



Chair – Paola Ferrario

Vice Chair – Vacant

Recording Secretary – Christopher Gauthier

Commissioners: Richard Ahlstrom, Elana Aubrey, Luis Salazar & Francis Welson

Alternate Commissioner: Marco Crescentini

HOLYOKE HISTORICAL COMMISSION (HHC)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday March 10, 2022

Due to the declared public health emergency the meeting was held virtually via Zoom & Hybrid (First Meeting). Meeting ID: 875 4810 9116.

Attendance: Richard Ahlstrom, Elana Aubrey, Marco Crescentini, Paola Ferrario, Christopher Gauthier, Luis Salazar & Frances Welson.

Not in Attendance: None

Municipal Staff: Director, Office of Planning & Economic Development - Aaron Vega, Development Specialist – Jennifer Keitt & Head Clerk – Marie Brazeau.

Others in Attendance: Holyoke Preservation Trust – Olivia Mausel, Devon Shelf Storage - Shannon Dodge & 195 Appleton Street Attorney - George Hailer.

1. **Call to Order** – Paola Ferrario called the meeting to order @ 5:37pm and announced that the meeting was being recorded.
2. **Review of February 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes & Amended November 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes** – A motion was made by Elana Aubrey and seconded by Luis Salazar to accept the minutes from February 14, 2022. The motion carried unanimously. A motion was made by Luis Salazar and seconded by Richard Ahlstrom to accept the minutes from November 8, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.
3. **Public Hearing Concerning the Proposed Demolition of 195 Appleton Street. (Parcel 021-01-007) Owned by Devon Self Storage** – A motion was made to open the Public Hearing for 195 Appleton Street by Frances Welson and seconded by Luis Salazar. The motion carried unanimously. Paola Ferrario thanked the applicants for submitting materials in a timely fashion, and noted that she received an email feed which showed conversations between Richard Ahlstrom, Shannon Dodge & Benjamin Murphy that happened in August of 2021. Paola Ferrario stated that the Commission was never notified of the plans for partial demolition of 195 Appleton Street back in August. Paola Ferrario presented the Historical profile of 195 Appleton Street, AKA Merrick Thread Mill, and stated that it was a building worth of placement on the National Historic Registry. An intact model Mill, in the slow burning-construction-style. It was noted that the Merrick's mill history was the stage for relevant improvements in the textile technology and significant events in labor history. In the 1940's employing woman, assigned to 3rd shift, due to WWII, a first in Massachusetts, since it was illegal for woman to work in factories at night.



Shannon Dodge spoke of the conditions of all buildings. Building “A” being the main proponent of the project. He stated that several of the smaller buildings sustained fire damage & or structural damage, hence the questions regarding the economic feasibility of keeping instead of demolishing them (“F-L” & the attached smoke stack.) Their proposed plan is for 900 storage units with removal of said buildings that would allow customers drive up access to the interior of Building “A” to unload/load belongings out of the elements. After the removal of Buildings “F-L” unpaved areas will be landscaped with grass and trees to blend into the surrounding area of the canals.

Elana Aubrey asked about the green space lot in front. George Hailer answered that it is owned by the Winn Companies, the Farr Alpaca Mill and will be utilized for parking for their over-55 apartment complexes which is in the process of being developed. Shannon Dodge spoke of the exterior, of building “A” at 195 Appleton Street. the shell (external walls) being the most valuable asset to the property. They would be building a building inside of 195 Appleton Street, reinforced internally with steel & concrete, keeping the existing brick and wood framing intact. Frances Welson asked about the proposed buildings not being salvageable and if any structural documentation from their engineers was available for the Commission to review. Shannon Dodge would forward those reports to us. Christopher Gauthier asked about entry parking. Shannon Dodge stated cars would enter by building “B” which will be utilized as office space, and enter in front of building “E” and entering section “G” the drive isle would go along with the canal, buildings “G, H, & K.” Where buildings “K & L” meet would be a right hand turn to the building and proposed drive through. The space where building “I” was would be parking spaces for employee use.

