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RECEIVED

NOV 16 2021

**Holyoke City Clerk's  
Holyoke, MA**

To: Holyoke City Council, Mayor  
Date: November 2021  
From: CDP  
Re: Combining Holyoke's two Historical Commissions

My name is Craig Della Penna. I am a Holyoke native, grew up there, wrote a book about Holyoke and helped form two advocacy orgs there. (Save Historic Holyoke and Friends of the Holyoke Canal Walk) For several years, I also led bike tours for Wistariahurst of both the Canal District and the Highlands. (see attached brochure).

The first house I ever purchased and restored was in Holyoke. It was originally owned by the Dreikorn family who famously baked the bread we all enjoyed. Today I live in a Civil War era antique house in Florence and I serve on the Northampton Historical Commission. This letter is from me—and not on behalf of the Northampton Historical Commission.

Currently Holyoke has two Historical Commissions

1. Historical Commission
2. Fairfield Avenue Local Historic District Commission-LHDC

Currently both commissions have members appointed by the mayor and approved by the C.C. The members are supposed to have some knowledge of real estate/ architecture and/or historic preservation if possible. The rest of the commissioners have to be residents of the city. There are Mass General Laws which state the particular duties of each (MGL 40 Sec. 8D and MGL 40 Sec. 4).

Holyoke follows state law which requires all municipalities to create a Historical Commission which covers general duties in the city, The Fairfield Ave Local Historic District Commission covers that one specific district within the city. Because Holyoke has both active commissions. Both are meeting once a month. Both are keeping minutes and performs their official duties. Both are making annual reports. It might be time to consider streamlining these bodies by combining them.

The idea is not new. Springfield had combined their commissions. The Historical Commission and believe it or not, FIVE Local Historic District Commissions. Northampton has a Historical Commission AND one Local Historic District. Today, these are combined.

Holyoke can simplify staffing, meeting locations and projects. By combining, the members can collaborate toward a singular purpose, streamline the concepts so the general public has a better understanding of historic preservation. Under the leadership of the Planning Department, these services can be consolidated, staff is available for both commissions and time, money and energy can be saved.

Why is the Historical commission funded whereas the LHDC is not?  
Why is the Historical commission staffed whereas the LHDC is not?

Both commissions are created equally but have separate duties. If combined, the current commissioners can choose to remain in place or withdraw and new commissioners appointed. The newly formed commission will discuss their duties, and decide on monthly or bi-weekly meetings, vote on a chair and other details as needed.

