councilor