



**City of Holyoke - Historical Commission Meeting Minutes 05/10/2023 (Remote via Zoom)**

Historical Commission Members Present: Chris Gauthier (Chairperson), Joseph Mazzola, Lizbeth Rodriguez, Olivia Mausel, Jean Jonker

Historical Commission Members Absent: Luis Salazar

Staff Present: Jennifer Keitt (Senior Project Manager)

Members of the public present: Tris Metcalfe (144 High Street), KATY MOONAN (144 High Street), CARLOS PEÑA (144 High Street)

RECEIVED

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Gauthier called the meeting to Order at 5:34 p.m.

JUL 28 2023

2. Review of Meeting Minutes for April 10, 2023

Holyoke City Clerk's  
Holyoke, MA

Commissioner JONKER made a motion to approve the April 12, 2023 meeting Minutes. Commissioner Mazzola seconded the motion, and the commission voted unanimously to approve the meeting Minutes.

3. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

4. Public Presentation - 144 High Street, Fuller's Block, HLY 185

While shown on the screen, Tris Metcalfe explained a photo montage of the existing rear wall of 144 High Street and proposed rebuilding of said wall. He pointed out that the current wall is falling apart and does not have a foundation. The proposed rear wall rebuild includes helical piers using the existing steel beam, passive solar windows, one door, two garage doors, and a well-insulated wall with fire proof siding. The color of the siding has not yet been determined, but the window/door frames will be black and the garage doors will include dark glass. The front of the building will be restored, including window replacement and maintenance repairs. Mr. Metcalfe indicated that the proposal is not only an improvement to the city, but will also compliment the historic character of the neighborhood. He pointed out in the photos that other buildings down the street also have a change of color and/or material at the corner of the building.

Mr. Metcalfe further explained the wall and window details. The wall will include a foam frost mat with a concrete slab and cement block on top of it, just beneath the helical piers, preventing the wall from ever settling in the future. The windows will be operable, providing the potential to vent the building.

Commissioner Mausel questioned what has been done on the property thus far. Mr. Metcalfe explained that an Application for Demolition is currently in review, and the street-level floor that was falling down has been removed. The roof and wall removal will not include a crane or excavator, but will rather be a clean, safe and tedious process. How the side walls will be braced during construction is still in discussion. The steel high beam will remain, be tied to the helical piers and braced back to the street-level floor. Once a building permit is received, the demolition will continue and a request for a permit to build new electrical heating finishes, a roof, etc. will be submitted.

Chairperson Gauthier questioned if an engineering report was done for the building. Mr. Metcalfe indicated that while he is not privy as to what all the prior architect, who started the job, had done with regard to engineering, he is a structural engineer himself and any report prepared by him is in fact a structural engineering report.

At Chairperson Gauthier's request, Mr. Metcalfe explained how exactly the work will be done safely. The work will likely begin on the west side where there is currently a huge hole in the roof. The roof will be removed, the wall holding up said roof will come down, and then a new wall and new roof will be built. The process will be slow and completed in sections. Mr. Metcalfe offered to prepare a narrative with more in-depth discussion of the process, if the building inspector wishes.

Commissioner Mausel mentioned that the property must line up with the Secretary of State standards of restoration and renovation, and Mr. Metcalfe confirmed that he is very familiar with and has been abiding by the standards for about 40 years. He further explained that the proposed plans are in accordance with said standards.

Mr. Metcalfe indicated that he confirmed with Mass. Development that there are no relevant regulations and/or specific details, but the project needs to be approved by the Historic Commission. Commissioner Mausel informed Mr. Metcalfe that he needs to submit a Project Notification Form to Mass. Historic, which he agreed to do.

Chairperson Gauthier questioned why a demo permit was not filed. Katy Moonan indicated that the first thing that needs done is emergency stabilization of the wall and the roof attached to it, as it is considered hazardous. She explained that a demo permit was not filed for the interior work because when the roof caved in, it collapsed the floor, eliminating the need for a demo and rather requiring debris removal. Mr. Metcalfe added that a demo permit has been filed and is currently under review. Ms. Moonan indicated that the permit was submitted on April 6, 2023.

