

Holyoke Redevelopment Authority
Meeting Minutes - November 17, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom - Meeting ID: Meeting ID: 816 2609 1209

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

Others Present: Lauren Canepari (WinnDevelopment), Anthony Luciano (License Board), Attorney Michael Bissonnette, (Law Department)

1. **Call to order:** Chairperson Thomas Creed called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. and stated that the meeting is being held virtually per the Governor’s March 12, 2020 executive order and being recorded via a zoom video conference. He added that today marks the HRA’s first hybrid meeting with some Board Members in attendance in person. 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 October 27, 2021:** A motion was made by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan to approve the October 27, 2021 meeting minutes. All members approved.

3. **Project / Property Updates**

- a. **216 Appleton Street / WinnDevelopment:** Thomas Creed commented about the project funding announcement made at an event last month. He then introduced Lauren Canepari of WinnDevelopment to provide a project update. Ms. Canepari said that with the DHCD award letter in hand the project is officially happening. She explained next steps with the other funding sources and that Winn is working to finalize 100% design plans. Ms. Canepari added that Winn is working to close of 5 Essex Street which would connect to 216 Appleton over a connector to be built over the rail lines. She said they are working to resolve some title issues on this sale and that they are also preparing updated plans for the Planning Board’s consideration. Regarding project timing, Ms. Canepari said they expect start of construction be late first quarter or early second quarter 2022 with April being the goal for shovels in the ground. Thomas Creed asked if anything is needed from the Authority or the City to help with the April start date. Ms. Canepari replied that she thinks they are on their timeline. John Whelihan asked for more information on the Essex Street building. Ms. Canepari explained that it would serve as a second entrance for tenants as well as an amenity for 216 Appleton and it would have such things as a community room, a gym and a management office. She said that there would be an enclosed bridge connector over the rail to 216 Appleton and that the property would provide some additional parking for the development. A rendering of the project was shown and Ms. Canepari added that this also is a benefit for Phase Two of the project. Thomas Creed asked about the extent of involvement with the railroad. Ms. Canepari said the railroad has been very cooperative and that they have an

MOU in place to build over the rail including an easement for air rights. Thomas Creed commented that this design to include the new building is a great enhancement for both project phases. Aaron Vega said that from the legal side it is important to have the ground lease reviewed. Ms. Canepari said that Winn’s counsel is working on this. John Dyjach noted that staff and Winn are working to amend the agreement for the 191 Appleton Street land so that the timing is consistent with the 216 Appleton agreement. Aaron Vega noted that State Housing Committee Chair is visiting Holyoke and that this project and others in the area will be highlighted. Thomas Creed thanked Ms. Canepari on behalf of the Board for the update and the partnership with Winn.

John Dyjach said that the extension for the 191 Appleton Street agreement is being reviewed by KP Law and asked if the Board is amenable to approve if the only purpose is to align the dates with the 216 Appleton agreement. Thomas Creed commented that if the other terms or structure of agreement aren’t changing, he would entertain a motion to authorize the Chair to execute an amendment to make the 191 Appleton Street agreement coterminous with the 216 Appleton Street agreement. Motion to move the order as stated by the Chair was made by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan. With no further discussion, a roll call followed:

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

- b. **Canal Row:** Chairperson Creed welcomed Denis Luzuriaga for an update on the Canal Row project. Mr. Luzuriaga said the main update is that they applied for funding from the State’s Housing Development Incentive Program and that they are awaiting notice if the funding will be provided. He said they have been preparing design plans but the outcome of the funding request will determine the path forward for the project. He explained the concept remains the same with forty-five apartments on three upper floors and fifteen thousand square feet of leasable commercial space on the ground floor. Thomas Creed asked if there is any indication of when notification of the HDIP funding will be made. Mr. Luzuriaga said he did not know but is hopeful that it would be in a few weeks. Aaron Vega said that this project will be highlighted along with the need for HDIP funding during the tour next week with the Housing Committee Chair. Thomas Creed thanked Mr. Luzuriaga and said that the extension to the current agreement will be taken up at the HRA’s December meeting when hopefully more information on funding is known.
- c. **South Holyoke Homes:** Thomas Creed said that Holyoke Housing Authority was not asked to attend the meeting but noted that he went by the Phase One site and saw progress with footings poured. He said the next step for Phase Two is for the parcels to be approved for transfer from the City to HRA which he understands is in process. Aaron Vega noted that the legal agreements for the Phase Two properties are in process including the swap for the Church lot. Attorney Bissonnette noted that it is reasonable to expect the sale to be completed by the end of the year. He noted that the sale of 123 Pine Street is also progressing.
- d. **123 Pine Street:** John Dyjach said that the Disposition Agreement is being finalized. Chairperson Creed noted that the Board previously authorized the Chair to execute so long as there are no material changes. John Dyjach noted that the garage, formerly at the rear of the property, was removed by the City.

