

**Holyoke Redevelopment Authority  
Meeting Minutes – August 18, 2021  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom - Meeting ID: 873 1037 7191**

**Members Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

Aaron Vega, Executive Director  
John Dyjach, Assistant Director  
Benjamin Murphy, Development Specialist  
Gabriella Klinakis, Head Clerk

**Others Present:** Atty. Michael Bissonnette (Law Dept.), Dennis Hohenberger (MassLive)

1. **Call to order:** Chairperson Thomas Creed called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. and stated that the meeting was being held virtually per the Governor’s March 12, 2020 executive order and being recorded via a zoom video conference. A roll call followed:

| <u>Name</u>   | <u>Present</u> |
|---------------|----------------|
| Daphne Board  | X              |
| Thomas Creed  | X              |
| Carl Eger     | X              |
| John Whelihan | X              |

2. **HRA Board Business**

- a. **Meeting Minutes of June 9, 2021:** A motion was made by Carl Eger and seconded by Daphne Board to approve the June 9, 2021 meeting minutes. All members approved.

3. **Project / Property Updates**

- a. **South Holyoke Homes / Holyoke Housing Authority:** Aaron Vega said that the Letter of Intent for the land swap with the Greek Orthodox Church is ready to be signed. He added that the improvements to the City owned lot are underway. Chairperson Creed asked about next steps and Aaron Vega replied that it is to prepare the sale agreements. Mr. Vega said the timing is not known because staff relies on the City Law Department to develop the agreements and they have a large workload and are short staffed. There was then some discussion on using outside counsel if necessary. A motion was made by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan to authorize staff to expend up to \$10,000 for legal counsel up to \$10,000 staff if needed. A roll call followed:

| <u>Name</u>   | <u>Yes</u> |
|---------------|------------|
| Daphne Board  | X          |
| Thomas Creed  | X          |
| Carl Eger     | X          |
| John Whelihan | X          |

Chairperson Creed asked that staff engage with the new owner of the Holyoke Machine property as soon as possible. He also noted that the HHA submitted an ARPA funding request for South Holyoke Homes. Aaron Vega said that staff would continue efforts to contact the new owner of the Holyoke Machine property. He also suggested that the HRA consider a letter of support for the HHA’s ARPA application. Chairperson Creed offered to prepare a support letter with staff to which the Board concurred.

- b. **216 Appleton / WinnDevelopment:** Chairperson Creed said that he recently joined staff and the Mayor in a meeting to hear a presentation from WinnDevelopment. He said that

Winn continues to represent the project well and gave the Mayor good background as they are also seeking ARPA funding. John Dyjach said that staff continues to work with Winn and KP Law on pending agreements. He also explained that Winn has expanded the project by getting an agreement to purchase a building across the rail line at the bottom of Essex Street to further enhance the development. Daphne Board noted that they are now defining the project as a 55 and over development.

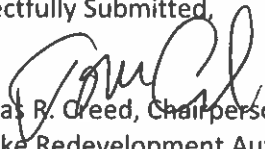
- c. **Race & Main Street Parcels / Canal Row:** John Dyjach explained that the agreements with Canal Row are pending signatures. He added the developers are working with staff to apply for incentives similar to what they did for the Cubit project. Chairperson Creed asked about the status of Freight Farms. Aaron Vega replied MassDevelopment and HCC are preparing for the move to happen by the end of September. Carl Eger asked if there has been any feedback from neighbors about the project to which Aaron Vega replied that it has all been positive.
  - d. **123 Pine Street:** Chairperson Creed said that one proposal was received in response to the RFP and that staff indicated there may be other interest. Aaron Vega described other improvements happening in the immediate area. John Dyjach noted that VOC did a good job at maintaining the property but that the garage at the rear of the property is in very poor condition and will likely be removed by the City. He added that staff will ask that any additional proposals be submitted soon so that the Board can consider them at the next meeting.
  - e. **37 Appleton Street / American Environmental:** Thomas Creed explained the reverter that was put in place when this property was sold to American Environmental. He asked that staff invite the company to the September meeting to discuss the status of the project.
  - f. **160 Middle Water Street / Western Mass Demolition Corp.:** Chairperson Creed said that like 37 Appleton, this property was sold for \$1.00 so that it would be cleared and prepared for future development. Aaron Vega explained that there is currently a proposal to develop the property for parking to support the redevelopment of a nearby mill building for a cannabis business.
4. **Other Business:**
- a. **Dwight Street Community Garden:** Chairperson Creed noted the positive impacts that the project has had in the area. Ben Murphy said that he has been in contact with Neighbor to Neighbor and that they are pleased with the progress. He noted that the agreement with them comes due later this year and that the future of the project will need to be considered over the next few months.
  - b. **Center City Liquor License:** Chairperson Creed said that there is an upcoming meeting to discuss modifications to the liquor license program to make it more active. Aaron Vega noted that two topics are the fee structure and potentially including new uses such as included event spaces. Thomas Creed said these may be considered at an upcoming meeting.
  - c. **HRA Board:** Chairperson Creed noted that Aaron Vega continues to discuss the appointment of a Board member with the Mayor. Aaron Vega said that one very qualified candidate was presented to the Mayor and that he is considering that person among other potential candidates.
  - d. **Release of HRA Minutes:** John Dyjach noted the list of executive minutes that were released.

**5. Adjournment:**

With no other business, a motion was made at 6:03 p.m. by Carl Eger and seconded by Daphne Board to adjourn the meeting. Chairperson Creed stated that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30 Section 21(a) of the Open Meeting Law, the Holyoke Redevelopment Authority will enter Executive Session at this time to consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body. A roll call followed:

| <u>Name</u>   | <u>Yes</u> |
|---------------|------------|
| Daphne Board  | X          |
| Thomas Creed  | X          |
| Carl Eger     | X          |
| John Whelihan | X          |

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Thomas R. Creed, Chairperson  
Holyoke Redevelopment Authority