Chairperson Gauthier questioned if a red "X" had been placed on the building as discussed previously, and it was confirmed that the fire department would be taking care of that. He also asked for an explanation of the permits and what has happened so far, as everything that he has seen is demolition, not emergency stabilization. Mr. Metcalfe indicated that this is a foundation/selective demolition permit circumstance, and the permit is under review.

George Shaw, building inspector, explained that the submitted permit was for selective demolition and stabilizing the building, as a demolition permit is not necessary since the building is not being taken down. At Chairperson Gauthier's request, Mr. Shaw agreed to send out an email to schedule a meeting to discuss the project further.

Ms. Moonan added that a full filing for the entire project is to come, but the current permit is just the initial step for the emergency stabilization of the building. Carlos Peña reiterated that at any time, the back wall could come down with the roof collapsing, creating a very hazardous condition. He noted that kids play basketball in the area of the unstable wall. Chairperson Gauthier recommended immediate contact with Mass. Historic, as the Commission is required to follow the procedures in place, which require approval from Mass. Historic first.

Mr. Shaw agreed to modify the wording on the permit application to make it clear about what it does and/or does not entail. He also agreed to assist in ensuring that the building is secure.

#### 5. Preservation Restriction Agreement - 536 Dwight Street, Holyoke City Hall

Commissioner Mausel indicated that she was told that they are aware of the preservation restrictions, and they are hoping to bring some things back to original. It was confirmed that there is nothing the Commission needs to do right now, aside from being watchful.

#### 6. Report from Commissioners Attending Other Board & Committee Meetings

Commissioner Mazzola indicated that at the Tourism Committee meeting there was an exciting presentation from Beyond Walls. There was a brief discussion about the Commission potentially needing to be involved if historic building owners desire to have a modern mural painted on a historic building. Commissioner Mazzola agreed to bring that up at the next meeting.

Commissioner Jonker indicated that the city's 150th anniversary celebration has been set for October 28, 2023. It will be a masquerade gala ball with a silent auction. The 150th Celebration Committee is also working diligently to prepare a time capsule. In December, the Rotary is having their big event and the closing of the time capsule will occur THERE. Ms. Jonker also mentioned that the Holyoke Preservation Trust is holding an art contest for people of all ages, with the application form being available on the Holyoke Preservation Trust's website.

Commissioner Mausel indicated that Stephanie Pierce, a local photographer, has been taking in depth photos at City Hall, which she will continue to do in the coming weeks.

Commissioner Mausel indicated that there is a document recovery CPA project underway that could potentially allow for old documents to be digitized and put up for the public to see.

#### 7. Community Preservation Plan - Gathering Feedback for CPA

Chairperson Gauthier informed the Commission that in his last meeting with CPA, Meagan indicated that they are in the process of updating the book and would like input from the Historical Commission on any additions or edits. He asked that the Commission prepare any input for the next meeting in June so that he can forward it to Meagan for the next CPA meeting.

#### 8. Historic House Plaque Update

Commissioner Mausel indicated that the application needs to be updated, and offered to do so for the next meeting. It was confirmed that there are several people waiting for a historic house plaque.

#### 9. New/Old Business

Chairperson Gauthier indicated that there is no Property Preservation Group master listing yet, but multiple departments are working to prepare such a list. Several preservation restriction documents have been shared to the Google Drive. The State Register of Historic Places Certificate was received for Essex Street, and the 2022 book of state historic places was scanned and shared to the Google Drive.

Ms. Keitt indicated that an email was sent with regard to Commissioner Salazar, and no reply was received. She agreed to find out what the protocol is and inform the Commission, as he has missed five meetings.

Ms. Keitt indicated that they have a developers toolkit that they use in office which includes tips, tricks, and helpful information. After a brief discussion, Ms. Keitt made a motion for approval to contact Shannon Walsh with regard to creating a historic buildings developers toolkit that can be handed out to interest parties. The Commission voted unanimously to approve said motion.

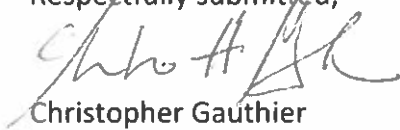
#### 10. Next Meeting: June 12, 2023

Chairperson Gauthier announced that the next meeting is scheduled for June 12, 2023.

#### 11. Adjourn

Chairperson Gauthier made a motion to adjourn at 6:47 p.m., and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Gauthier", written over the printed name.

Christopher Gauthier  
Chairperson