Holyoke Historical Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 10, 2017

Attendance: Richard Ahlstrom (Chairperson), Joe Paul (6:35pm), Frances Welson, Alexandra Puffer, Paola Ferrario (6:49pm),
Municipal Staff: Debbie Oppermann (OPED), Barbara Bou (OPED)
Absent: Christopher Gauthier, Dan Fitzgerald, Jean Jonker, Olivia Mausel, James Sheehan, Dan
Public in attendance: Vitek Kruta (Holyoke Preservation Trust)

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

2) Review of 6-12-17 minutes: Alexandra Puffer made a motion to accept the minutes for June 12, 2017, motion seconded by Joe Paul, vote to accept-unanimous.

3) Vitek Kruta – Holyoke Preservation Trust: Mr. Kruta asked to attend this evening’s meeting for two reasons, to talk about the Holyoke Preservation Trust and to discuss the status of the former Mater Dolorosa Church. He explained that he is a restoration expert and business owner and that at one time he had been a member of the Historical Commission but had left because of a conflict of interest, to establish the Holyoke Preservation Trust, a nonprofit organization that works to preserve Holyoke’s architectural heritage. The group advocates on behalf of owners seeking to preserve historic buildings and offers lectures on a variety of topics including energy consumption, architecture, rehabilitation techniques, etc. Mr. Kruta stated that the Trust is interested in working with the Commission to preserve a number of buildings in the city such as the Train Station (Richardson).

He also discussed efforts to preserve the former Mater Dolorosa Church. The Holyoke Preservation Trust is working with the Mater Dolorosa Preservation Society to save the church from demolition. Two ideas that the advocates have had are: (1) ask the City to take the church by eminent domain and (2) has asked the Historical Commission to create a single building historic district. Frances Welson made a motion to initiate the process of creating a single building historic district for the former church, Paola Ferreria seconded the motion and the Commissioners agreed to meet again on July 26, 2017 at 6:30pm to discuss the possibility of creating a Mater Dolorosa District.

4) Community Preservation Committee appointment: The Historical Commission was asked to appoint a member of the Historical Commission to the Community Preservation Committee. Debbie Opperman stated that Marco Crescentini was interested in that appointment. Ms. Oppermann included Mr. Crescentini’s resume in the meeting packet handed out to the Commissioners. The Commissioners would like to meet Mr. Crescentini in order to make a decision on the appointment to the CPC. Debbie Opperman will ask Mr. Crescentini if he is available to meet with the Commissioners at the next meeting scheduled for July 26, 2017.

5) Bylaws Review and Revise: Commissioners conducted a lengthy review of Commission by-laws as approved on January 7, 2015 and made changes to several sections. Debbie Oppermann will incorporate those changes and provide a revised document in the meeting packet for the next regular meeting scheduled for August 14th.
6) Preservation Work City Hall Portraits: Debbie Oppermann explained that the Friends of City Hall, through Olivia Mausel, a member of the Friends, requested funds for restoration work on City Hall Portraits. Given that the request was submitted close to the fiscal year end and that there were funds available that would not be spent by the Commission and that the request was made between meetings of the Commission, Debbie encumbered the money prior to the July meeting with the understanding that she would bring the matter before the Commission for a vote. Commissioners were provided with an estimate prepared by KV Restoration for the work. After some deliberation regarding the work including questioning why the Historical Commission would pay for work initiated by the Friends of City Hall, the group decided to approve the expense because the work was closely aligned with the Commission’s and because the Commission had the money to pay for it at the end of the fiscal year.

7) Intern: Debbie Oppermann explained that Joseph Maspo is interested in a summer internship with the Historical Commission. The Commissioners were very interested in having Mr. Maspo intern for the summer and thought he might work on creating the single building Historic District for Mater Dolorosa. Paola Ferrario offered to supervise Mr. Maspo, if he’s still available for the work. Debbie will invite him to the July 26th meeting wherein the Commission and Local Historic District Commission will determine if and how it will proceed establishing a single building historic district.

8) Business Updates:
   a) 1866 Northampton Street: Debbie Opperman stated that the applicant requested that the Historical Commission send a letter to MA Historical Commission stating that it approves of the preliminary redevelopment concept. Debbie sent MHC a letter stating that in anticipation of correspondence from MHC directing the applicant to provide final plans and specifications to the Historical Commission for review prior to redeveloping the site.
   b) 1 Cabot Street: Debbie Opperman stated that the City of Holyoke has a buyer for 1 Cabot Street and is moving forward with a purchase and sale on the property. She will keep the committee up to date on subsequent activity.
   c) 394 Demolition – Massachusetts Historical Commission provided a letter to the Commission approving the demolition of 394 High Street.

9) New Business: Medal of Honor Monument: Debbie Oppermann reported that the Historical Commission received $9,500 in Community Development Block Grant funding for designing and installing a monument in Veterans Park honoring Medal of Honor recipients from the city. The application was submitted earlier this year under the auspices of the Historical Commission although it was conceived by a resident, James Bronson, written with the help of a Historical Commission member Olivia Mausel and the Director of Community Development, Alicia Zoeller and has a matching grant of $7,500 from the State Historic Advisory Board. The Historical Commission is responsible for implementing grant activity.

10) Next Meeting- Aug. 14, 2017

11) Adjourn: a motion was made by Paola Ferrario to adjourn, seconded by Alexandra Puffer – unanimous vote at 9:05pm.

Submitted by:
Barbara Bou