Members Present:
Carl Eger, Jr. Chairperson
Gladys Lebron-Martinez, Treasurer
Maria Ferrer, Member

Staff Present:
Marcos Marrero, Executive Director
John Dyjach, Assistant Director
Claire Ricker, Senior Planner
Tessa Murphy-Romboletti, Development Specialist
Rosemary Simonich, Head Administrative Clerk

Others Present:
Nancy Sachs          David Bartley
Dale Rosenkranz      Rory Casey
Stacey Anasazi       Sandy Alicia
Kathy McKean         Stephanie Rice
Lori Divine          Kathleen Dewey
Vitek Kruta          Lee Vardakis
William Newcomb      Robert Judge

1. Call to Order
Chairperson Carl Eger, Jr. called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m., stated that the meeting was being recorded and requested a roll call:

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2. Review of Meeting Minutes
A motion was made by Maria Ferrer and seconded by Gladys Lebron-Martinez to approve the Regular Minutes of the August 20, 2014 meeting. A roll call vote followed:

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3. Urban Renewal Plan - Projects and Updates
A. Parsons Paper Mitigation Agreement with Northeast Utilities
Marcos Marrero said at the last HRA meeting the Board discussed pursuing redevelopment the 4 acre former Parsons Paper mill, which was significantly damaged in a 2009 fire. Most of the asbestos has been cleaned up by the EPA, but there are still two pending issues: asbestos tile in the debris and the possibility of contamination in relation to former mill operations. He explained that the HRA entered
into the agreement with Northeast Utilities to receive $250,000 for cleanup and development of the site, with $50,000 to be spent towards environmental assessment. He said if no further environmental assessment is needed the remaining $200,000 could be used for remediation at the site or building demolition. Mr. Marrero said that Northeast Utilities hired Tighe & Bond as the environmental consultant and that the firm is now working to provide the property assessment around mid-December.

B. Sale of HRA Controlled Property

John Dyjach explained that the sale of 182 Appleton Street (URP Area 6) to SPS Investments is proceeding. He said that SPS Investments will be now doing its due diligence on the property. Mr. Dyjach noted that this sale would be the HRA’s first property sale and that several approvals were needed from the Department of Housing and Community Development approvals before a Purchase and Sale Agreement could be finalized.

C. Property Tracking Updates

John Dyjach reviewed the property tracking update sheet for the 23 HRA controlled properties and noted that 2 additional properties were added to the list. He said that 74 Main Street and a portion of 100 Main Street, both part of URP Area 5, were acquired by the City for the passenger Rail project. Marcos Marrero added that 74 Main Street previously housed the two businesses, Sun Bus Tours and Donzi Boat Sales. He said the City acquired this property under eminent domain and then assisted the property owners with relocation.

Chairperson Carl Eger, Jr. asked if there were any questions from either Board Members or the audience. Nancy Sachs from 80 Race St. asked how much the owner of the business at 74 Main St. was paid for relocation. Mr. Marrero explained that because the project is partially funded through Housing & Urban Development (HUD) certain state and federal guidelines are required for purchase and relocation. Mr. Marrero said that 74 Man Street was taken thought he eminent domain process and that $113,500 was paid to Richard Mei who is the owner of 74 Main St. He said that there may be additional relocation expenses paid to Mr. Mei but that amount has not yet been determined. The tenant at 74 Main Street, Donzi Boat Sales, was paid $15,700 for relocation expenses. Mr. Marrero said that the City purchased a portion of 100 Main Street from William Johnson for $25,000. Tenants at Mr. Johnson’s property were also paid relocation expenses totaling approximately $4,000.

D. Liquor License – Review Draft HRA Guidelines and Application

Marcos Marrero noted that approval was received by the City Council, the State Legislature and the Governor for 13 additional liquor licenses to be used within the URP area. He explained that the law maintains that the License board remains the local authority on issuing these licenses but for these licenses an applicant would first need approval from the HRA that the applicant is a restaurant that meets the criteria of the URP. Tessa Murphy-Rumboletti then reviewed the draft HRA Guidelines for the Center City Liquor License Application with the Board for feedback. Mr. Marrero said this process will not affect current license holders in any way as a condition of license board approval of license. He stated the licenses must be used for a restaurant and will not be issued to bars. In addition, if a restaurant closes or changes ownership they must return the liquor license back to the City; it cannot be sold or transferred. Lori Divine of Gateway City Arts and the STEAM Building asked for clarification on the definition of a restaurant which states it “must contain at least two thirds of its legal capacity filled with tables and/or booths and is designed for indoor consumption of food prepared on the premises”. Mr. Marrero explained the intent of these criteria is to ensure that the tables or booths must be in 2/3 of the restaurant's capacity and not in 2/3 of the entire building. Kathy McKeen, representing MIFA Victory Theater, inquired as to how the needs of a liquor license for an entertainment venue would be
handled per these guidelines. Mr. Marrero said these liquor licenses are limited by the law for restaurants only.

