

Holyoke Redevelopment Authority
Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2013 at 5:00 pm
City Hall Annex 4th Floor Conference Room
20 Korean Veterans Plaza, Holyoke, MA

Members Present:

Jacqueline Watson, Chairperson
Carl Eger, Jr., Vice-Chairperson
Patricia Duffy, Treasurer
Gladys Lebron-Martinez, Assistant Treasurer
Thomas Creed, Member

Staff Present:

Marcos Marrero, Director
John Dyjach, Assistant Director
Claire Ricker, Senior Planner
Bradley Henning, Development Specialist
Rosemary Simonich, Head Administrative Clerk

Others Present:

Edward Owen
Susan Van Pelt

1. CALL TO ORDER

HRA Member Jacqueline Watson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and stated that the meeting was being recorded. A roll call followed:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Thomas Creed	X	
Patricia Duffy	X	
Gladys Lebron-Martinez	X	
Jacqueline Watson	X	

2. MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Thomas Creed and seconded by Patricia Duffy to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2013 meeting. A roll call vote followed:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Thomas Creed	X	
Patricia Duffy	X	
Gladys Lebron-Martinez	X	
Jacqueline Watson	X	

A motion was made by Thomas Creed and seconded by Gladys Lebron-Martinez to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2013 meeting. A roll call vote followed:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Thomas Creed	X	
Patricia Duffy	X	
Gladys Lebron-Martinez	X	
Jacqueline Watson	X	

3. URBAN RENEWAL PLAN UPDATES

HRA Seed Funding and Land Transfers

Marcos Marrero opened the meeting by notifying the Board that HEDIC has approved the request for \$100,000 in seed funding for the HRA, and that five HEDIC owned properties have also been approved for transfer to the HRA. Mr. Marrero stated that in exchange for the land transfer, the HEDIC Board stipulated that they be entitled to a 50% share of the income generated by the parcels. Mr. Marrero also mentioned that the City Council has approved the transfer of eight City-owned properties to the HRA, with both the HEDIC and City-owned properties being located within Urban Renewal Plan (URP) Areas 5, 6 and 7.

Mr. Marrero stated that the HRA is now authorized to prepare the sites for development and execute transactions involving the parcels, though the properties are yet to be registered under HRA ownership with the Hampden County register of deeds. Mr. Marrero further stated that additional City-owned, URP identified properties have been put on hold from going to auction, and pending Council approval can be transferred to the HRA in the future.

Jacqueline Watson asked if the HRA would need City Council approval to sell any of the transferred properties, with Mr. Marrero responding that City Council approval would not be required, due to the fact that the properties and there development criteria have already been identified for within the URP.

John Dyjach informed the Board that an account has been opened with People's Bank for depositing the HRA seed funding, and that fund expenditures must be approved by the Board. He added that checks will require two signatures in accordance with HRA by-laws. Gladys Lebron-Martinez expressed her concern about signing checks being that she also is a City Councilor. Marcos Marrero said that he wasn't aware of a conflict and added that if any member has a concern about a potential conflict of interest they should contact the State Ethics Board for clarification.

Redevelopment Updates

- Passenger Rail

Mr. Marrero reported that the final review is pending for receiving an environmental permit that will allow the City to move forward on plans to construct its passenger rail platform. He stated that once the environmental permit was granted, the City will begin the right-of-way acquisition process for three parcels located on the corner of Dwight and Main Streets.

- Concept Proposal from Olde Holyoke Development Corporation

Mr. Marrero referred the Board to the letter from Olde Holyoke Development Corporation (OHDC) which included a concept for URP Area 8 - South Holyoke and a meeting request to discuss the organization's proposal. Mr. Marrero pointed out that the document did not represent a proposal for acquiring property, but could be described as proposal for policy. Following some discussion, the Board agreed to invite OHDC to the next HRA meeting to have a general discussion on the concept. Mr. Marrero stated that though the HRA has not yet reached the stage of procuring anyone for such a project, the proposal would help the Board to gain an understanding for what the master developer concept entails.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

- Canalwalk Update

Marcos Marrero stated that the construction for Canalwalk Phase II is out to bid, and with bid openings scheduled for December 17, 2013 and construction expected to begin in the spring 2014.

- 216 Appleton Street

Marcos Marrero stated that \$247,000 in grant money was approved for the environmental clean-up of the 216 Appleton Street property.

- Condominium Project at the former Holyoke Catholic High School

Marcos Marrero stated that E. Denis Walsh of Weld Management, the project developer, gave a presentation recently to the Holyoke Taxpayers Association, and that Mr. Walsh expects to close on his financing and begin construction by year's end. Thomas Creed noted that the HRA Board had previously discussed inviting Mr. Walsh to an HRA meeting to give a presentation of his project, and noted that it would be beneficial for the HRA to learn about his methods for financing the project. The Board requested that a future meeting with Mr. Walsh be arranged.

- Building Survey

Marcos Marrero explained that Mass Development is providing the City with technical assistance for conducting an adaptive reuse survey on several downtown buildings. Mr. Marrero cited the criteria for selecting buildings as that they must be located in urban renewal areas, they must support the Lyman Terrace planning concept as well as the URP and that the building must be close to 100% vacant. Mr. Marrero stated that a series of buildings that match the criteria have been identified, and that contracts for conducting the study are expected to be finalized in the next few weeks.

- URP Property Tracking

Thomas Creed asked if staff could begin building action plans for keeping track of land inventory status and their expected development time sequences. Mr. Marrero replied that staff could begin putting together a matrix and contextual land map to document intended development actions. Mr. Creed recommended that the Board review such inventory documents at each meeting.

- Lyman Terrace

Marcos Marrero reported that five responses to the Requests for Proposals (RFP) have been received on the Lyman Terrace Project. He said that MassDevelopment and Mass Housing Partnership were providing support the selection process, with the scoring of proposals being conducted by committee. Mr. Marrero further stated that the committee will choose three proposals to be presented during a public meeting that will allow the community to vote and decide which proposal is preferred.

- URP Public Outreach

Thomas Creed asked if a decision had ever been made as to how the HRA could better inform the public of its activities through periodic, comprehensive updates. John Dyjach stated that it was his understanding that the next steps would include drafting a formal description and framework for public engagement. The Board requested that such a framework be drafted and suggested that bilingual materials be employed to broaden the public invitation base.

- *Public Comment*

Susan Van Pelt, a resident of 246 Walnut St., stated that she continues to be frustrated by the fact that the Appleton/Essex St. corridor was not designated as a formal URP area, and that she believes the area continues to be neglected. She cited the Farr Mansion as a current issue that the HRA should consider.

Marcos Marrero then introduced Bradley Henning as a new staff member and that Bradley's title is Development Specialist. Board members welcomed Mr. Henning and said they are looking forward to working with him.

With no other business to discuss, a motion was made by Thomas Creed and seconded by Patricia Duffy to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 pm. A roll call vote was taken:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Thomas Creed	X	
Patricia Duffy	X	
Carl Eger, Jr.	X	
Gladys Lebron-Martinez	X	
Jacqueline Watson	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Creed,
Acting Chairperson
Holyoke Redevelopment Authority