



Holyoke Historical Commission (HHC)
Meeting Minutes
Monday March 9, 2020

Attendance: Richard Ahlstrom, Paola Ferrario, Christopher Gauthier, Frances Welson, Marco Crescentini

Not in Attendance: N/A

Municipal Staff: Ben Murphy (OPED)

Others in Attendance: N/A

1. **Call to Order** – Richard Ahlstrom called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m and announced that the meeting was being recorded.
2. **Review of December 9, 2019, January 13, 2020, and February 10, 2020 Minutes** – The minutes of the December, January, and February meetings were not available for the Commission to review and approve.
3. **Public Participation** – No public participation
4. **Richardson Train Station**
Richard Ahlstrom shared that he had invited David White, new owner of the Richardson Train Station, to attend the March Historical Commission meeting to discuss his plans for the building. A note left by Mr. White to the Commission indicated he was called away at the last minute and could not attend this meeting but will plan on attending the next meeting.
5. **Demolition Delay Ordinance**
Ben Murphy shared that he and Commissioner Welson have met with the Building Commissioner, the Board of Health Director, and the Fire Chief. His intention is to now take the comments from those Department Heads and incorporate them into the draft ordinance and then bring them back to the Commission for review. He also plans on reviewing the administrative process and see if there may be a way to improve the process. Mr. Murphy shared that the City Council Ordinance Committee is back logged and will likely not be able to take up the demolition delay ordinance until the fall.

Commissioners proceeded with a discussion on a schedule to move the amended ordinance forward. The Commission consensus was the following actions:

- The final demolition delay ordinance draft will be completed and agreed to by the Commission
- The Commission will produce talking points about the amended ordinance
- A presentation will be put together and presented to the Problem Properties Group
- A letter will be drafted that explains the changes to the ordinance for City Councilors
- Commissioners will schedule one-on-one meetings with City Councilors to discuss the amended ordinance
- A public information session will be held to give the public opportunity to learn about and ask questions about the proposed changes
- The amended ordinance will then be given to the City Council for their consideration

6. MHC Survey and Planning Grant

a. Main St. Corridor Survey

Ben Murphy shared that the consultant is completing the historic survey forms and that is expected to be completed in May. The expectation is that the consultant will make a presentation to the Commission at a future meeting.

b. 2020 Grant Application – Canal System Industrial Area Survey

Ben Murphy shared that the grant application was sent to MHC and he is now working with the Office for Community Development to find out if CDBG funds will be available as the required MHC grant match.

7. Old Business – None discussed

8. New Business

- Marco Crescentini shared that the Community Preservation Committee is holding a public hearing on March 11th at 6PM at the Senior Center. CPA grant applicants will present their projects to the public.
- Ben Murphy shared that the City, through the DPW, is applying for MHC Preservation Project Funds for the stain glass windows at City Hall and a support letter from the Historical Commission is required. They have been funded in the last two MHC grant rounds and have received CPA funding. A presentation about the project was sent to the Commission to review. Window number 12 and 3 will be reinstalled and windows number 1, 2, 4, 5 are being removed and stored for future restoration.

A motion was made by Marco Crescentini and seconded by Christopher Gauthier for the Commission to send a letter of support for the restoration of City Hall stained glass windows. The motion carried.

- Ben Murphy shared that MHC sent communications that both the Holyoke War Memorial Building and Smiths Ferry Cemetery qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. MHC has agreed to fund placing the War Memorial Building on the National Register but is not able to do the same for Smiths Ferry Cemetery at this time.
- The Western Mass Historical Commission Coalition has asked for historic preservation success stories and the Holyoke Commission has agreed to provide information on the restoration of the Yankee Pedlar/PeoplesBank project. Commissioner Welton will provide the information and pictures for a short five-minute presentation at the March 25th meeting in Greenfield.
- Paola Ferrario shared that she attended an affordable housing event at the Senior Center where she acquired information on the cost of new construction, which is very expensive, and it makes a good case for rehabilitating existing buildings vs. new construction.

9. Next Meeting – April 2020

10. Adjourn

At 7:26 p.m., there being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Frances Welton and seconded by Paola Ferrario to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

Sincerely,

Holyoke Historical Commission