

Holyoke Redevelopment Authority
Meeting Minutes – Thursday June 16, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

Conference room 403 or Virtual Zoom:
Meeting ID: 820 1045 2084

Members Present:

Thomas Creed, Chair
Carl Eger, Vice Chair
John Whelihan, Treasurer
Jorge Colon, Member
Daphne Board (Virtual)

Staff Present:

Aaron Vega, Executive Director
John Dyjach, Assistant Director
Marie Brazeau, Head Clerk
Jennifer Keitt, Development Specialist
Attorney Mike Bissonnette

Others Present: Terry Gibson (Neighbor to Neighbor), Mathew Robayna (Winn Development), Dennis Luzuriaga (Canal Row)

1. Call to order:

Thomas Creed called the meeting to order at 5:01pm and announced that the meeting is being recorded.

A roll call followed:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Present</u>
Daphne Board	X (Virtual)
Thomas Creed	X
Carl Eger	X
John Whelihan	X
Jorge Colon	X

2. HRA Board Business

a. Meeting Minutes of May 18

Thomas Creed requested clarification on the minutes regarding Aaron Vega's statement on Canal Rows agreement. Specifically, Section 4, item b, should be more clear saying that the lease agreement would be drafted this summer. With no objection to this amendment, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan.

A roll call followed:

John Whelihan	X
Carl Eger	X
Thomas Creed	X
Jorge Colon	X
Daphne Board	X

The motion passed unanimously.

b. Financial Report

Thomas Creed asked John Dyjach to share the financial report. John Dyjach explained that the most notable transactions were the Jackson Canal loan transfer of payments to the Holyoke Industrial Corporation and the potential Avalon liquor license reimbursement. John also added that in the report the South Holyoke Homes Phase II transaction has been added. Thomas Creed thanked staff for the work and effort of staff, Carl Eger seconded the thanks saying the report is well done and detailed.

A motion to approve and accept the report was made by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan.

A roll call followed:

Carl Eger	X
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Thomas Creed	X
Jorge Colon	X
Daphne Board	X
John Whelihan	X

The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Project Updates:** The board agreed to move out of order to respect the time of those at the meeting to provide updates.

b. **216 Appleton (Appleton Mills Apartments/ Winn Development):** Tom Creed introduced Matthew Robayna from Winn Development and thanked him for joining the meeting. Matthew announced that they were making progress with the zoning application for Essex Street. He then went on to explain the sky bridge being planned for the project that went before the planning board. They will be in front of the Planning Board again on June 28th and are hoping for approval. Further they have started having some presence at the sight boarding up windows. Matthew then went on to say that he hopes to have the ground lease ready for fall. The Chair then opened the floor to questions. Carl Eger asked for clarification on costs and the timeline. Matthew said they are anticipating some funding gaps and will be looking for extra funding. Tom Creed asked that if these gaps will change the project, Matthew responded that while some materials may change due to cost, they will not decrease the number of units planned. Tom Creed then asked if current agreements need to be extended. John Dyjach explained that the agreement does need to be extended, which allows for three 6-month extensions, and pending review of counsel we can move forward.

A motion was made by Carl Eger to give the Chair authority to act on the extension for Winn for both 216 and 191 Appleton and seconded by John Whelihan.

A roll call followed:

Name

Daphne Board	X
Thomas Creed	X
Carl Eger	X
John Whelihan	X
Jorge Colon	X

The motion passed unanimously.

d. **Canal Row:** Tom Creed thanked and welcomed Dennis Luzuriaga for being there and invited him to share any updates. Dennis explained some funding issues due to not receiving HDIP funding and would like to work on an extension. Dennis explained that he would like an extension but would like to add that the HRA could pursue other options while they work to fill funding gaps. Aaron went on to say that this would not mean doing another RFP for the property but would allow them to remain open to other offers and conversations with developers. Aaron added that other projects considered should have similar ideas that prioritize housing due the success of buildings like the Cubit having mixed use space. Aaron recommended doing a one-year extension so that Dennis and Marco would have enough time to reapply for the next round of HDIP funding. John Dyjach added that to apply for HDIP Marco and Dennis need a level of site control, so the agreement is important. Tom Creed asked Attorney Bissonnette if it is possible to allow the option agreement to be extended with first right of refusal while still being able to market the property. Attorney Bissonnette said in order to allow the applicant to apply for the HDIP funding site control is necessary and that so long as the city has no other plans for the property it is okay to continue the option agreement. Further, Bissonnette explained the terms of allowing the property to still be marketed to offers that meet or exceed the existing agreement is fairly straightforward and common in real estate transactions. Carl Eger noted that this extension does not include Lot 15, Attorney Bissonnette confirmed this and said that Lot 15 will be being transferred shortly. John Whelihan stated his one concern over the extension is the TIF in place on the property without progress on the project. Whelihan went on to say that he still thinks the Luzuriaga's are the best option for this project and area.

A motion was made to extend the Canal Row agreement for one year with the discussed stipulations of first right of refusal was made by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan.

A roll call followed:

Name

John Whelihan X

Carl Eger X

Thomas Creed X

Jorge Colon X

Daphne Board X

The motion passed unanimously.

c. Dwight Street Community Garden/ Neighbor to Neighbor: Tom Creed introduced and welcomed Terry Gibson from Neighbor to Neighbor to give an update on the community garden. Terry said that the second growing season is underway with seed plantings that were donated and planted by volunteers. They are continuing to work on making connections with local farms with a priority on minority owned farms. Aaron Vega asked if Neighbor to Neighbor is ready to purchase the property, Terry Gibson responded that they are ready and would just need numbers. Daphne Board said that she has seen firsthand the improvements in her neighborhood as a result of the community garden nearby and other properties being improved. Tom Creed asked that staff work on transferring this property to Neighbor to Neighbor in the near future.

a. South Holyoke Homes: Tom Creed said that when the board and staff went to visit the South Holyoke Homes project site, he was very impressed. He explained the design fits in well with the park and the neighborhood and will work well for families. Further, he commended the MassWorks improvements with streetlights and paving to make the whole neighborhood better so everyone will be looking forward to the next phase of this project. John Dyjach added that there is effort in place with the Housing Authority and counsel to acquire the properties for the next phase.

4. Other Business:

Aaron Vega announced that Avalon, who had paid for the Center City liquor license program, would be closing, and will be submitting a request for refunding of their unused payment. Tom then asked if the board could grant staff the ability to review the agreement with Avalon and make the appropriate reimbursement. A motion was made by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan to give staff authority to return the deposit to Avalon.

A roll call followed:

Daphne Board X

Thomas Creed X

Carl Eger X

John Whelihan X

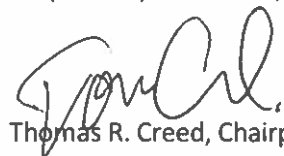
Jorge Colon X

The motion passed unanimously.

5. Executive Meeting (if necessary)

6. Adjournment. Having no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:16 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Thomas R. Creed, Chairperson