Holyoke Historical Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2018

Attendance: Richard Ahlstrom (Chairperson), Joe Paul, Alexandra Puffer, Paola Ferrario, Chris Gauthier (Alternate), Francis Welson
Absent: James Sheehan
Associate: Dan Fitzgerald
Municipal Staff: Debbie Oppermann (OPED)
Others Present: Glenn Shealey, Olivia Mausel

1. Call to Order- Richard Ahlstrom called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

2. Review of February 5, 2018- A motion was made by Ali Puffer and seconded by Joe Paul to approve the minutes of 2/5/18. The decision was unanimous.

3. Discussion and adoption of revised bylaws – Frances Welson identified several words that need to be capitalized. Questions raised included whether we should limit the number of terms that a person can serve, and if there is a conflict of interest in leaving in a member of the "local Board of Realtors" under Section 2.E Nominees. Debbie Oppermann will research both and provide answers at the April meeting where everyone hoped a final vote to approve them will be taken.

There was also a discussion leading to clarification on the elimination of Associate positions. Under the proposed bylaws there will not be Associate positions only up to two Alternate positions. This was based in part on recommendations made in the Sept. 2017 Historic Preservation Plan. Debbi Oppermann offered her understanding of how Associate positions came to be and suggested that if a current Associate would like to become an Alternate or be considered for the vacancy that he or she should contact the Chairman.

4. Commissioner status updates – Richard Ahlstrom reviewed a table of Commissioner's term expiration dates. He also noted that there was a vacancy on the Commission and a discussion ensued about having the current Alternate fill that position and how the Commission would like its membership to reflect the broader City. Chris Gauthier, the current Alternate, had expressed his interest in filling that vacancy. Commissioners discussed how the Commission's bylaws state.... and that Chris has met those requirements. The Commission also noted that it has not yet conducted any kind of broad outreach to the community in terms of soliciting interest in serving. Ali Puffer made a motion to nominate Chris Gauthier to fill the vacancy on the Commission and to give the Chairman permission to ask the Mayor to reappoint Chris, Paolo Ferrario seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
5. **Archeological Accountability Policy** – The discussion began as a follow-up to one begun at the February meeting wherein Debbie Oppermann shared a review by City Solicitor Paul Payor on the sample policy from Deerfield, MA. Frances Welson said that she had skimmed the state archeological law and thought the policies therein were clear in that they lay out a uniform system for complying with the law through standardized procedures.

Rich Ahlstrom asked Olivia Mausel in the audience to share more information about this topic since she brought it before the commission. Ms. Mausel said that even though there is state law and archeological policies through the MA Historical Commission they do not include the municipality in the information loop. MA Historical Commission complies with the laws about digs and artifacts but it doesn’t have to inform the municipality about the nature of the digs or where the artifacts end up. And once the artifacts end up in a museum or university collection, the municipality doesn’t have any standing in terms of access to those items. Crafting a local policy may be one way for the municipality and hence, the Historical Commission to be in the information loop.

After much discussion, Richard Ahlstrom stated that the issue is a valid one worthy of additional consideration but that other projects and issues are a priority at this time. Paolo Ferrario made a motion to postpone further discussion on this topic for six months and to take it up again at the September 2018 meeting. Frances Welson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. **Richardson Train Station** – Richard Ahlstrom reported that he and Joe Paul had recently discussed ways of ensuring that the train station isn’t demolished and one was creating a local historic district that would encompass the train station and a swath of land between Main and Race Streets between Appleton and Lyman Streets (see map attached) and acknowledging that only the Local Historic District Commission is empowered to undertake that action.

HG&E owns the building and has been marketing it for sale for several years. Rich stated that Debbie Oppermann had had a conversation with Jim Lavelle, General Manager of the HG&E, about the idea of the Commission considering a local historic district, and that Mr. Lavelle said that he wouldn’t be interested in that due to the fact that he has a potential buyer for the property. He didn’t mention the name of the prospect and Debbie didn’t ask.

