



Chair – Richard Ahlstrom
Vice Chair – Paola Ferrario
Recording Secretary – Christopher Gauthier
Commissioners: Elana Aubrey, Luis Salazar & Frances Welson
Alternate Commissioner: Marco Crescentini

HOLYOKE HISTORICAL COMMISSION (HHC)

Meeting
Minutes Monday,
February 14, 2022

Due to the declared public health emergency the meeting was held virtually via Zoom.
Meeting ID: 857 1763 9804

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

Not in Attendance: None

Municipal Staff: Office of Planning & Economic Development: Director-Aaron Vega, Development Specialist-Jennifer Keitt & Head Clerk-Marie Brazeau. At-Large Councilor-Jose Maldonado Velez

Others in Attendance: Gabriela Alcantar-Pohls

- 1. Call to Order** – Richard Ahlstrom called the meeting to order @ 5:32pm and announced that the meeting was being recorded.
- 2. Review of December 13, 2021 & January 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes** – A motion was made by Elana Aubrey and seconded by Christopher Gauthier to accept the minutes from December 13, 2021. The motion carried unanimously. A motion was made by Elana Aubrey and seconded by Christopher Gauthier to accept the minutes from January 10, 2022. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3. Public Participation** – Aaron Vega introduced New Development Specialist, Jennifer Keitt and Head Clerk, Marie Brazeau. Aaron Vega offered the possibility for the Commission to have a designated “Google Drive”. Where all of the Commission’s documents will be stored digitally, to access, and to publish on the City’s web site. Gabriela Alcantar-Pohls was introduced to the Commission expressing interest in joining the HHC.
- 4. Elections of Historical Commission Officers** – Richard Ahlstrom announced he was stepping down immediately as Chair, but retaining his position of Commissioner. Richard Ahlstrom asked if anyone had interest in filling the officer positions, Paola Ferrario expressed interest. Paola Ferrario asked if Christopher Gauthier wanted to be Vice Chair which he did, but after no interest was shown for the position of Recording Secretary and after the Commission acknowledged the immediate need for a Recording Secretary, Christopher Gauthier volunteered for the Recording Secretary position.



A motion was made by Elana Aubrey and seconded by Christopher Gauthier to appoint Paola Ferrario as Chair. the motion carried unanimously. A motion was made by Elana Aubrey and seconded by Luis Salazar to re-elect Christopher Gauthier as Recording Secretary. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was handed over to Chair Paola Ferrario.

A motion was made by Richard Ahlstrom and seconded by Elana Aubrey to take Item 10 out of order. The motion carried unanimously.

- 10. Proceeding with Revised Preservation Ordinance (Demo Delay)** – Discussion amongst Commissioners on how to review and do minor changes of the Ordinance if needed. Communication via email was suggested. Frances Welson pointed out that this communication method might cause breaking open meeting laws. Paola Ferrario will research open meeting rules. Paola Ferrario mentioned the possibility to work on the document on line if stored on a “Google Drive”. A motion was made by Elana Aubrey and seconded by Christopher Gauthier to work on the final draft to have it ready for the Ordinance Committee Meeting on March 8, 2022. The motion carried unanimously. Richard Ahlstrom spoke of the City’s properties that have been demolished due to a short 6-month delay. He suggested that photographs showing examples of them (such as 135 Walnut Street) (before and after) would be beneficial to support the Ordinance. Paola Ferrario acknowledged the importance of “Notice of Decision” to have on record regarding why a demo delay was issued. At this point there may not be any “Notice of Decision/determination” for the past two years.

A motion was made by Frances Welson and seconded by Elana Aubrey to go back to Item 5 and move to regular order, the motion carried unanimously.

- 5. Report on Conversation with Attorney Degnan – Executive Session - &**
6. Combining Historic Commissions-Status of Order Before Charter and Rules - Paola Ferrario spoke of her meeting with Richard Ahlstrom and Attorney Degnan if we could go into Executive Session to find out more on the order to merge the HHC and LHD, why was it sent to the Charter & Rules Commission without a vote of the two Commissions. Richard Ahlstrom spoke of his conversation with Councilor Jose Maldonado Velez that the order is in the packet with Charter & Rules. Councilor Jose Maldonado Velez is clear that we do not want this order moved forward. Paola Ferrari asked about the new order approved by Charter & Rules which states no order can stay in committee for than 6 months then must be sent to city council with or without our recommendation. Councilor Jose Maldonado Velez explained that the request to merge the two commissions was brought forth by acting Mayor Murphy. He stated he would not put in on the Charter & Rules agenda. He stated as well the current Mayor could veto if it was passed by city council. A motion was made by Christopher Gauthier and seconded by Elana Aubrey to table any further discussion of merging the HHC & LHD. Elana Aubrey, Marco Crescentini, Paola Ferrario, Christopher Gauthier, Luis Salazar & Frances Welson voted Yes. Richard Ahlstrom voted no.



7. **Review of Meeting Minutes** – Christopher Gauthier questioned whether the last 6 months of minutes that were recently posted on the city website were approved by the Commission. Paola Ferrario asked the Commission before the next meeting to review the minutes, which were recently uploaded to the website.
8. **Community Preservation Act Update** – Paola Ferrario stated that she had noticed some confusion among commissioners about the duties of the HHC in regards to CPA historical grants applications. She stated that determining whether a property was historically significant to the City of Holyoke was not the commission’s only duty. She reported that CPC would like the Commission to give them more info on why the proposal is or isn’t suitable for a CPA Historic Preservation Grant. Paola Ferrario spoke about two documents which are currently posted on the HHC webpage; HHC Community Preservation Act Role & Responsibilities & HHC Eligibility Determination for Community Preservation Act Historic Preservation Applications. Paola Ferrario encouraged commissioners to give applicants more information and advice when they come in front of the commission to present their project and ask for historic status. Paola Ferrario suggested that the Commission’s letters to CPC be longer to include feedback on the projects instead of solely stating the historical importance of a building. Richard Ahlstrom spoke of the Preservation Restriction Addendum for 348 Chestnut Street which has been sent to Ma Historic for final approval, before the Commission signs it.
9. **Historical Commission Community Engagement** – Elana Aubrey stated that she would be attending the Historical Commission Tourism meeting on 2/16/2022. She will be our contact with that Commission. Luis Salazar spoke of a communications subcommittee to connect with others in the community, a learning experience for a simpler access that he would compile. Luis Salazar also stated that he has bought the “Historical Holyoke” domain for future use.
11. **Other Business Not Reasonably Anticipated When Meeting Agenda Posted** – Paola Ferrario stated she was trying to find out if Ben Murphy had applied for any Ma Historic grants and would have that information for the next meeting. Richard Ahlstrom notified the Commission that an application for a demolition delay hearing was submitted for 195 Appleton Street. It was a late notice from the building department.
12. **Next Meeting – March 7, 2022**- A motion was made by Elana Aubrey and seconded by Luis Salazar to have the next HHC Meeting on March 7, 2022, both hybrid and in person. The motion carried unanimously.
13. **Adjourn** – At 8:02pm there being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Elana Aubrey and seconded by Frances Welson to adjourn the meeting, the motion carried unanimously.