

Councilors Kevin A. Jourdain, Rebecca Lisi, & Aaron Vega

Ordered,

Based on recent trends in coal-burning power plants of this size around the country, it is very possible that the owners of Mt. Tom Station will retire the coal plant soon. A recent report (*The Republican*, October 12, 2011) stated that Mt. Tom plans to lay off approximately half of its workforce because of a lack of demand for their services. In light of current emissions requirements and the low percentage of time that the plant is online, it is highly questionable if it can remain a viable enterprise.

The Mt. Tom Station plant has already made attempts to reduce its tax valuation at a loss of revenue to the city. Frankly, the city must be proactive in addressing the real likelihood that this plant will close, and it must seriously consider the impacts that this closing would have on the community, both environmentally and financially. We are very concerned that the Mt. Tom plant may become a dormant facility, and we need to consider how the city may be harmed and burdened by such a blight.

Looking at case studies of Salem, Massachusetts, and Somerset, Massachusetts, where coal plants have recently retired and are being re-visioned, it is clear that there is a need for, and in some cases, funding available for redevelopment studies.

Therefore, we request the establishment of a diverse community advisory group to the city to research and develop a plan for the reuse of the Mt. Tom coal plant site.

We charge this community advisory group (CAG) with the goal of strengthening Holyoke's designation as a "green community," and we propose that it undertake the following activities: 1) pursue funding for a professional re-use study, 2) engage residents of Holyoke in bi-monthly public hearings on visioning and progress, and 3) explore possibilities and propose sustainable alternatives for the site. Reuse alternatives must bring good, green jobs to the city and improve the quality of life for all those who live and work in our community. The CAG shall be made up of at least one resident of each ward chosen by the Chair of the City Council's Redevelopment Committee in consultation with city leaders and local community action groups. The CAG shall also take input from the owners and the unions representing the employees of the plant.

We propose that the CAG submit a written report to the Holyoke City Council by October 2012.

We believe foresight and informed choices are imperative to a smooth transition away from coal and toward a healthy and thriving community!