

**Holyoke Redevelopment Authority  
Meeting Minutes – Wednesday November 30, 2022 at 5:30 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  
Daphne Board, Member  
Jorge Colon, Member

**Staff Present:**

Aaron Vega, Executive Director  
John Dyjach, Assistant Director  
Jennifer Keitt, Development Specialist

Others Present: Sarah Meier- Zimble, Janara Healy

**1. Call to order:**

Thomas Creed called the meeting to order at 5:31p.m and announced that the meeting is being recorded and is being held both in person and virtually. Thomas Creed then read the following disclaimer:

“The meeting is being held both in person and remotely according to Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, extending the remote meeting provisions of Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020, executive order. The meeting notice contained a link to “GoToMeeting” providing the public with remote access.”

**A roll call followed:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Daphne Board	X	
Jorge Colon	X	
Thomas Creed	X	
Carl Eger Jr.	X	
John Whelihan	X	

All members attended the meeting in person.

**2. HRA Board Business**

- a. **Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2022:** A motion to approve the minutes of October 19, 2022, was made by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan:

**A roll call followed:**

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

The motion passed unanimously.

- 3. Property/ Project Updates and Next Steps:** The Chair said they would be moving out of order to respect the time of others present to provide updates and began with item 3b on the agenda.
- b. South Holyoke Homes- Holyoke Housing Authority:** The Chair thanked Sarah Meier-Zimbler from the Holyoke Housing Authority for her presence and asked for any relevant updates. Janara Healy of the Holyoke Housing Authority was also present. Sarah thanked the Board for their time and the Annual Report of the Holyoke Housing Authority was shared on the screen. Sarah explained a large goal in the past year has been community engagement. This includes credit classes and first-time homebuyers' classes in preparation for the new homes being built through the South Holyoke Homes project. Earlier in the fall this included an information session for the new buildings and the process of being selected. They received roughly one thousand qualified applicants for the Phase I units. This goal will continue in the new year. Phase I construction is still underway, the interior is under renovation, but they are expecting work to be done in Spring 2023. The infrastructure improvements in the area are also nearly complete and expected to wrap up in the spring. The lottery for the Phase I units will be held this month (November 2022). Phase II plans are still progressing and will be going back out to bid this winter after earlier bids came back \$2.5 million above estimates. Chairperson Creed asked for confirmation that after receiving the over-budget bids, the Housing Authority performed another cost estimate that reaffirmed their original estimate. Sarah confirmed that this is correct. The Housing Authority also considered adjusting the scale of the project to make it more appealing for bids. The Housing Authority has overall positive feelings about getting units filled in 2023 and moving forward with subsequent phases. The Chair thanked HHA staff for their presentation and opened the floor for comments and questions. Carl Eger commented that this project and the interest in the Phase I lottery shows the exasperated need for housing, Mr. Eger then asked how the surplus of applicants for this phase would affect the HHA going forward. Sarah explained the applicants who do not get chosen for this phase of housing do not get automatically put in the applications for the next phase, but they are able to reapply. John Whelihan echoed the concern for the housing crisis demonstrated with this volume of applications. Chairperson Creed pointed out that Phase I was funded through a variety of sources, Phase II is largely ARPA and state funding, and that it is time to begin finding Phase III funding sources. ARPA funding will be running out and funding projects of this scale may be a concern. Sarah responded that the ARPA funding should carry them through the home-ownership phases. She went on to emphasize that affordable home ownership is a difficult project to carry out financially as it means barely breaking even. Chairperson Creed offered any support the Board can provide in these applications for funding and that the Board is anxious to see Phase I complete. They all anticipate more investment in the South Holyoke Community and congratulate the Housing Authority on their hard work. The Chair then asked staff for any updates on Phase III. John Dyjach stated that staff feels optimistic on progress with the property owner but are still facing some roadblocks with communication. The law department has been aiding staff with the potential for a consensual order of taking for the property.
- a. 216 Appleton Street (Appleton Mills Apartments/WinnDevelopment):** The Chair turned the Board's attention to the most recent Lease Agreement for 216 Appleton and disclosed it is not yet in its final form. A full review with the legal team will be held when more progress has been made. The Chair urged the Board when reviewing this document to pay special attention to the aspects of the agreement that explain the duties of the Redevelopment Authority as the landlord to be aware of going forward with the lease. The Board hopes to be ready to review this agreement with counsel next month. Mr. Vega said there are only a few points that counsel is still debating and will hopefully be finalized shortly. Staff will continue to update the Board as things progress. Mr. Eger expressed concern over the slow progress and asked staff if there should be concern over lack of work on the project. Mr. Vega expressed he believes Winn Development is committed to this project but has had road blacks due to changing market concerns with construction as well as concerns with insurance. The Board asked staff to invite Winn Development to be present at the next meeting. Mr. Dyjach updated the Board that the budget provided for KP Law, provided by Winn Development, has just under half remaining from the original \$40,000. They do not anticipate being out of funds in the near future and all payments are currently up to date. The Chair stressed that ideally KP Law and Winn would be present in December. The Chair asked for any final comments or questions on 216 Appleton, and having none they moved on to item 3c.

**c. Dwight Street Community Garden/ Neighbor to Neighbor:** The Chair opened the floor to any updates from staff on the Community Garden. Jennifer Keitt explained that unfortunately, by the time that they received communication from Neighbor to Neighbor, the deadline had passed. Mrs. Keitt then directed the Board's attention to the Extension of License Agreement for 772 Dwight Street, which allows Neighbor to Neighbor a period of sixty days starting November 30<sup>th</sup>. The Chair asked if this will be before DHCD, Mrs. Keitt responded it will be shortly. Mr. Dyjach explained DHCD had already given a go ahead but will need to request standard waivers for appraisals for projects of this kind. Once proper protocol is complete there should be no other roadblocks, financial or otherwise, to move forward with a final sale.

A motion was made by Carl Eger and seconded by John Whelihan to accept the Extension to the License Agreement.

**A roll call followed:**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Daphne Board	X	
Carl Eger	X	
Jorge Colon	X	
John Whelihan	X	
Thomas Creed	X	

The motion passed unanimously.

**4. Other Business:** The Chair opened the floor to any other business. The Chair discussed that he attended the most recent DGR meeting for the presentation by Wayfinders on their feasibility study on the High Street and Appleton Street area. Chair Creed said the study demonstrated common focus areas such as the High Street area for a continued partnership. Mr. Creed did feel the presentation was not necessarily about new ground covered and it was familiar to other studies conducted. Mr. Whelihan also joined the presentation and while he agreed it was not new to the Redevelopment Authority the research was impressive and may have reached new people. Daphne Board who was also present, noted some gaps in the survey data and lack of neighborhood engagement. Mr. Creed agreed with the feedback and would like the HRA to offer feedback on the study to Wayfinders. Mr. Vega announced that Wayfinders will be undergoing some changes with staff and having them come to a meeting in January or February could be beneficial. Mr. Dyjach pointed out that this area is also a focus point for the TDI Fellow which provides another avenue for feedback and for community engagement. Mr. Vega turned the Boards attention to the TDI Work Plan for reinvestment and revitalization in the High Street area. Staff provided a brief overview of the progress with TDI and the budget outline.

**5. Executive Meeting (if necessary):** No business necessitated executive session.

**6. Adjournment.** Having no other business, Carl Eger motioned to adjourn the meeting and enter into the Annual meeting, seconded by John Whelihan.

**A roll call followed:**

Carl Eger  
Daphne Board  
Jorge Colon  
John Whelihan  
Thomas Creed

The motion passed unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Board', written in a cursive style.

Daphne Board, Chairperson