e. Dwight Street Community Garden: Aaron Vega explained that he has been in contact with Neighbor to Neighbor about the maintenance plan needed for the property as part of their agreement with the HRA. He added that staff also worked with other city departments to provide assistance to the person formerly living at the site and that the tent was removed. John Dyjach explained that the agreement with Neighbor to Neighbor expires at the end of the month. Thomas Creed said that with a maintenance plan still pending he is not sure the Board is ready to proceed with a longer term. Daphne Board asked why a longer term is not being considered if the requirements are the same. John Dyjach responded that the original agreement required a maintenance plan which Neighbor to Neighbor has not provided yet. There was then discussion on clarifying what is needed in the Maintenance Plan and Aaron Vega said he would continue working with Neighbor to Neighbor to get this done. Thomas Creed asked if it made sense to extend the existing agreement for sixty days while this was being worked on. A motion was made by Carl Eger and seconded by Daphne Board to extend the existing agreement with Neighbor to Neighbor for sixty days. Under discussion Carl Eger said it is important to have this document in writing as it is a provision of the agreement to document. Thomas Creed agreed and said it is a cooperative effort and for everyone's benefit to have a document outlining this. With no further discussion, a roll call on the motion followed:

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

4. Center City Liquor License: Chairperson Creed said that the Board and staff continue to explore ways to promote the utilization of the Center City Liquor License Program. Aaron Vega said one effort toward this is to collaborate with the License Board and then introduced Anthony Luciano, its Chair. Mr. Luciano thanked the HRA for this opportunity and said the License Board has discussed ways to support this program and make it more attractive. He said one possibility may be for the License Board to help match some incentives and suggested that a working group be formed to consider this and other ideas ways to promote the program. Aaron Vega explained that there may be some flexibility with the program and that some modifications to the requirements of the program be considered to go along with additional marketing. Thomas Creed asked if a Board member was interested and available to be part of the working group. Carl Eger offered to represent the Board for this. Thomas Creed thanked Anthony and Carl and asked that they provide updates as this evolves. He also said that he is especially interested broadening the definition of businesses that can take advantage of the program and hoped the working group can creatively explore that aspect. Daphne Board said a couple of ideas that come to mind are to make the information and application for the program available in Spanish and secondly to reach out to restaurants in the area that do not have a license. Carl Eger said he thinks that market awareness of the program is crucial. To this point Daphne Board suggested that a press release be done highlighting the business that recently received a license as well as to market the program. Aaron Vega said these are good ideas for staff to follow-up on.

5. Other Business:

- a. Thomas Creed read the note of appreciation from Suzanne Parker of Girls Inc. to the HRA about the progress with the South Holyoke Homes development.
- b. Aaron Vega said that he is in discussion with Mayor Garcia about the vacancy on the Board and hopes there will be an appointment soon.

- c. Aaron Vega said that since some of the current HRA projects are taking shape it may be time in the next few months for the Board to consider the next priorities. Thomas Creed concurred and suggested that it might be good for him and another Board member to meet with staff to consider priorities that could then be discussed with the entire Board at a meeting.

6. Adjournment:

Chairperson Creed said that he does not anticipate that an Executive Meeting is necessary and that the Board will convene its Annual Meeting next. With no other business a motion was made by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m. 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