

**Holyoke Redevelopment Authority**  
**Meeting Minutes – December 15, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.**  
**Virtual Meeting via Zoom - Meeting ID: Meeting ID: 812 5529 1883**

**Members Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

Aaron Vega, Executive Director  
John Dyjach, Assistant Director

**Others Present:** Jennifer Keitt (HRA Board Appointee pending City Council confirmation)

1. **Call to order:** Chairperson Thomas Creed called the meeting to order at 5:05 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. A roll call followed:

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

Chairperson Creed led introductions to Jennifer Keitt. Ms. Keitt then proceeded to provide her background and express her interest in joining the HRA Board.

2. **HRA Board Business**

- a. **Meeting Minutes of November 17, 2021:** A motion was made by Carl Eger and seconded by Daphne Board to approve the November 17, 2021 meeting minutes as written. John Dyjach said there are a few typographical errors that will be corrected. All members approved.  
John Dyjach noted that the Annual Meeting minutes are prepared and will be presented at a future meeting.

3. **Project / Property Updates**

- a. **216 Appleton Street / WinnDevelopment:** Aaron Vega updated the Board that staff is still pursuing the draft ground lease for the project with WinnDevelopment and the attorneys. He wants a specific timeline to be provided so that the HRA is not rushed when the March or April closing comes along. Mr. Vega said that, upon Winn’s request he is providing a narrative of other developments occurring in the area. Additionally, he said that Winn is coordinating a meeting with residents of 101 Cabot Street to discuss Historic Register designation. Mr. Vega said that as the last update he is aware that Winn is resolving title issues for their purchase of the property across the rail line on Essex Street. John Whelihan asked if there is a percentage of 101 Cabot residents needed to approve historic designation. Aaron Vega explained that it is his understanding there is not a percentage required but that the residents can individually or as a group provide letters of support or opposition or that they do not respond as Winn only needs to show efforts were made to involve the other parties and this also includes the 108 Cabot and 1 Bigelow Street buildings that were also once part of the Farr Alpaca complex. Daphne Board asked if someone from the city or the HRA should be at Winn’s meeting with the residents. Aaron Vega said he will attend and one or two HRA members are welcome. He expects someone from the Historic Commission to also attend. Chairperson Creed asked Mr. Vega to inform the Board of the meeting date and time.

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Chairperson Creed then said that regarding the schedule with Winn he thinks it is especially important to get the timeline and/or a calendar until April in writing so as to avoid delay and provide accountability for tasks. He added that he does not know all the items that need to happen including what Winn needs to accomplish with the Planning Board. Carl Eger agreed and said some form of matrix would work. Chairperson Creed asked that staff work with Winn to provide this.

Daphne Board suggested that the new Ward Councilor should be invited to Winn's meeting. Chairperson Creed agreed and added that communication should be initiated with the new Ward Councilors on the urban renewal plan and with all HRA activities. Aaron Vega agreed and that will start when the new Councilors become official in early January.

John Dyjach said that the extension for the 191 Appleton Street agreement that was approved by the Board in November is being finalized for signature by the Chair and WinnDevelopment.

- b. **Canal Row:** Chairperson Creed said that Board action needs to be considered regarding extensions drafted for the Option Agreement and the License Agreement. John Dyjach explained the agreements and said they are the same as previous extensions with one notable change being that no new non-refundable deposit is being required for this extension. He said this was not done at the developer's request but at Staff's suggestion because there is already \$10,000 in non-refundable deposits and the developers have expended or will expend other expenses to get the project going. Mr. Dyjach said the Law Department reviewed and approved the form of these agreements. He added that the state recently approved the commercial incentive, but the housing incentive approval remains the key. With this information, Chairperson Creed asked for the Board's to consider a motion to approve these agreements and authorize the Chair to execute. A motion was made by Carl Eger and seconded by Daphne Board to approve the action as described by the Chair. Chairperson Creed said that he agrees with not including a deposit but that it does not preclude the HRA from requiring future deposits for extensions if needed. He added that the length of the extension appears reasonable and is sufficient time to receive notice of HDIP funding and for securing project financing. He noted that the agreement extension date should be written as June 30, 2022. With no further discussion a roll call vote followed:

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

- c. **South Holyoke Homes:** John Dyjach said that the City Council recently approved transfer of the Phase 2 lots on Clemente Street to the HRA. He reviewed a map of the Phase 2 area and said the next step is to prepare the standard Land Disposition Agreement and asked that Board to consider authorizing staff to prepare this document and finalize this document since except for it being a different location it is the same agreement used for other HHA South Holyoke Homes properties. Thomas Creed said that it is unusual to ask for approval of a document the Board has not reviewed but he understands it would be the same document and that he would be supportive especially if it helps expedite the process and not have to call a special meeting. He said that he would entertain a motion to approve the standard disposition agreement with the HHA for South Holyoke Homes to transfer parcels 5, 6, 7 and 8 and authorize the Chair to execute as long as it is in form and substance as the previous HRA/HHA agreements. John Dyjach said that staff will come back to the Board if there are any substantive changes, He added that staff is trying to move these

agreements along and that their execution also relies on the Law Dept. and HHA review. With no further discussion a roll call vote followed:

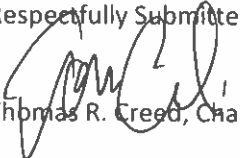
<u>Name</u>	<u>Yes</u>
John Whelihan	X
Carl Eger	X
Thomas Creed	X
Daphne Board	X

- d. **Dwight Street Community Garden:** John Dyjach said he has little to report but thinks progress is being made on the one remaining item for the extension which is Neighbor to Neighbor's maintenance plan for the property. He thinks this should be resolved in the next 30 to 60 days. Aaron Vega added that during a recent discussion with Neighbor to Neighbor it was good to hear that they would be a tax paying entity after they acquire.
- e. **123 Pine Street Sale:** John Dyjach said that the agreement is signed and that the buyer has a forty-five day due diligence period and if that goes well another thirty days to close. He added that the City removed the dilapidated garage that was at the rear of the building before the agreement was signed.
4. **Other Business:**
- a. Aaron Vega said he and Daphne Board recently discussed the idea of grants for property rehab in the URP area and thinks there will be some ideas to bring forward to the Board in the new year. Thomas Creed suggested that some fund generation for such a program should also be part of the discussion.
- b. Aaron Vega said that, although the former Geriatric Authority is not under the purview of the HRA, he thought it important to share that considerable progress is being made on this project by Kindred and BayState Healthcare. He shared slides depicting the estimate \$62M development and noted that this will also be a tax paying entity with an estimated \$1.3M in new annual tax revenue for the City. John Dyjach also noted a recent meeting that Aaron and the Mayor convened with manufacturers and that it is important to continue to engage with these established companies.
- c. Aaron Vega asked if the HRA would like to meet individually or as a group to discuss future priority projects for the HRA. Thomas Creed concurred and suggested that it might be good for him and another Board member to meet with staff after the holidays to consider priorities that could then be discussed with the entire Board at a meeting. He also said he wants to be cognizant of staff's bandwidth as other projects are nearing a conclusion.
- d. Chairperson Creed said that he was pleased to see the recent press article about HRA activities which included promotion for the Center City Liquor License Program. Daphne Board then asked about Avalon's pending liquor license program. Aaron Vega said he recently talked with one of the partners there and that they need to provide the State ABCC with one piece of documentation. He will continue to try to move this along. He added that he is also working with other companies to consider the program.

5. **Adjournment:**

With no further business and no executive meeting a motion was made by Daphne Board and seconded by Carl Eger to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Thomas R. Creed, Chairperson