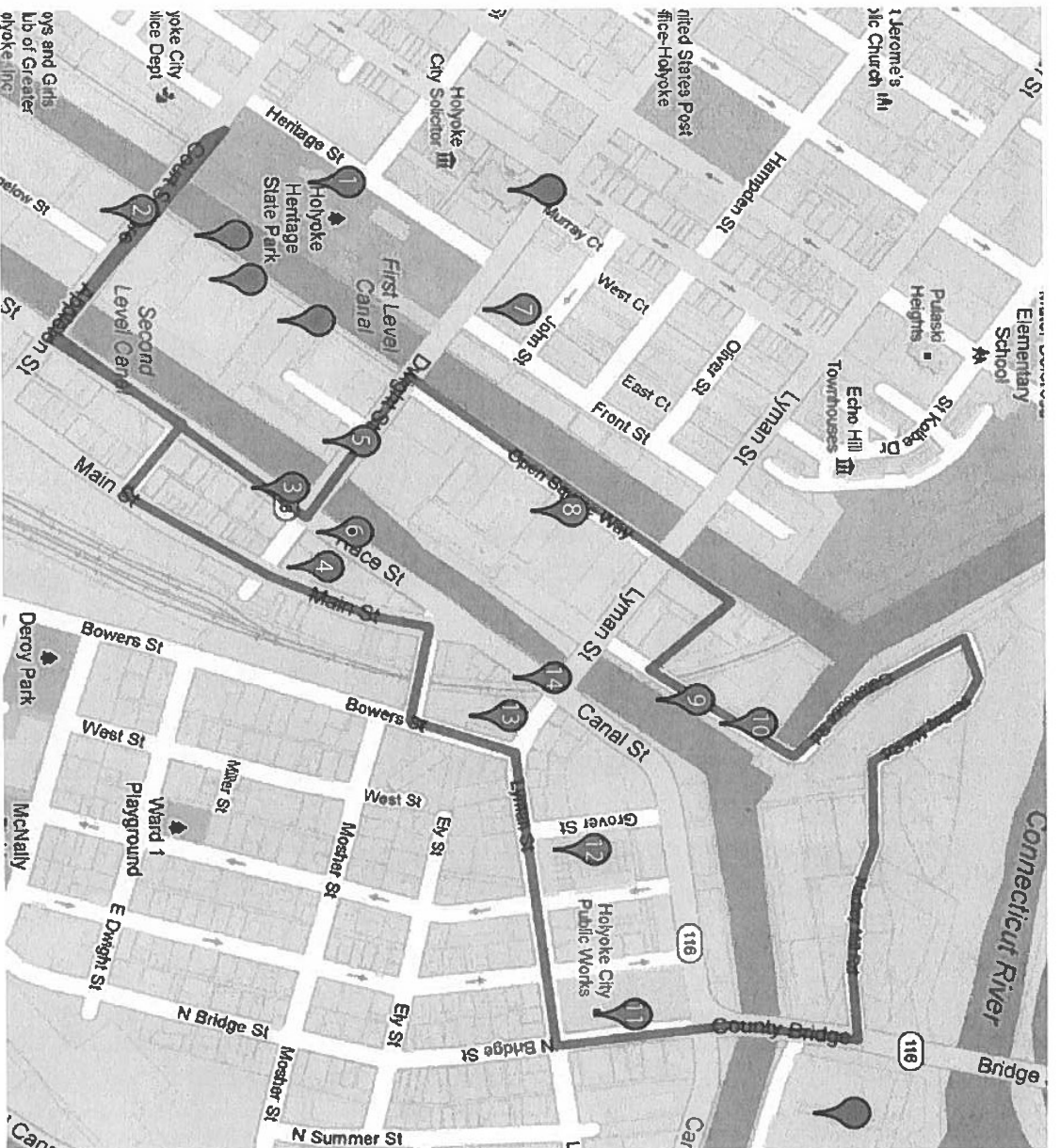
Fortunately today, the residents of Holyoke are more aware of the city's history and efforts to preserve significant buildings. The time is right to combine these commissions to make them more effective and productive.

Thank you!



Craig Della Penna

1. Heritage State Park. Former location of the Wm. Skinner Silk Manufacturing mill.
2. Green High Performance Computing Center. Data center housing 10,000 high-end computers. Former site of the 1874 first Wm. Skinner Silk mill.
3. Sears Building (1896) 80 Race St. Once one of the largest grocery firms in the area.
4. Hotel Hamilton (1878) 345-363 Dwight St. Once a major commercial structure.
5. Beebe-Holbrook Paper Mill (1871). Currently used for hydroelectric power generation.
6. Parson's Hall (1870) 362 Dwight St. Once known for its dances, theatrical productions and athletics.
7. Windsor Hotel and Opera House, 45 Dwight St. Both destroyed by fire.
8. Lyman Mills and current use of Open Square.
9. The Wherehouse, 109 Lyman St. Located in a revamped former mill along the canal system loaded with Holyoke memorabilia.
10. The Dam and Fish Lift hosts thousands of visitors for a few weeks in the spring.
11. Old Trolley Car Barn for the Holyoke Street Railway. Currently Holyoke's DPW garage.
12. Lyman Street. Built in 1848 to house Lyman Mills workers, these are some of the oldest housing units in Holyoke
13. Railroad Station Complex. Designed by famed architect, H.H. Richardson.
14. Mt Tom Fire Station (1887) was located here because it was the most densely populated area of Holyoke at the time. It is attached to the HWP company.
15. Back to Heritage State Park.



