

CHIEF, from page 1

cess. He has 27 years of experience policing in Springfield, where he helped with many issues similar to those Holyoke is facing.

"He is able to speak as to why the discrepancies exist in our audit," Garcia said. "He knew the audit very well...and he could speak to the transferable skills that he can replicate here to advance our audit and improve our policing infrastructure."

Garcia and Keenan firmly believe that Keenan's experience in Springfield will help him to bring a new life to the Holyoke Police Department.

Additionally, Garcia appreciated how Keenan shares his philosophy on balancing compassion with enforcement.

"He is a very compassionate individual but understands that compassion needs to work hand in hand with enforcement," Garcia said.

Keenan believes that people should

be given support to help prevent them from having to turn to more desperate measures to survive.

"If you look at the folks taught are down on their luck, there is not a woman in the world who wants to be a prostitute, there is not a guy on the planet who wants to do panhandling, there is no one who wants to battle alcoholism or drug addiction," Keenan said. "Unfortunately circumstances happen in the world where these things happen and if you get folks and you meet them where you are sometimes you get them to a point where you can help them...I think helping people is just as important as enforcing the law."

In his time at HPD, Keenan plans to make this a department-wide philosophy.

One of the first things he wants to do as chief is to get out and begin meeting the people of Holyoke.

"I want to establish trust with the citizens and other department heads because a police department derives its legitimacy from its relationship with the public so I

want to make those bonds and connections extremely strong," Keenan said.

After that he wants to begin developing a new five year strategic plan for the department to follow. It will focus on discussing crime issues, social service issues and developing the staff.

He also wants to work on implementing strategies to improve the issues highlighted in the 2023 police audit.

More than anything, Keenan wants to help move Holyoke toward a brighter future through his work.

"I would love to leave Holyoke in a much better place than we have it," Keenan said. "I would love to establish some great infrastructure and some great technology. I would like to leave Holyoke in a place where the open spaces in the parks are returned to the people for recreation, a place where people want to raise families, a place where people feel free to use the streets."

He also hopes to develop the next police officer from within the department

so they truly know Holyoke and can continue the work Keenan plans to do.

Garcia and others on the search committee are confident in Keenan's abilities to help make that aspiration a reality.

The public is invited to the Oath of Office ceremony for Brian Keenan, Holyoke's incoming police chief.

The ceremony will take place in the ballroom at Holyoke City Hall, 536 Dwight Street, on Tuesday, Jan. 7, at 11 a.m. Father Mark Stelzer will offer an opening prayer.

The speakers will be Holyoke Mayor Joshua A. Garcia, State Senator John Velis, and Hampden County District Attorney Anthony Gulluni. Judge Tina Wescott Cafaro will preside and administer the oath of office.

SCHOOLS, from page 1

With this plan in mind, Commissioner Russel Johnston announced on Oct. 29 that the district could have a provisional exit from receivership planned for July 1.

One of the main priorities for the schools committee was to ensure they knew the process to hire and evaluate a superintendent.

"We just cannot lose local control ever again," City Councilor Kevin Jourdain said at a meeting. "So we have to make sure whoever this new visionary leader is going to be for our city, they've got to be real solid."

A community advisory committee was formed by the school committee and

they are going to look into what the best steps are for hiring a superintendent.

While Soto can stay on as the current superintendent, should he want to, the district wants to ensure that that is the best choice for the district moving forward.

"The advisory committee is going to convene and have a conversation and they are going to have surveys and public input," Mayor Joshua Garcia said. "They are going to facilitate a community engagement process to hear back from the community on what the school board should do."

This committee will meet from about December through March as they discuss the next steps the district should take.

Then they will report back to the school committee where they will begin

the final steps of the process, whether it be beginning the search for a new superintendent, rehiring superintendent Soto or some combination of the two.

Garcia hopes that the district will do an interim contract with Soto, should he be interested, and then use that extra time to do a superintendent search.

"Focusing on the transition and doing the superintendent search and when you find a new superintendent there is a bit of a curve you have to overcome...I think might be a little too much," Garcia said in a recent interview.

The advisory committee will be hard at work making these decisions over the next couple months and the school committee will provide updates to the community as they receive them.

In the meantime, the school committee is focused on ensuring that all of their members are prepared to take up the responsibilities of running the district once more.

Already the committee has worked on reviewing their budget transfer policies and they have received training on how to evaluate a superintendent.

They are also working on going through all of the schools committee policies to ensure they are up to date and will do what is best for the district.

Overall, this process has taken a lot of hard work and dedication from the school committee, district leadership, the commissioner and the mayor and they all look forward to seeing how their hard work will pay off as the transition occurs.

Public Notices



City of Holyoke PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com**; ID: 836-3939-8493; CALL IN *67 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, a Site Plan Review (Sec 10), a Special Permit applications for an Increase in Fence Height (Sec 4.6.3.2) and a Parking Reduction (Sec. 6.1.7) for the proposed Motor Vehicle Repair Garage (File 167), submitted by LN Berneche on behalf of American Environmental, to be located at 37 Appleton Street (036-01-002).

A complete copy of the application may be seen in the Office of Planning and Economic Development at 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, 8:30 am-4:30 pm, M-F.

