

**AMHERST HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Members Present: Jane Wald – Chair, Robin Fordham, Janet Marquardt, Theodore Parker

Staff Present: Brandon Toponce, Historical Commission Staff Representative

Meeting Date: March 6, 2019

Time Started: 6:05 PM

Time Ended: 8:30 PM

PUBLIC HEARING

Amir Mikhchi, 133 and 143 South East Street

Mr. Mikhchi stated the two properties were previously rezoned to Village Center Business and he desires to demolish the two homes to construct a new commercial building. He said the homes are not in good condition on the outside as well as the inside, with mold found throughout the basement. He believes that at this point the home is not habitable.

Ms. Wald opened the public hearing and seeing no one from the public wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

The Commission reviewed the Standards for Designation, Section 13.4 of the Zoning Bylaw, and agreed the two homes were not historically significant.

Ms. Marquardt made a motion for the Historical Commission to grant the demolition permit for both homes located at 133 and 143 South East Street, based on the lack of being historically significant as determined under Section 13.4 of the Zoning Bylaw. Ms. Fordham seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

PUBLIC MEETING

Jason Edwards, 1350 South East Street

Mr. Edwards explained that he would like to demolish all of the accessory buildings on the property in order to construct a new home. The barn, which he believed was falling apart, was no longer needed on the property.

Mr. Toponce stated that after the accessory structures are demolished, Mr. Edwards will need to receive approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals since the lot is non-conforming in relation to building circle requirements.

Ms. Wald agreed the Barn appeared to be dilapidated. Seeing that the Commissioners had no further comments, she asked for a motion.

Mr. Parker made a motion to not hold a public hearing for the accessory structures located at 1350 South East Street. Ms. Marquardt seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

Mitchel and Mary Lynn Olson, 562 Montague Road

Mr. Toponce stated the applicant was unable to attend the meeting and they desire the Commission to make a decision on whether to hold a public hearing for the demolition of the barn located on the north property line. He said the homeowners received notice from their insurance company that if the barn did not come down, it would increase their homeowners insurance substantially.

Mr. Parker commented that the barn being proposed for demolition was exactly the style of barn the commission should preserve

Ms. Marquardt asked if the barn is visible from Plum Tree Road.

Ms. Wald responded that you could see it, and that within the last ten years the barn has greatly deteriorated

Ms. Marquardt suggested that from the submitted photographs, it only appears as if the lean-to was the most dilapidated section. She then suggested that the Commission hold a public hearing.

Ms. Fordham agreed the barn should not be demolished.

Mr. Parker made a motion to hold a public hearing on the demolition delay of the barn located at 562 Montague Road. Ms. Marquardt seconded the motion and it passed 4-0.

Minutes

The commission reviewed the January 9, and February 6 meeting minutes, and approved them with corrections.

Discussion on Historic Landscape Designation

Mr. Toponce reviewed the request by Wildwood Cemetery to become a designated Historic Landscape. The Commission requested Mr. Toponce create a letter describing the steps the Cemetery will need to take to designate the property.

Grazing Goats

The commission chose to continue this item to a later date when Ms. Auth attends.

CPA Update

Ms. Fordham discussed how the CPAC meeting has progressed, and requested the Commission review the projects relating to Historic Preservation and rank them in order. This ranking will help CPAC make a determination for funding.

Ranking for CPA Historic Preservation Projects

1. West Cemetery headstones
2. Farmhouse window restoration
3. Inventory grant match
4. Amherst Preservation Plan
5. Textile restoration
6. Data migration for AHS
7. DPW building historic survey

Article 13, Demolition Delay update

Mr. Parker discussed the final wording and layout of Section 13.0, which the commission agreed was appropriate. He also discussed some of the definitions and reminded the Commission that the word “structure” was being removed from the document and replaced with the word “building.”

Mr. Toponce expressed his concern over discussing in length aspects of Article 13 as a Commission. He believed the purpose of having a subcommittee was to work out the issues and then bring a draft to the full commission for review and approval. This will ensure better time management during regular Historical Commission meetings.

Emily Dickinson Museum Letter of Support

Ms. Wald recused herself as a member of the Commission since she is the Executive Director of the Emily Dickinson Museum. As Vice Chair, Ms. Marquardt conducted the rest of the meeting.

Ms. Wald explained how the Museum is applying for a grant from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund to assist with the restoration, repair and repainting of the original window sashes, shutters and doors of the Dickinson Homestead. For this request, a letter of support is required from the Historical Commission and the Local Historic District Commission.

The Commission agreed the proposed project would be very positive for the museum and wished to grant their support. Since Ms. Wald recused herself, the Commission did not have a quorum and could not officially vote on the letter.

Adjournment

The next meeting for Wednesday, April 3 was canceled due to the lack of a quorum. Ms. Marquardt made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Parker seconded the motion, which passed 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.