238 CABOT STREET, HOLYOKE, MA 01040  
 413-322-5660 WWW.W1STARIAHURST.ORG



Use this QR code to access the Holyoke History Walk application where you can find an historical map and information and photographs of historic buildings in Holyoke, MA.

## Bicycle Tours of Holyoke A Healthy Dose of History!

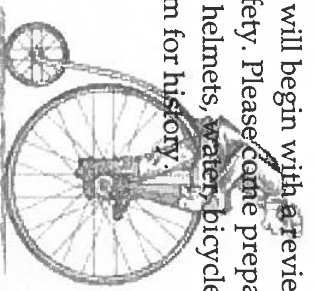
### The Mills:

Grab your bike and join us for this tour focusing on the history of the nationally recognized historic district around the canals and nearby mills. Learn about the city's industrial history and canal landscapes as Della Penna shares his insights into manufacturing industry in Holyoke. The tour route will begin and end at Holyoke Heritage State Park and will include stops on Race Street, Bridge Street and Lyman Street.

### The Mansions:

Come along and cycle around the elegant homes built by the Holyoke industrialists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Ride through the highlands and the Fairfield Avenue Historic District with their grand Victorian houses. Learn about the families, architects and builders of these magnificent homes. This route will begin at Kennedy Park and tour around Fairfield Avenue, Lexington Avenue, Madison Avenue and River Terrace.

Each tour will begin with a review of basic bicycle safety. Please come prepared with your own helmets, water, bicycle and enthusiasm for history.



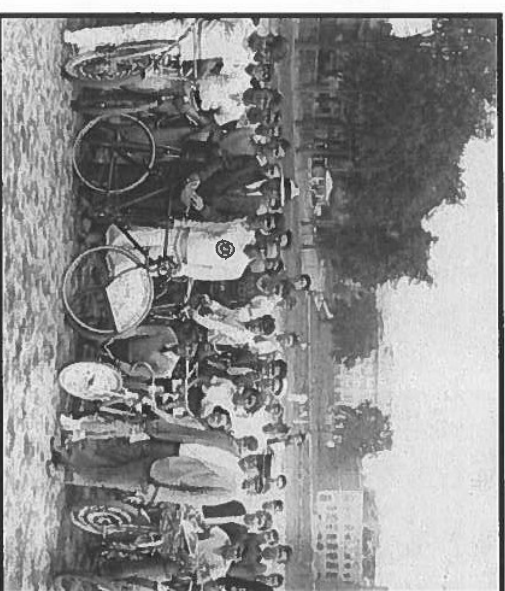
Craig Della Penna is a native of Holyoke, and a local real estate broker. He is the author of five books and numerous op-ed pieces/guest editorials on the value of rail trails and greenways in the context of residential real estate and smart growth development. With over 1,200 lectures in twenty-one states, he is one of the country's most in-demand public speakers on these subjects in the U.S. One of his books was *Images of America: Holyoke*—now in its sixth printing and one of the most successful of the series. He also was directly involved in the start-up of two local advocacy groups important in Holyoke's renaissance; Save Historic Holyoke and Friends of the Holyoke Canal Walk.

Wistariahurst Museum is dedicated to preserving Holyoke's history and inspiring an appreciation of history and culture through educational programs, exhibits and special events. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Wistariahurst is the former home of William Skinner, a prominent silk manufacturer. The Museum is open for guided tours every Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 12 p.m. - 4 p.m. During these hours, the Carriage House Exhibit & Gift Shop are also open. Hours for Archive Research: Mon. 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Thur. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. For more information or a schedule of upcoming events, please visit our website at [www.wistariahurst.org](http://www.wistariahurst.org).



**WISTARIAHURST**  
**MUSEUM**  
*The Skinner*  
*Family Estate*

## BICYCLE TOURS OF HISTORIC HOLYOKE: THE MILLS

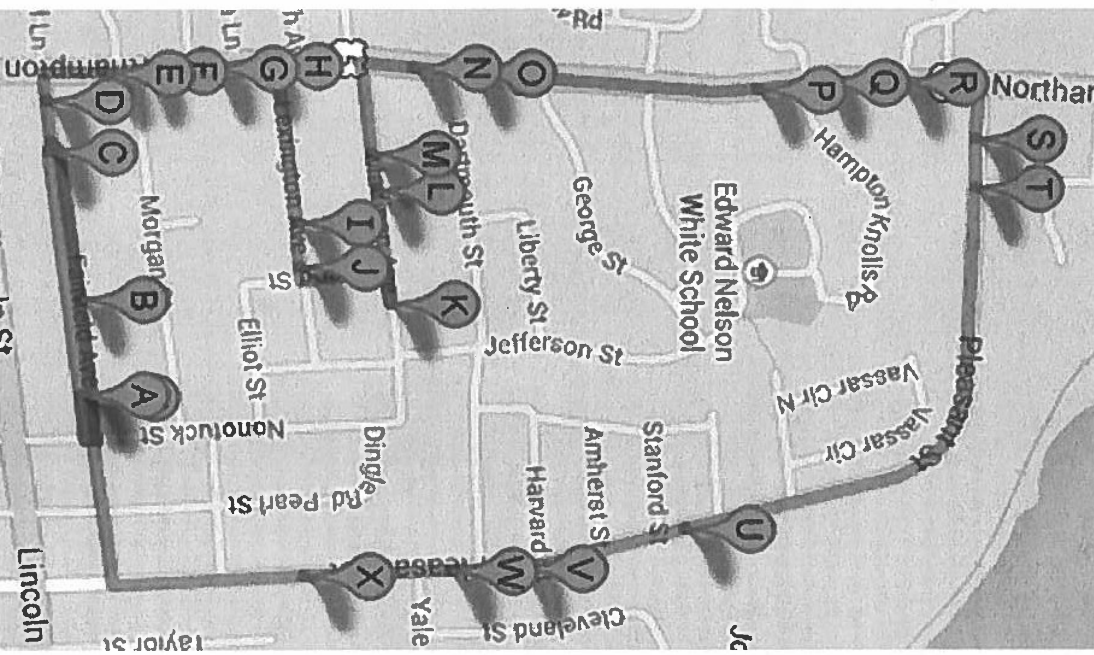


Sunday, Sept. 17  
11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Led by Local Realtor,  
Author and Advocate of  
Holyoke's Renaissance  
Craig Della Penna

238 CABOT STREET, HOLYOKE, MA 01040  
413-322-5660 [WWW.WISTARIAHURST.ORG](http://WWW.WISTARIAHURST.ORG)

- A. Andrew Miller House—30 Fairfield Avenue**  
**1889 Queen Anne Style**  
 This house has unusually fine ornaments on its porch, including pairs of columns which frame panels of lattice and diagonal pattern frame openings. Andrew Miller was one of the few craftsmen on the street; many of the other residents were merchants or involved in the paper industry.
- B. John Judd House—48 Fairfield Avenue**  
**1912 Craftsman/Colonial Revival**  
 John Judd owned Judd Paper Co. This is one of the few houses on the street that isn't in the Queen Anne style. The house has three chimneys and a small brick sun wing. The carriage house echoes the style of the main house.
- C. William Wilson House—67 Fairfield Avenue**  
**1891 Queen Anne Style**  
 Architect: Alderman. The architect lived in this house from 1900 to 1908. This house is one of the most elaborately decorated on the street, including a stained glass window on the western side.
- D. Roswell Fairfield House—74 Fairfield Avenue**  
**1883 Queen Anne Style**  
 Roswell Fairfield was the owner of the land that was divided into the lots that make up Fairfield Ave. He was also treasurer and V.P. of Whiting Paper Co. and later started Fairfield Paper Co. The building has bays which project from the north, south, and west sides of the building.
- E. A.W. Eslebeck House—1374 Northampton Street**  
**1886 Queen Anne Style**  
 This house's elaborate details have been well kept throughout its many owners since the 1880s. The house originally had a full wraparound porch which is now enclosed, and the lower level of the circular bay on the house was originally open as well.
- F. Samuel Whiting House—1365 Northampton St.**  
**913 Colonial Revival (Current Marion Center)**  
 Samuel Whiting was president of Whiting and Cook, Inc. who were stationary manufacturers. He had this house built in 1913 and it is the largest Colonial revival in the north Holyoke suburbs.
- G. Henry Tuttle House—1329 Northampton Street**  
**1780 Federal Style**  
 This is the oldest house in north Holyoke as well the only center chimney house of the Federal period in north Holyoke. Henry Tuttle founded the Holyoke Street Railroad and edited the Holyoke Transcript. He also gave the land on which the Holyoke home for Aged People would be built.
- H. Rufus Chapin House—1328 Northampton Street**  
**1906 Tudor Revival Style**  
 This house is distinctive in that it has a cobbled first story and a port cochere. It also has an eave line horizontal beam with a molder border, which is a popular detail of Tudor houses in the area from the 1910s. The owner, Rufus Chapin, was a traveling salesman for Baker-Vawter Co. who made loose-leaf notebooks.
- I. E.H. Friedrich House—52 Lexington Avenue**  
**1920 Craftsman/Eclectic style**  
 This stucco side gabled house is a combination of Tudor, Craftsman and colonial revival styles. The owner of this house owned a company of sheet metal workers as well as an ice business.
- J. Daniel O'Connell House—40 Lexington Avenue**  
**1926 Tudor Revival Style**  
 This Tudor Revival has a broad gable spanning the front of the house and pairs of cross gables facing the sides, making it different in plan from the other Tudor styles in the area. The O'Connell family were a family of prominent builders in Holyoke.
- K. Elisha Walker House—95 Madison Avenue**  
**1916 Colonial Revival Style**  
 The first owner of the house was Elisha Walker and he was sales manager of Collins Manufacturing Co. Later in 1940, Richard Towne, who was production manager of the National Blank Book Co., bought the house. It has a multi paneled sash around the door as well as a transom above the door.
- L. G.W. Prentiss Jr. House—153 Madison Avenue**  
**1913 Craftsman Style**  
 The owner, George Prentiss, graduated from MIT, and was treasurer and general manager of his father's wire manufacturing company in Holyoke. This neighborhood has many Craftsman houses, but this is an outstanding and well kept example. It has one large gable across the front of the house which is supported by a long trellis above the door.
- M. William Wilson House—168 Madison Avenue**  
**1914 Tudor Revival Style**  
 William Wilson was a proprietor of City Ice Co. The house has an elaborate roof line; two gables on either side of a bowed section in the center and a small shed dormer. The roof of the projecting porch echoes the curve of the roof.
