

AMHERST HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Jane Wald, Bob Romer, Laura Lovett, Janet Marquardt, Ted Parker

Staff Present: Brandon Toponce, Historical Commission Staff Representative

Meeting Date: May 7, 2018

Time Started: 6:05 PM

Time Ended: 7:30 PM

AGENDA ITEMS

Minutes

The Commission reviewed and approved the March 26 meeting minutes and the April 23 meeting minutes, with corrections.

42 Shumway Street, Preliminary Review

Mr. Toponce stated the applicant received approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals on Thursday, March 29. This approval was for the creation of a non-owner occupied duplex with nine parking spaces. The Zoning Board of appeals found the project to meet all applicable Zoning Bylaw Requirements. As one of the conditions of approval they are required to come before the Historical Commission for a review of the demolition of the Garage. He also explained how the ranch style home was constructed in 1956 with the garage being part of the original construction. The applicant is requesting the removal of the garage to allow for required and additional parking spaces.

Ms. Marquardt believed the garage was an important feature of the home and wondered if a hearing should be conducted to allow the neighbors an opportunity to express concern on the changes.

Mr. Parker commented how it was not under the purview of the Commission to review the use and the group should only be looking at the proposed demolition of the garage.

Mr. Toponce also added that a public hearing was conducted by the ZBA, and the public had an opportunity to express their concerns.

Mr. Parker stated that the building does not stand out as significant and the garage does not warrant preservation.

Ms. Wald added that it may not be the best example of a ranch style home within Amherst.

Mr. Parker made a motion to hold a hearing for the Demolition Delay

Ms. Marquardt seconded and the motion failed to pass with a 0-5 vote

Mr. Irving Slavid with Monument Conservation Collaborative presented his findings and recommendation for restoration to the commission. His group went through the 1870 section of the cemetery and evaluated the stones that needed the most work. Showing the Commission a map of the 1870 section, he believed the best areas to address were those around the Dickinson family plot, at the front of the cemetery and other locations where the stones had already fallen down.

Mr. Slavid said 66 stones were counted as being unstable, 42 stones were highly visible and a total of 136 should be repaired, adding that funding would not make this possible. He concluded that 42 stones, under the current funding, could be repaired, and recommended focusing on those which are the most visible.

Ms. Wald asked the group if safety should be the top priority, with the most visible second.

Ms. Marquardt agreed and added that the commission should place an article in the paper to let the community know the work that is taking place.

Mr. Parker felt that all of the hazardous stones should be repaired and then with the remaining amount of funds going toward those that are highly visible.

Ms. Wald commented that she liked this idea of doing the stones at the front that were highly visible. She believed it would be good for the public to see that improvements were being made.

Mr. Slavid added that because two groups were being looked at during the selection process, he proposed his budget at \$44,800. Yet, the actual amount set aside was \$50,000. He asked the Commission if they would consider placing the additional funds in the budget, which would allow for the repair of eight more stones.

The Commission agreed that this would be a good idea and requested that Mr. Toponce find out if this would be possible.

Ms. Wald concluded by asking Mr. Slavid how long he believed the project would take to complete.

Mr. Slavid believed the project would be complete by the end of September of this year.

Ms. Wald thanked Mr. Slavid for coming and told him that he was welcome to go.

Ms. Marquardt updated the Commission on the North Common meeting that she and Ms. Wald attended. She thought many good ideas were expressed by the group and announced they would be holding a public hearing on May 29, at 7:00 PM, in the Town Room.

Ms. Marquardt also discussed the proposed nomination for a home located at the corner of Bay Road and South East Street prepared by Shannon Walsh with the Pioneer Valley Planning

Commission. She believed the wrong house was researched and that Ms. Walsh documented the Simeon Smith Farmstead when it should have been the Thayer Farmstead. She requested that Mr. Toponce find out from Ms. Walsh what the actual name of the property should be.

Mr. Toponce updated the Commission on the emergency demolition located at 159 North Pleasant. He said Mr. Morra, the Building Commissioner, is working with the property owner and the inspectors on a time frame for demolition. Since this is an emergency demolition it would not be going to the Commission for review.

Mr. Parker expressed concern that although this is not going to be coming to the Commission, he would hope that they would become aware of what is taking place prior to seeing it in the paper.

Mr. Toponce agreed and said he will talk to Mr. Morra about getting notice of emergency demolitions to the Commission sooner in the process.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM