

Holyoke Redevelopment Authority
Meeting Minutes – September 29, 2021
Virtual Meeting via Zoom - Meeting ID: 849 3971 4602

Members Present:

Thomas Creed, Chairperson
John Whelihan, Treasurer
Daphne Board, Member

Staff Present:

Aaron Vega, Executive Director
John Dyjach, Assistant Director
Benjamin Murphy, Development Specialist

Others Present: Sarah Meier-Zimbler and Matthew Mainville (Holyoke Housing Authority), Charlie Hughes (American Environmental), Arthur Naatz, Carrie Naatz and Nicholas Robinson (CAN Properties)

1. **Call to order:** Chairperson Thomas Creed called the meeting to order at 5:03 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>
John Whelihan	X
Thomas Creed	X
Daphne Board	X

2. **HRA Board Business**

- a. **Meeting Minutes of August 18, 2021:** A motion was made by Daphne Board and seconded by John Whelihan to approve the August 18, 2021 meeting minutes. All members approved. Thomas Creed noted that as a follow-up to the minutes an HRA letter of support was provided for HHA’s ARPA funding application for South Holyoke Homes. Additionally, he said that the agreement was signed with Canal Row for the Main and Race Street land and that there was a follow-up meeting with City staff about the Center City Liquor License program.
- b. **Financial Report:** John Dyjach reviewed the financial report and noted the Jackson Canal loan and the liquor license payments. John Whelihan asked if the City Council receives these reports. Mr. Dyjach replied that it is sent with the annual report. Thomas Creed suggested that staff look into establishing separate bank accounts for the different projects.

3. **Project / Property Updates**

- a. **South Holyoke Homes / Holyoke Housing Authority:** Matthew Manville thanked the Board for the letter of support and to Mayor Murphy for awarding \$1.3M in ARPA funding. Sarah Meier-Zimbler explained that work is underway for Phase 1 on South East Street which they anticipate being completed next August. She then explained that for Phase 2 and with ARPA funding in place the HHA is shifting the schedule to proceed with plans for eight townhome style housing units on the lots on the corner of Sargeant and South East Streets. She said that after gaining site control and performing due diligence the expectation is that this work could start in the Spring or early Summer of 2022. Thomas Creed noted the delay in gaining site control of the lot on the opposite corner and asked if the HHA would be ready to move on the transfer of that lot. Matthew Mainville replied that as soon as the HRA is ready to transfer the HHA is ready to accept and move forward. Sarah Meier-Zimbler noted that as part of that site work for Phase 2 the HHA would construct the dumpster enclosure now. John Whelihan asked about the Mayor’s support and Matthew Mainville said that his support remains very strong. There was then discussion about Phase 3 and the status of other properties. Thomas Creed noted the sale of the former Holyoke Machine lots on South East Street and that staff is making efforts to contact the new owner.

Thomas Creed asked about community outreach for the housing opportunities. Sarah Meier-Zimblber discussed some of the efforts and that outreach will ramp up in 2022.

- b. **216 Appleton / WinnDevelopment:** John Dyjach said that agreements with WinnDevelopment are pending review with the Board in the Executive meeting. He noted that Winn also applied for ARPA funding. Thomas Creed noted the HRA’s support of Winn’s funding request.

- c. **Race & Main Street Parcels / Canal Row:** John Dyjach said that for the Race Street Lot 15 License, Canal Row requested that the HRA allow the insurance policy to be changed to \$1M per occurrence and \$2M in aggregate which is a more typical requirement of this type of insurance. He said the request was reviewed with the Law Department which concurred that is the standard for this type of coverage. Mr. Dyjach noted that staff is also working with Canal Row on city and state tax incentive applications for the Canal Row project. Thomas Creed said that regarding the insurance request, it is his understanding that the HRA typically follows the City recommendation and that he had no issue adjusting this. He asked if Board members had any question or if a vote can be entertained. John Whelihan made a motion to authorize the change which was seconded by Daphne Board. A roll call followed:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Present</u>
John Whelihan	X
Thomas Creed	X
Daphne Board	X

- d. **37 Appleton Street / American Environmental:** Thomas Creed explained that the HRA sold 37 Appleton Street a few years ago to American Environmental to develop the site and that the company was invited to meet and provide an update. Charlie Hughes of American Environmental said that multiple options to develop the property have been considered but as of today the company is working with Forish Construction to design a gas station and storage facility for the company. He said the storage facility is to house their heavy equipment and for new offices for the company. Mr. Hughes said that he expects Forish to have plans ready in about thirty to forty-five days. John Whelihan asked if the gas station would be only for the company or open to the public too. Mr. Hughes said it would be for both. Daphne Board asked if the gas station would include a convenience store or would it be more for industrial type uses. Mr. Hughes replied that it would be more for industrial type vehicles given the area that it is located but that they would be open to other uses if the need was determined. He added that over the last few weeks the company has done further clean-up and leveling at the site in preparation for development. Aaron Vega noted the increased property improvements in the area with investments from the cannabis industry and other businesses. He suggested that the company provide some initial concept plans to the office to get a head start on reviewing the concepts and permitting. Thomas Creed thanked Mr. Hughes for the time and said the HRA appreciates the update and that the work is proceeding.

- e. **160 Middle Water Street / Western Mass Demolition Corp.:** Thomas Creed said that it is his understanding that work is proceeding at the location involving a neighboring new business. He asked that staff monitor and provide updates on the development.

- f. **123 Pine Street:** Chairperson Creed said that since the last meeting additional proposals were sought and that the Board will consider the two received in the Executive meeting. He thanked HRA and City staff for opening the building on several occasion for inspections.

4. Other Business:

- a. **Center City Liquor License:** Aaron Vega recapped his meeting with Chairperson Creed and State Representative Patricia Duffy to consider modifications to promote the Center City Liquor License program. He said that more consideration is needed especially regarding the flexibility for the type of businesses that can apply for the license. He said the \$10,000 fee was set by the legislation, but the Board may consider providing relief such as covering the local \$1,000 application fee. Thomas Creed said it was a good meeting with some creative ideas being formulated to possibly bring forward. Daphne Board asked the status of the Avalon license. Aaron Vega said there were delays during the pandemic and with the company providing information to the State. He is hopeful their license can be finalized within a few weeks
- b. **Rapid Recovery Program:** Aaron Vega explained that the consultant provided by the State to assist with local economic recovery from the pandemic is finalizing recommendations. He said that Ben Murphy assisted with this and that there were many meetings and interviews with local stakeholders. Mr. Vega said the topics ranged from marketing and tourism to infrastructure improvements and community wealth building. He thinks the work reinforces some of the efforts already underway in Holyoke and noted that there is possibility for funding as an outcome of the analysis. Ben Murphy said that the analysis included work related to the HRA such as property improvements and support for business development in the URP area. Thomas Creed concurred that some of what he heard aligned with the HRA's work and appreciated that this effort could result in funding for future projects.

5. **Executive Meeting:** A motion was made at 6:02 p.m. by Daphne Board and seconded by John Whelihan to enter the Executive 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>
John Whelihan	X
Thomas Creed	X
Daphne Board	X

6. Adjournment:

The Board returned from the Executive Thomas Creed noted that this is Ben Murphy's last meeting as he has taken a position outside of the City. Board members expressed thanks and well wishes to Mr. Murphy.

With no other business, a motion was made by Daphne Board and seconded by John Whelihan to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m. A roll call followed:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Yes</u>
John Whelihan	X
Thomas Creed	X
Daphne Board	X

Respectfully Submitted


Thomas K. Creed, Chairperson
Holyoke Redevelopment Authority