Holyoke Redevelopment Authority
Meeting Minutes - May 18, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.
Office of Planning & Economic Development - 4th Floor Conference Room
20 Korean Veterans Plaza, Holyoke, MA 01040

Members Present:
Gladys Lebron-Martinez, Chairperson
Thomas Creed, Vice Chairperson
Maria Ferrer, Treasurer
Carl Eger, Jr., Assistant Treasurer
John Whelihan, Member

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

Others Present:
Glenn Shealey, Quantum Properties, LLC
Holyoke City Councilor Michael Sullivan
Holyoke City Councilor Nelson Roman
Deborah Aloisi, Commission on Disabilities

1. Call to Order
Chairperson, Gladys Lebron-Martinez called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. stated the meeting was being recorded, and requested a roll call:

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2. Urban Renewal Plan - Projects and Updates
a. Aegis Energy (Parson’s Paper-URP Area 7) - 84 Sargeant Street
Marcos Marrero updated the Board on the Parsons Paper redevelopment and explained that there is more comibled asbestos on the site than had originally been estimated, which would significantly increase the cost over the $900,000 budgeted to remove it. He explained that in light of this information the decision was made to stop further removal of comibled debris in order to consider alternatives. Mr. Marrero then reviewed the options available moving forward and explained that the most likely scenario at this point would be to encapsulate the comibled debris on site by burying it and placing an Activity and Use Limitation (AUL) which would limit certain uses such as a school or playground. He added that an AUL would not interfere with the uses planned for the site.

City Councilor Michael Sullivan and Glenn Shealey of Quantum Properties asked what the Holyoke Gas and Electric and Tighe & Bond think about this option. John Dyjach explained that Tighe & Bond suggested this approach and that all parties involved are aware that the site has to be in suitable condition for hydroelectric production. Councilor Sullivan asked if there is an estimate for the cost of overage thus far, and Marcos Marrero answered that there is not an estimate yet. Councilor Sullivan then asked if the work has been issued through the public bidding process under prevailing wage requirements and Marcos Marrero replied yes. The Board asked if the requisitions and all records for...
financials are kept on file in the office. John Dyjach said that all documents are kept in electronic and in hard copy. Marcos Marrero said that Tighe & Bond review and recommends all project invoices prior to being approved.

b. The Cubit (Main and Appleton lots 8, 9, 10 – URP Area 5)

Marcos Marrero said the Cubit project received approval from the City Council for commercial and residential tax incentives which in turn help the project receive bank financing and move the project forward. He said the site plan for the project was approved by the Planning Board and that due diligence is being done for the acquisition of the adjacent HRA lots. He also noted that a title exam was ordered for Lot 2 that is being acquired by the HRA as part of the sale. Thomas Creed asked what the timeline is for the project to be complete and Mr. Marrero said that the developers intend for the housing units to be ready by January 2017 and the Culinary Center to open for classes by Fall 2017.

c. American Environmental (37 Appleton St – URP Area 10)

John Dyjach informed the Board that American Environmental is in the midst of its due diligence and permitting period in order to complete the purchase of 37 Appleton Street.

d. Bueno y Sano (Race Street Lot 14 – URP Area 5)

Marcos Marrero said that Bueno Y Sano’s mobile food truck has been open for several weeks. They have done some minor landscaping, installed the meat smoker and operate the food takeout Monday through Friday.

e. Winn Development (216 Appleton St. – URP Area 6)

Marcos Marrero said that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) approved the disposition agreement for this project. He explained that WinnDevelopment contacted staff about needing a second form of egress from the building and that the area toward Essex Street over the rail line which is owned by Pioneer Valley Railroad (PVRR) is a possibility. He said that staff connected with PVRR and they are receptive to assisting with the project. John Dyjach added that he and Marcos recently met with the President of Winn Development and their architect to tour the building. Mr. Marrero said that the concept is for a singles corridor style design with all units facing toward the canal. In addition

f. Urban Agenda Grant (South Holyoke- URP Area 8)

Marcos Marrero reviewed the Urban Agenda Grant which is envisioned to create housing in South Holyoke around Carlos Vega Park. He explained that the HRA had just received a contract from DHCD and that staff intends to begin initial conversations likely sometime this summer with South Holyoke residents to discuss the project and the opportunities that can come from this funding. He said that we want to get a better idea of what is important to the community before any design or construction begins.

Ward 2 Councilor Nelson Roman said he is very excited about the Urban Agenda Grant for South Holyoke and explained that he is in attendance to advocate for Nueva Esperanza to be considered a partner in this project, as well as the newly formed South Holyoke Association. Councilor Roman said he thinks it is a good idea that the HRA will reach out to the residents of the community for discussions, rather than the developer. He also explained that it might make more sense to engage residents in mid-June rather than July or August because most residents will be on vacation. Mr. Marrero agreed with Councilor Roman but explained that he did not want to wait too long for the initial conversations. Councilor Roman understood and explained he would discuss this with the Association.
3. Other Business
Chairperson Gladys Lebron-Martinez asked if there were any questions from anyone in attendance. Glenn Shealey from Quantum Properties, LLC asked about the $1 million capital investment in the Parson's project by the Holyoke Gas & Electric Department. Mr. Marrero explained that the HRA received $1 million from the Holyoke Gas & Electric, which in turn received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), through the City, which required that the money could only be used for a renewable energy project and only the city could apply for the grant. Mr. Marrero further explained the background behind the funding and how it resulted from a lawsuit filed by the Conservation Law Foundation against the Commonwealth. He added that the City applied for the grant and through a contract, the HG&E allocated $1 million in capital expenses for the Parsons Paper cleanup project as it would facilitate a hydroelectric project for them there in the near future. Mr. Marrero explained that, this $1 million gets two renewable energy projects plus the cleaned up site and jobs.

4. HRA Board Business
a. Meeting Minutes - March 31, 2016
A motion was made by Thomas Creed and seconded by Carl Eger, Jr. to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 31, 2016. The decision was unanimous. A roll call followed:

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5. Executive Session
Chairperson Gladys Lebron-Martinez said that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30 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 or real property.

The Board entered into Executive Session at 6:15pm.
The Board returned to Regular Session at 6:40 pm.

7. Adjournment
With no other business, a motion was made by Carl Eger, Jr. and seconded by Thomas Creed to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 6:40 p.m. A roll call vote followed:

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Respectfully submitted,

Gladys Lebron-Martinez  
Chairperson  
Holyoke Redevelopment Authority

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