

**Holyoke Redevelopment Authority**  
**Executive Meeting Minutes - December 16, 2020 at 5:00 pm**  
**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Thomas Creed, Chairperson  
Carl Eger, Jr., Vice Chairperson  
John Whelihan, Treasurer  
Daphne Board, Member

**Staff Present:**

Marcos Marrero, Executive Director  
John Dyjach, Assistant Director  
Benjamin Murphy, Development Specialist

1. **Call to Order:** Chairperson Creed called the Executive Meeting to order at 5:34 pm and stated that the meeting was being recorded via a Zoom video conference. He also requested confirmation that no one else was present since the meeting was being done remotely. All confirmed and an attendance roll call followed:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Present</u>
Daphne Board	X
Thomas Creed	X
Carl Eger, Jr.	X
John Whelihan	X

2. **HRA Board Business**

- a. **Executive Meeting Minutes of November 18, 2020:** A motion was made by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan to accept the November 18, 2020 executive minutes as written. A roll call followed:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Daphne Board	X
Thomas Creed	X
Carl Eger, Jr.	X
John Whelihan	X

3. **Other Business**

- a. **Canal Row:** Regarding the sale agreement with Canal Row for Race Street parcel 15, John Dyjach explained that Canal Row's attorney came back with mostly minor modifications except for changing the terms of the resale provision. He said the Board previously considered this and determined that the resale provision would remain as is. Thomas Creed asked the Board if the position on the resale clause remained or if there was an interest to negotiate. He added that his perspective is the same as what was discussed at previous meetings, that this should remain, but wanted to make sure the Board's position remained the same. All members concurred that the resale provision should remain in the P&S. John Dyjach said this would be relayed to Canal Row.

- b. **South Holyoke Homes:** John Dyjach said that as the Urban Redevelopment Plan amendment is being finalized the focus will now be on real estate acquisition for the South Holyoke Homes development. He said that the Holyoke Machine properties and the land swap with the Greek Orthodox Church are the current priorities. Mr. Dyjach said a step that can be done at this time is to request the transfer of 60 Hamilton Street, which is also known as Parcel 16, from the City to the HRA and asked for the Board's concurrence to proceed. Chairperson Creed said he would entertain a motion to authorize staff to take the steps necessary to request transfer of ownership from the City to the HRA. Said motion was made by Carl Eger and seconded by Daphne Board. Under discussion Carl Eger noted this location was once the site of the Skinner Coffee House which was of historic significance. John Whelihan asked about outreach to the Greek Church and Benjamin Murphy said that staff has connected with Father Tom Cokotis and other church representatives to have preliminary discussions. A roll call vote on the motion followed:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Daphne Board	X
Thomas Creed	X
Carl Eger, Jr.	X
John Whelihan	X

c. John Whelihan noted the recent news of the closure of Gateway City Arts and asked if there was a role for the HRA and if the closure will affect other plans in the area. Marcos Marrero replied that he has been in contact with the owners and that there is a desire to sell the property for the continuance of the business. He mentioned that GCA suffered significantly from the pandemic restrictions because it relied on revenues from events to support operating costs for them as well as for the other businesses located there. Mr. Marrero said that the nearby STEAM Building and Cubit have different types of tenancy and appear to be weathering the effects. He noted that the closing is especially difficult when in contrast there are other business initiatives that have liquidity and the city is seeing a barrage of project permitting. John Whelihan commented on his concerns for spin off businesses and the HCC Culinary Center related to opportunities for employment. Daphne Board commented that she thinks that with some government resources the businesses and restaurants can come back strong. Thomas Creed said it is important to find ways to help businesses bridge the gap before there can be some semblance of normal. He said GCA built a terrific business and it would be good if a well capitalized entity could continue what they started.

d. Marcos Marrero noted that a group expressed interest in the Armory and that there's the possibility of a proposal being submitted. He said the people involved relocated here recently from California and are in the cannabis industry. Mr. Marrero said that the concept as he understands it would be for some type of workforce training center. Daphne Board asked if it would involve marijuana. Marcos Marrero replied that he doesn't know the specifics of the concept but it could not involve cannabis on the property because it is not allowed per zoning. He thinks the training could be for the marijuana industry or for similar skills transferrable to other industry.

4. **Adjournment:** With no other business, a motion was made at 6:01 pm by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan to adjourn the executive meeting. Chairperson Creed extended holiday wishes to everyone and said that the next HRA meeting will be January 20<sup>th</sup>. A roll call followed:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Daphne Board	X
Thomas Creed	X
Carl Eger, Jr.	X
John Whelihan	X

Respectfully submitted,

  
 Thomas R. Creed, Chairperson  
 Holyoke Redevelopment Authority

Document presented at meeting:  
 Executive meeting minutes of November 18, 2020