- N. Joseph Metcalf House—1265 Northampton St.**  
**1912 Craftsman Style**  
 This house has steep shed roofs with exposed rafter ends and slightly flaring eaves. Most of the windows have diamond-patterned muntins in the upper panes. The first owner, Joseph Metcalf, was one of the leaders in the textile industry, producing alpaca wool fabric.
- O. Thomas Kennedy House—1250 Northampton St.**  
**1896 Queen Anne Style**  
 Thomas Kennedy was a bridge and dam builder. This house is embellished with front gables, an octagonal tower, and a wraparound porch featuring turned posts and ornamental brackets. Other decorative elements include dentiling on the roofline cornice and a stained glass transom on the porch.
- P. Henry Hastings House—1193 Northampton St.**  
**1845 Victorian Homestead Style**  
 Henry Hastings was a dentist and amateur geologist who owned this house from the earliest Holyoke directory in 1882 and likely even earlier. It is a composite of styles, from its lacy Gothic Revival vergeboards to porch posts and castelated roof in the Queen Anne style.
- Q. Frank Hastings House—1164 Northampton St.**  
**1895 Queen Anne Style**  
 Another member of the Hastings family to live on Northampton Street, Frank was a policeman. Many decorative features of his house are still intact: cut shingles in the gables, turned posts and brackets on the front porch, a wooden balustrade, and flared-topped chimneys. A polygonal deck suggests the existence of a former pavilion.
- R. Philip Steiger House—1147 Northampton St.**  
**1915 Shingle Style**  
 This house was built by the son and business partner of Albert Steiger of the department store chain. The house has a broad profile, front gables, and a central porch with stungled piers.
- S. B.G. Fontana House—4 River Terrace**  
**1900 Colonial Revival Style**  
 The Doric-columned porches, simpler massing, and central door relate this house to Colonial Revival style, but a wrap-around porch and front corner polygonal bay are residual Queen Anne features. In 1911, this was the only house on its street, and was not connected to city water until 1917.
- T. A.L. de Ollouqui House—28 River Terrace**  
**1923 Craftsman Bungalow Style**  
 This house is the only example of a bungalow style house in the surrounding houses. It is side gabled, with a low, raftered, overhanging roof. The owner was a traveling salesman from a firm in New York.
- U. William & Elizabeth (Skinner) Hubbard House**  
**90 Pleasant Street**  
**1920 Colonial Revival Style**  
 William Hubbard was the secretary and assistant treasurer at William Skinner's silk mill. His home is distinctive by its semicircular windows and its front door decorated with an iron lantern and a colored terra cotta panel.
- V. F.A. McLane House—174 Pleasant Street**  
**1902 Colonial Revival Style**  
 This house is one of the most elaborate, and also one of the earliest, in its development. It is eye-catching for its large porch, with Doric columns, curved balustrade and port cochere. Frederick McLane was a superintendent at the Skinner silk mill.
- W. Newton Cain House—177 Pleasant Street**  
**1898 Tudor Revival Style**  
 One of the largest Tudor houses in the neighborhood, this house has distinctive curved half-timber decoration and leaded transoms in front windows. This house was an advertisement for Newton Cain's skills as a carpenter and builder.
- X. Loving School—250 Pleasant Street**  
**Tudor Revival Style**  
 The Loving School, one of only two private schools in Holyoke at the time, relocated to this building in 1919. It is unusual among Tudor houses for its broad shape, being only a story-and-a-half high. Its decorative windows are clustered and multipaned. This house was vacant in 1940 before being converted to a residence.

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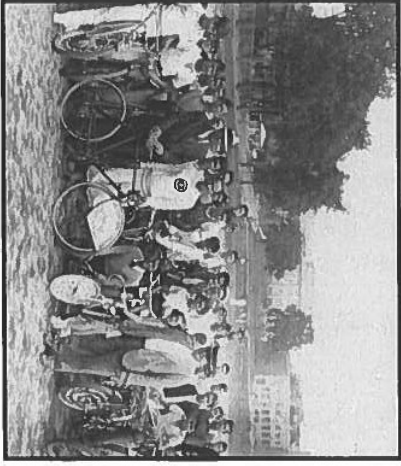


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 Each tour will begin with a review of basic bicycle safety. Please come prepared with your own helmets, water, bicycle and enthusiasm for history.  
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**OF HISTORIC HOLYOKE:**  
**THE MANSIONS**



**Saturday, Sept. 16**  
**11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**  
**Beginning at Kennedy Park**  
**Led by Local Realtor,**  
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