



Mayor Joshua Garcia

Office of Planning and Economic Development

City of Holyoke

Historical Commission

August 29th, 2022

Holyoke City Council
Holyoke City Hall
536 Dwight Street Holyoke, MA 01040

The Holyoke Historical Commission would like to thank the City Council for the majority vote in favor of the new Preservation of Historic Building Ordinance, on August 2, 2022. We hope the ordinance will be brought back to the table for a new vote in October or November, 2022.

We would like to point out that in the past few years we have seen several businesses and developers come to Holyoke because of its buildings. These new investors have brought businesses, employment and created new dwellings, and are here now because extraordinary historical real estate is here, in Holyoke.

The possible transformation of the First Congregational Church into an Indian Motorcycles Museum and dealership has sparked the fantasy and caught the attention of many of you. Any notion that the new Preservation Ordinance may discourage developers is in fact denying the reality that some of the most professional developers who have come to Holyoke are here because of buildings that have been preserved.

Now is not the time to stop an ordinance that facilitates preservation and repurposing of our building stock. Our efforts enhance not only the beauty of our city but boost the real estate value of properties feeding our tax revenues. The vote August 2nd was non-partisan—councilors of all wards and political beliefs came together because preserving our buildings results in benefits for all of our citizens, whether through the creation of quality rental units at affordable rates, or the protection of neighborhoods for homeowners who care about the architectural integrity of their surroundings. The vote was proof that our city council is working together to do what is best for our city.

As for dissenting comments regarding the HHC's inaction to save the "Bud" (an historical saloon located at 30 John Street), it was well-known that in 2006, 30 John Street was considered a hazard by the fire department, and by 2015 the roof had already partially collapsed. Please see the two reference articles linked below that reported the Historical Commission had tried to intervene to save the building, but the neglect in maintaining the structure, along with the substantial amount of back taxes made it impossible to find a buyer.

Although the Commission appreciates the effort of our predecessors, we would like to state that 'saving' or 'marketing buildings' is not the job of the Commission. The current Chair is focused on the regulatory duties that this board must perform. In other words, the Historical Commission has no jurisdiction in the marketing of buildings, enforcing building and safety codes, or imposing a tax levy.

The Commission is grateful for the work the Preservation Property Group has done. Over the past few years, they have prevented or rectified problem situations similar to the one of 30 John Street. We take this occasion to thank past and present Mayors and the City Council for having contributed to create the Preservation Property Group. We thank you for your time in considering the new Preservation of Historic Building Ordinance.

CITY HALL ANNEX – 20 KOREAN VETERANS PLAZA - SUITE 406 – HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS 01040-5000

PHONE: (413) 322-5655 • E-MAIL: oped@holyoke.org

Birthplace of Volleyball



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https://www.masslive.com/news/2015/08/holyoke_arranges_for_demolitio.html

https://www.masslive.com/news/2011/07/holyokes_the_bud_building_insp.html

Sincerely

The Historical Commission

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