The building permit was questioned as the rendering showed buildings “B & E” to be raised, when they appeared to be repurposed in the renderings for the project. Shannon Dodge assured the Commission that those buildings were staying and would check into the permit further to rectify. Marco Crescentini asked the applicants if any display of historical imagery of the past to present, would be incorporated at the site. Shannon Dodge appreciated the idea and stated that he would be willing to consult with the Commission in this effort. Elana Aubrey made a motion and seconded by Luis Salazar to continue to keep the public hearing open for the proposed demolition of 195 Appleton Street until the next HHC Meeting on April 11, 2022. the motion carried unanimously.

4. CPA –

a. Marco Crescentini & Luis Salazar attending last evening’s CPC Meeting. The Director of Girls Inc. along with their Architect, Kuhn Riddle, speaking of the possible disconnect with CPC members of returning 480 Hampden Street to its original renderings when it was originally built. Marco Crescentini spoke of the Mass Historic Guidelines to be in line with its history of being built, but how the buildings presence mutates over time, with additions, windows etc. Those changes become the history of the building. They will be making improvements to the building envelope in the years to come. Paola Ferrario stated our importance with working with the CPC, bottom line we are not judging tastes, but buildings being restored to the proper way to Mass Historic standards. CPC needs to hear our opinions.



b. Paola Ferrario stated she has been working with Meagan Magrath of the CPC Commission on the Preservation Grant outline. She spoke of the Armor & Co. giving up their CPA Grant. Once applicants see an opportunity to seek a historic grant they must realize that once they submit a project and sign a preservation restriction, the application cannot change.

Discussion with Commission on the new Preservation Grant Outline, to streamline its process and to avoid any of the hurdles with the preservation restriction. A yearly meeting in October was suggested of each year to discuss applicants for the following years deadline.

5. Preservation Ordinance Update - Paola Ferrario spoke of issues with past OPED advice, and several additions being added to this ordinance in 2019. She had 2 questions with this draft. the first, properties built between 1947-1960, that could be on the National Registry of Historic Places, but with this ordinance they would not have to come in front of the Commission for a demolition delay. Secondly the two-step process in terms of not having a public hearing. The Ordinance can be amended again before being submitted to the Ordinance Committee. Discussion about bringing the changes and writing them into the Ordinance, then a city Council vote. It was agreed the Commission does a final review for next month's meeting then proceed to put it on the Ordinance Committee's agenda for May.

Frances Welson left the meeting @ 7:48pm. A motion was made by Elana Aubrey and seconded by Luis Salazar to form a sub committee to work on the Preservation Ordinance. the motion carried unanimously.

6. Report from Commissioners attending other Board & Committee Meetings - Elana Aubrey attended the Tourism Advisory Meeting where several people throughout the City of Holyoke attended. The focus of the meeting was to look closely at the people coming into the city as a way to gather information that what people want to see in Holyoke. The next meeting is in April.

7. New Chair on the State of the Commission & Plans for the upcoming Year – Paola Ferrario stated she was going to skip to item 8 due to the length of this current meeting.

8. & 9. New & Old Business –

- Paola Ferrario spoke of a Board & Commission Webinar sent to the Commission & possible attendance.
- Eileen Crosby has invited us to a workshop on Monday to show resources available to us in the History Room.
- OPED will now have staffing for the Historical Commission, per the Finance Committee.
- Fairfield Avenue has another Commissioner being appointed, they will now have a quorum.
- Olivia Mausel has completed the preliminary study for Sacred Heart, ready to be sent to Ma Historic.
- Paola Ferrario wrote to past Mayor Murphy and asked why joining of the 2 Commissions was brought forward, she received a simple reply that he was advised by many people to do so.
- Paola Ferrario also noted if the Commission was interested, and with Richard Ahlstrom's approval she could share emails between Marco Marrero, Richard Ahlstrom & Aron Vega of the talks of the Commissions merging.
- For the next agenda, the Preservation Restriction Agreements that the Commission is responsible for that a report must be filed on a yearly basis.



10. **Election of Vice Chair** – A motion was made by Elana Aubrey and seconded by Luis Salazar to appoint Christopher Gauthier as Vice-Chair. The motion carried unanimously.
11. **Next Meeting** – April 11, 2022
12. **Adjourn** – At 8:03pm there being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Luis Salazar and seconded by Elana Aubrey to adjourn the meeting, the motion carried.