

AMHERST HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Jane Wald - Chair, Patricia J. Auth, Janet Marquardt, Theodore Parker

Staff Present: Brandon Toponce, Historical Commission Staff Representative

Meeting Date: December 5, 2018

Time Started: 6:00 PM

Time Ended: 8:05 PM

AGENDA ITEMS

Minutes

The Commission reviewed and approved the November 7, 2018 minutes, with corrections.

Amherst Historical Society CPA Project Review

Bonnie Isuna, with the Amherst Historical Society presented three new ideas for the FY 2020 CPA proposals. First, stabilizing the textiles for display. Second, Archeological study of earlier structures on the property. Third, begin the process of transferring a portion of the collection to an online database.

Mr. Toponce expressed concern the budget of \$8,000 was too small for the data base work. Other commissioners agreed and Ms. Wald asked what the funds would be going toward.

Ms. Isuna stated the \$8,000 is just a start and will help to look at the framework of a database with most of the funds going toward a consultant.

Ms. Wald suggested that more detail on this project and the archeological project should be presented to CPAC. Especially indicating the role of UMASS students and the Historical Society in relation to the archeological project.

Wildwood Cemetery

Rebecca Fricke, with Wildwood Cemetery presented a plan for trees to be removed and trimmed on the cemetery property. The goal would be to maintain the trees that are near the headstones that could cause the most damage.

The Commission discussed the project and recommended Ms. Fricke focus on the preservation of monuments that are in the most danger. It was suggested that monuments from notable residents and the oldest monuments be emphasized, or the preservation of the original cemetery design be included as part of the proposal.

Ms. Marquardt suggested the project include the preservation of open space since it was open to the public.

Ms. Auth added that it was an important recourse to the community and the tree removal could be considered a safety for those who utilize the trails.

Ms. Fricke said she would rework the application to include the detail suggested by the Commission and look into the open space aspect of the application.

Review Proposed CPA Funds

Ms. Wald recommended the Commission review the current proposals that are being sent to the CPAC concerning historic preservation.

\$55,000 – Wildwood Cemetery tree removal

\$50,000 – West Cemetery headstone repair

\$41,000 – Amherst Historical Society textile, archeological and database projects

\$10,000 – Due diligence survey work

Mr. Toponce updated the commission on the East Street School Intensive Level Survey, stating that the Town Manager, Paul Bockelman, suggested CPA funding not be used on this project and that the developer be required to create this report instead.

The Commission agreed this was an acceptable plan and withdrew their request for funding the Intensive Level Survey for the East Street School.

Writers Walk

Ms. Marquardt updated the Commission on how the writers walk signs should direct people to the Visitor Information Center, where they could pick up a brochure. She also suggested that a website be included to direct the participant to more information.

It was also suggested that the Commissioners review the text prepared by Ms. Marquardt and that Mr. Toponce get a final cost from DPW on the amount it would cost for them to place the signs at each location. Also, that he finds out more detail on the IT Department creating a space for the website.

Preservation Plan Discussion

Ms. Wald asked the group how they would like to proceed with updating the Preservation Plan and suggested that each of the action items be reviewed at as to indicate what was the most important. These concepts could then be divided into long and short term goals.

Mr. Toponce suggested that since the Commission was no longer pursuing the East Street School, that these funds be used to hire a consultant to update the Preservation Plan.

The Commission agreed that this would be a good idea and requested that Mr. Toponce prepare the CPA application for this.

Emily Dickinson Federal Funding Project Update

Ms. Wald stated that the information on the work to be done on the Emily Dickinson Museum was coming before the Commission to fulfill the criteria for Federal funding. She explained the work would include needed repairs to tighten up the structure and a new HVAC system. She also indicated that all plans would be sent to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and approval.

Adjournment

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, January 9, at 6:00 PM. Ms. Wald made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Marquardt seconded the motion, which passed 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05.