Several business owners had questions for the Board. Lori Divine said her business is legally classified as a nightclub and that the plan is to start out small and grow as they build up into a restaurant. She suggested creating a timeframe so that a business could start out small and grow as they make money. She said she does not see this accounted for in this application process. She said another challenge is that their business has a seasonal beer and wine license and they are not permitted to sell beer and wine during January or February and that a liquor license is an essential part of the revenue. Vice Kruta asked if there was a way they could start with allowing food served on Friday and Saturday, with the full intention of having a restaurant in the future. Marcos Marrero told Ms. Devine and Mr. Kruta that the Board still has to adjust these criteria and that the License Board retains all the authority to issue liquor licenses. He said that the HRA oversight process is still being defined. City Councilor David Bartley, Jr. said there should be some flexibility with these 13 liquor licenses to assists the downtown businesses. Ms. Murphy-Romboletti said in the overview process of the license application under #4 “the applicant will enter into a written commitment with the HRA” and said this would be the opportunity to explain the plan to them. Carl Eger, Jr. reminded everyone that the HRA is here to make sure we maximize jobs at our economic base and that we must be sensitive to private capital interests that want to make investments and create that environment.

Board Member Maria Ferrer asked what would happen if she had a business with a two year lease and when the two years was up her landlord chose to not renew her lease. She inquired if she could bring her liquor license to another restaurant or would she lose it. Rory Casey from Mayor Morse’s Office said it is written in the Special Act that these licenses are “place-based” and would not be able to transfer ownership or location. In this case, the liquor license would be revoked and you would have to reapply and pay a $10,000 fee again. The reason behind this is that a business owner could take their license and relocate to the mall. He said however, the HRA could consider the criteria. The Board agreed to approve the application form only for the Center City License Application Form but said they and staff will continue to revise the Eligibility, Evaluation Criteria and Process Review. Attorney William Newcomb from the Holyoke Law Department commented that although the use for these licenses must be approved by the HRA, it is the local licensing board that has the authority to issue or revoke a license based on transfer of ownership or location.

A motion was made by Gladys Lebron Martinez and seconded by Maria Ferrer to approve the Center City Liquor License application form. The decision was unanimous. A roll call vote followed:

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D. Project Updates

Mr. Marrero gave the following updates:

Passenger Rail
The rail platform work will begin within the next two weeks. A notice to proceed was given to the demolition contractor. Bids on the rail platform construction were received and we are seeking additional funding to complete the project. He said if we can give a notice to proceed by November 15 we may be able to have the project completed by August 11, 2015. He said the earliest we can have a
portion of the platform active is March 19, 2015 if we are given notice to proceed by December 12. Mr. Marrero then explained the funding gap and that efforts are underway to secure the funding.

**CanalWalk Phase II**
Mr. Marrero said the CanalWalk remains under construction and the rail bridge that runs over the Canal Walk was recently painted.

**Lyman Terrace**
The Housing Authority is currently undergoing site plan review which may be completed in late November. The HHA was unsuccessful in securing MassWorks funding, which would have been allocated for infrastructure improvements. February is the next award round for the tax credits which would make the project financially feasible and allow the HHA to apply for Massworks funding again.

**216 Appleton St. (former Farr Alpaca Mill)**
Senior Planner Clair Ricker said asbestos, lead paint and hazardous material has been identified by a third party inspector. Work will include the entire interior of the building and should be done by the middle of November.

**SPARK**
Mr. Marrero said that SPARK is an entrepreneurship program that was started by a partnership that includes the City of Holyoke, Careerpoint, Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce, Nuestras Raices, Holyoke Public Library, Holyoke Community College and several private individuals on the governing Board that also provided input. He said this was part of a proposal to the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. Twenty six cities applied and only six received funding; Holyoke was funded at $250,000 in seed funding. The theory is we have a lot of potential entrepreneurs who don’t have access to mentors and networks of opportunity, and SPARK has been designed to provide these resources in order to create new economic development opportunities for small and medium scale businesses.

**Executive Session**
In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A Section 1(a)of the Open Meeting Law, the Holyoke Redevelopment Authority will enter into Executive Session at this time (being that an open session would be detrimental to the negotiating position of the Board) in order to pursue the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property.

A motion was made by Maria Ferrer and seconded by Gladys-Lebron Martinez to enter into Executive Session at 6:10 pm. The decision was unanimous. A roll call was requested by Chairperson Carl Eger, Jr.

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Respectfully Submitted,

Carl Eger, Jr., Chairperson
Holyoke Redevelopment Authority