Joe Paul stated that the Holyoke Preservation Trust has conducted a lot of research on the train station and that perhaps the Commission should get in touch with that group to understand the work that’s been done that could support a local historic district nomination to the MA Historical Commission. He also offered to research each property form within the MACRIS system.

*Before moving to the Old Business portion of the meeting, the Commission offered the guest in the audience an opportunity to speak. He was Glenn Shealey, owner of Quantum Properties, LLC., 20 Water Street, Holyoke. Mr. Shealey stated that he was the party interested in purchasing the Richardson Train Station. He also stated that he*
has a keen interest in Holyoke where he owns several properties and that he is particularly interested in the train station and would hate to see it demolished due to a deteriorated condition. Mr. Shealey is interested in historic preservation and said that if he buys the property that he would work with the Commission as much as possible to preserve the building.

7. Old Business:
   a. **98-100 North East Street demolition oversight** – Debbie Oppermann confirmed that the house at this site was mistakenly demolished when a permit for the demolition of the garage only was authorized. According to Damian Cote, Building Inspector, Associated Building Wreckers, the demolition contractor on this project, will be fined. Debbie also provided limited research on the home from the Public History Room at the Library. All agreed that it was fortunate that the building that was inadvertently demolished was not historically significant.

   b. **Update on 1850 Northampton Street** – Richard Ahlstrom reported that the effort to move the 1850 N’ho St. house by One Holyoke CDC to a city owned property at 278 Pine Street appears to be well underway. Mike Moriarty, Ex. Dir. One Holyoke, will receive CDBG funds for the move and has already submitted a proposal to purchase the Pine Street parcel from the City. The cost for moving the building is affordable because the route that the mover will take along Beech St. doesn’t have any power lines that must be moved. Mike also reported that the porches need to be taken off due to their deteriorated condition and that he hoped to use labor from Dean Technical School to rebuild them.

   The Commission agreed that it should capitalize on the good news of the move, in terms of public relations and perhaps undertake some fund raising around it, for not only has the building been saved from demolition, it will be returned to its original use as a duplex.

   Other items discussed were: 1) the idea that PeoplesBank may contribute to a fundraising event or contribute actual funds in an amount informed by what would have been the demolition of the building, 2) develop a pool for people to buy chances based on certain benchmarks along the moving route, 3) getting someone to do a time-lapse film of the move, 4) collaborating with the Five Colleges on the sustainability aspect of the project.

   The move is anticipated to happen sometime in late spring / early summer.

   c. **Demolition Delay Subcommittee report** – The subcommittee reported that it hasn’t met recently and that it will prepare a list of questions for the full Commission for the April meeting.

   d. **Outreach efforts** – Paola Ferrario stated that she contacted Jossie Valentin (Ward 4 City Councilor) to discuss the Commission’s desire to hear from her constituents regarding historic preservation in their neighborhoods. Councilor Valentin offered to
put a survey on the Ward 4 website if the Commission is inclined to develop one. Paola said that it's imperative that the Commission be in touch with Wards 1, 2 and 4 and that she's contacted Nelson Roman (Ward 2 City Councilor) in order to schedule a meeting regarding the same.

8. **New Business – 1. Section 106 Review – 1850 N'ho Street:** Debbie Oppermann reviewed the nature of a 106 review and then asked the Commission to make a decision regarding the 106 review on the 1850 project. A motion was made by Ali Puffer to provide a letter of support, Richard Ahlstrom seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously. Debbie stated that she will address the Commission's decision to not impose a demolition delay on this project in the letter so as to not send a mixed signal to the MA Historical Commission.

9. **2. Mt. Tom Lodge** - Debbie Oppermann stated that she had an update on the Lodge's request from the last meeting. The Office of Community Development had, in fact, applied for Community Development Block Grant funding to prepare a nomination of the Lodge for the National Register. The project was awarded $20,000.

9. **Next Meeting – April 9, 2018**

10. **Adjourn**
With no other business in Regular Session, a motion was made by Frances Welson, seconded by Joe Paul to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. The decision was unanimous.

Submitted by,
Debbie U. Oppermann