

## Chicopee Historical Commission Voting Record and Minutes

The Historical Commission of the City of Chicopee public hearing for **Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 4:00 PM**, in the Chambers Conference room, City Hall Annex and via Zoom.

**Meeting was brought to order at 4:00 PM by Joshua Clark, Chair of the Historical Commission.**

Historical Commission attendance:

Member	Present	Absent	Excused
Joshua Clark, Chair	X		
Linda Menard-Mruk Vice Chair	X		
Raymond Hoess-Brooks	X		
Louise Osetek	X		
Timothy Wagner, Clerk		X	
Kathryn Gawron	X		
<i>Vacant</i>			

Planning Staff attendance:

Member	Present	Absent	Excused
Lee Pouliot, Director			X
James Dawson, Development Manager	X		

**Item 1:** **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 in April of 2023.

**Notes:** Alexander Jansen of the Valley Opportunity Council (VOC) presented an update on the project. He explained that VOC was requesting a letter of support from the Commission that would be sent to the Massachusetts Historical Commission in August for the next round of tax credits. Mr. Jansen explained that VOC had secured \$1.6 million in tax credits to date. Construction is expected to commence in the December 2023/ January 2024 timeframe. They expect the project to take about one year to complete. The City Council recently granted a one-year extension of the Special Permit. Commissioner Hoess-Brooks noted that VOC currently did not own the building and inquired how the VOC can be earning tax credits on a building they did not own. Mr. Jansen explained that VOC had a Purchase and Sale Agreement with the City on the property. Mr. Jansen explained that he would provide more details of the Purchase and Sale Agreement at a later date.

Motion to approve and sign a letter of support was made by Louise Osetek and seconded by Kathryn Gawron. Vote was 5-0 to sign and issue a letter of support.

Member	Approve	Deny	Table	Abstain
Joshua Clark, Chair	X			
Linda Menard-Mruk	X			
Raymond Hoess-Brooks	X			
Louise Osetek	X			
Kathryn Gawron	X			

**Item 2:** Discussion regarding Historical Commission information on the Mayor’s webpage. Joshua Clark to provide an update.

**Notes:** Commissioner Clark provided an update stating the graphic had been created and the vacancy noted.

**Item 3:** Discussion with Springfield Diocese personnel regarding the closing of Holy Name of Jesus Parish; Historical Commission response; and what does the future hold for the building/complex.

**Notes:** The Commission is awaiting confirmation from the Diocese. Commissioner Clark noted that in the Catholic Magazine “The Mirror” was a letter from the bishop stating that the Assumption Church building could be demolished. Commissioner Clark to inquire with the City Law Department regarding stays of demolition. Chicopee Historical Society member Chet Koberski stated that chandeliers in the Assumption Church Rectory were possibly made by the Ames Foundry. Mr. Koberski also noted there is a WWI monument in Holy Name Church with the names of all the parishioners who served in WWI. Attorney Garvey and Mr. Koberski contacted Deacon Southworth who explained the monument would be donated to the City. The DPW is to retrieve the monument and the Chicopee Veteran’s Department will store it until an appropriate location can be found to display it. Commissioner Osetek inquired if the Assumption Church Rectory could be used by the French-Canadian Society.

**Item 4:** Discussion regarding the Edward Bellamy House; its condition and contents.

**Notes:** Chet Koberski of the Chicopee Historical Society stated that a structural integrity inspection had been completed. The inspection involved a drone as well as inspection crews. The inspection included the electrical system, plumbing system, hazardous materials (paint was sampled from hidden areas) and a structural evaluation. A 207-page report was issued. It was determined that a report had been completed 46 years earlier and some of the same issues remain. It has been estimated that \$1.1 million would be needed to stabilize the building to include a new roof, foundation repairs, new windows and doors, replacement of wooden supports and metal columns. There also appears to be mold or fungus on support beams. Planning Director Lee Pouliot contacted EPA to determine if there may be funding to assist in the mitigation of the mold issue. Commissioner Clark expressed concerns about records and documents stored in the Bellamy House and how to protect them. Mr. Koberski stated that collections of the Chicopee Historical Society and the Bellamy Association are both intermixed and separated. He explained it would take considerable time and archival experience to sort through the records and catalogue and protect them. It was suggested that a meeting between the Bellamy Association and the Chicopee Historical Commission may answer some questions about the collections.

At this point in the meeting Commissioner Clark excused himself to attend an appointment. Vice Chair Linda Menard-Mruk continued the meeting.

**Item 5: Minutes** from May 9, 2023

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Louise Osetek and seconded by Kathryn Gawron. Vote was 4-0 to approve.

Member	Approve	Deny	Table	Abstain
Joshua Clark, Chair				
Linda Menard-Mruk	X			
Raymond Hoess-Brooks	X			
Louise Osetek	X			
Kathryn Gawron	X			

**Item 6: Discussion/New Business**

**Notes:** No further discussion or New Business.

**Item 7: Adjournment** – Next regularly scheduled meeting is September 12, 2023.

Motion to adjourn was made by Raymond Hoess-Brooks and seconded by Louise Osetek. Vote was 4-0 to adjourn.

Member	Approve	Deny	Table	Abstain
Joshua Clark, Chair				
Linda Menard-Mruk	X			
Raymond Hoess-Brooks	X			
Louise Osetek	X			
Kathryn Gawron	X			

**Meeting adjourned at 4:57 PM.**