

Chicopee Historical Commission Voting Record and Minutes

The Planning Board of the City of Chicopee public hearing for Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 4:00 PM, in person and via Zoom.

Meeting was brought to order at 4:00 PM.

Historical Commission attendance:

Member	Present	Absent	Excused
Joshua Clark, Chair	X		
Linda Menard-Mruk Vice Chair	X		
Raymond Hoess-Brooks	X		
Patricia Ferreira			X
Karen Kirby	X		
Dave Robison	X		
Louise Osetek	X		

Planning Staff attendance:

Member	Present	Absent	Excused
Lee Pouliot, Director			X
James Dawson, Development Manager	X		
Patrick McKenna, Asst. Planner			X
Nathan Moreau, Assoc. Planner			X

Item 1: Welcome – New Commission Member Tim Wagner

The Commission welcomed Tim.

Item 2: Presentation by Valley Opportunity Council on the redevelopment of the former Belcher School into 20-25 apartments. VOC is requesting a new letter of support from the Commission. The last letter of support was issued April 13, 2021.

Notes: Stephen Huntley, Executive Director of the VOC provided the Commission with an update on the Belcher School project. The project will include 25 living units; three will be market rate and 22 will be affordable units. As of June 8, 2021, the VOC has received \$900,000 in tax credits from the Massachusetts Historic Commission. VOC needs about \$1.6 million to move forward with the project. VOC has met with neighbors. The project is expected to begin in 3-4 years when the cost of material and labor costs hopefully come down.

Motion to sign and issue a letter of support from the Commission was made by Dave Robison and seconded by Louise Osetek. Vote was 6-0 to sign and issue a letter of support.

Member	Approve	Deny	Table	Abstain
Joshua Clark Chair	X			
Linda Menard-Mruk Vice Chair	X			
Raymond Hoess-Brooks	X			
Dave Robison	X			
Louise Osetek	X			
Tim Wagner	X			

Item 3: **Presentation by Silverbrick** to update the Commission on the Cabotville Mill Project – Silverbrick is requesting a new letter of support letter from the Commission. The last letter of support was issued April 13, 2021.

Notes: The Commission is concerned that there has not been much progress on this project. Aaron Papowitz explained that material and labor costs have increased substantially. He noted that he has been exploring different revenue sources, grants, Brownfields loans and tax credits. He stated that as of June 8, 2021 the project is not economically feasible. He explained that he needs continued support from the Commission for this project to move forward. Mr. Papowitz noted that the project has been awarded \$1.6 million in tax credits thus far; four rounds of \$400,000 each. Commissioner Clark asked if there were any funding sources other than tax credits. Mr. Papowitz noted that prices are currently inflated but he is expectation some easing in the coming months. Commissioner Clark asked about likely tenants. Mr. Papowitz responded stated that pre-leasing was not possible during construction but may be available approximately 3 months after move-in. Mr. Papowitz has agreed to provide an update to the Commission at its October 12, 2021 meeting.

Motion to sign and issue a letter of support from the Commission was made by Dave Robison and seconded by Tim Wagner. Vote was 6-0 to sign and issue a letter of support.

Member	Approve	Deny	Table	Abstain
Joshua Clark Chair	X			
Linda Menard-Mruk Vice Chair	X			
Raymond Hoess-Brooks	X			
Dave Robison	X			
Louise Osetek	X			
Tim Wagner	X			

Item 4: **Determine Commission Clerk schedule.** Who will serve as Clerk for which months or will someone volunteer to take on the role of Clerk for the next year?

Notes: Commissioner Tim Wagner volunteered to serve as the Clerk of the Historical Commission.

Item 5: **Bylaws and Historical Commission Rules and Regulations** – Josh to present draft of possible Historical Commission Bylaws and Rules and Regulations for discussion.

Notes: Commissioner Clark reviewed the by-laws. Suggestions were provided by other Commissioners.

Article VI will include that project applicants will be required to give updates about project progress.

Article VIII will include an appeal process.

The Commission had some discussion with regard to Article IX and the relationship between the Historical Commission, the Historical Society and the Edward Bellamy Association. Commissioner Hoess-Brooks stated this is an educational opportunity for the City to be able to explain the differences among the three organizations.

Jason Amos, President of the Edward Bellamy Association, attended the meeting and explained he would email dates for the Commission to join the Mayor on a visit to the Edward Bellamy House.

Commissioner Mruk asked if adopting the by-laws or demolition delay clause needed City Council approval? Commissioner Clark stated the Law Department will be reviewing this.

Article XI – Commissioner Osetek asked if in the event of inclement weather or other emergency, should the by-laws include that meetings can be held via Zoom. It was agreed that the decision regarding applicability of Zoom meetings was governed by the State.

Commissioner Wagner requested that Commissioner Clark add a clause requiring periodical review of the Historical Commission by-laws.

Commissioner Clark requested Commissioners send him comments regarding the by-laws by August 1, 2021. Commissioner Clark would amend the by-laws with the received comments. A second reading of the by-laws will be placed on the Historical Commission’s September 14, 2021 agenda. Commissioners will review the by-laws and they will be sent to the Law Department for review. Once the Law Department completes its review the Commission will vote on accepting them.

Item 6: New Business – Planning Staff explained that resident Nicole Cochran of 33 Chapin Street sent a letter to the Historical Commission stating she is replacing the roof on her historic home. Since there is no ordinance or by-laws currently in effect the letter was considered a courtesy. Staff informed Ms. Cochran that she could proceed with the roof project.

Item 7: Adjournment – Next regularly scheduled meeting is September 14, 2021. – IN PERSON!!

Motion to adjourn was made by Louise Osetek and seconded by Tim Wagner. Vote was 6-0 to adjourn.

Member	Approve	Deny	Table	Abstain
Joshua Clark Chair	X			
Linda Menard-Mruk Vice Chair	X			
Raymond Hoess-Brooks	X			
Dave Robison	X			
Louise Osetek	X			
Tim Wagner	X			

Meeting adjourned at 5:06 PM.