APPLICANT: LN Berneche, Inc
PLANNING BOARD: Mimi Panitch, Chair
12/27/2024, 01/03/2025

City of Holyoke Notice of Public Hearing

The Ordinance Committee of the Holyoke City Council and the Planning Board will hold separate public hearings to hear zoning change applications from BL to DR for Tiago Martins and Jeffrey Dias at 712-718 Dwight St (006-06-009 & 006-06-010) as well as 736 Dwight St (006-09-002 & 006-09-001) to develop properties with duplex/triplex apartments. **Ordinance Committee hearing** will take place on **Wednesday, January 22 at 6:30 pm** at Holyoke City Hall

536 Dwight St and can be accessed remotely via www.zoom.us Meeting ID 883 9245 1976 Meeting Passcode 005736 or by call in at 1-646-558-8656 with same Meeting ID and Passcode.

Planning Board hearing will take place on **Tuesday, February 11 at 5:30 pm via www.zoom.us** Meeting ID: 836 3939 8493 or by call in at 1-646-558-8656 with same meeting ID. For a copy of the applications or to provide comments to the Ordinance Committee, please contact City Council Admin Asst Jeffery Anderson-Burgos at Anderson-BurgosJ@holyoke.org or by phone 413-322-5525. To provide comments to the Planning Board, please contact Brianna Tejada at tejadab@holyoke.org

Ordinance Chair Israel Rivera
Planning Chair Mimi Panitch
01/03, 01/10/2025

City of Holyoke Notice of Public Hearing

The Holyoke License Board will be holding a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 5:15 pm**. You can join via Zoom.com; ID 82543074809; CALL IN: *67 646 558 8656, or in person at City Hall Annex 20 Korean Veterans Plaza Room 406 regarding the application for a **Transfer of an Off-Premise Liquor License for 787 Mini Mart LLC at 399 Hillside Avenue**, pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.138.

Applicant: 787 Mini Mart LLC.
License Board: Anthony Luciano
12/27/2024, 01/03/2025

City of Holyoke Notice of Public Meetings

The Holyoke Community Preservation Committee will hold 2 public meetings on **January 15, 2025 and January 22, 2025 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. over zoom**, for the public to learn about and comment on projects seeking funds. For the zoom link please contact klaymann@holyoke.org. See proposals at <https://holyokecpac.org> 12/27/2024, 01/03/2025

City of Holyoke PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com**; ID: 836-3939-8493; CALL IN *67 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, Special Permit applications for an increase in the height of both Temporary and Permanent Fencing (Sec 4.6.3.2) and an Increase in Sign Size (Sec 6.4.6.4) for the proposed South Street Plaza Coffee Shop/Drive-Thru Restaurant (File 158), submitted by Salmar Realty, Inc., to be located at 209 South St (080-00-039).

A complete copy of the application may be seen in the Office of Planning and Economic Development at 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, 8:30 am-4:30 pm, M-F.

APPLICANT: Salmar Realty, Inc.
PLANNING BOARD: Mimi Panitch, Chair
12/27/2024, 01/03/2025

CITY OF HOLYOKE PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com**; ID: 836 3939 8493; CALL IN *67 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance (Sec 6.4.6.4) a Special Permit for an Increase in Sign Size and Multiple Signs for Super Fresh, located at 235 South Street (oso-00-039), submitted by Gabriel Garcia.

The complete application may be viewed through the Holyoke Planning Dept M-F, 9-4 p.m.

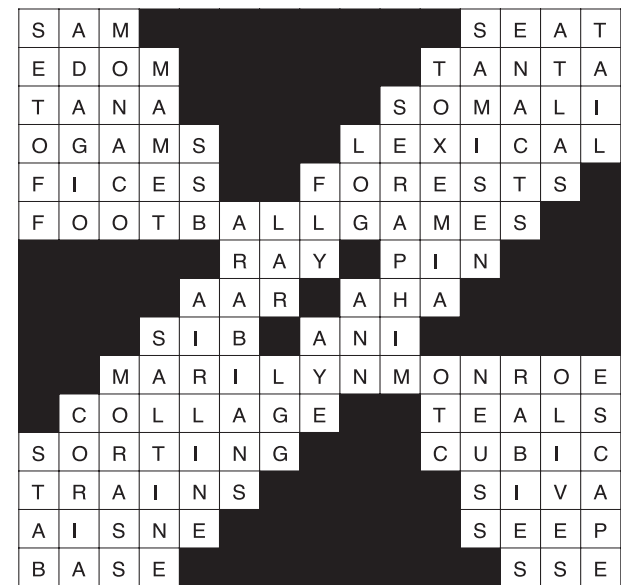
APPLICANT: Gabriel Garcia
PLANNING BOARD: Mimi Panitch
12/27/2024, 01/03/2024

City of Holyoke PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.**, in the City Hall Annex, Room 403, Holyoke MA to hear the petition of Mark Hoey, who is requesting an appeal from the zoning officer notice of determination letter dated 09/03/2024 and violation letter dated 11/06/2024, from Section 4.6.3/4.6.1, at a property known as 25 Cleveland St (095-00-034).

A complete copy of the application may be seen in the Office of Planning & Economic Development, 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, Rm 401, 8:30-4:30, M-F.

Applicant: Mark Hoey
Board of Appeals: Josh Knox
12/27/2024, 01/03, 01/10/2025



The Holyoke Sun
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.