

AMHERST HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Jane Wald - Chair, Patricia J. Auth, Robin Fordham, Ted Parker

Staff Present: Brandon Toponce, Historical Commission Staff Representative

Meeting Date: October 3, 2018

Time Started: 6:00 PM

Time Ended: 8:30 PM

AGENDA ITEMS

Minutes

The Commission reviewed and approved the August 30 and September 12, 2018 minutes, with changes.

Preliminary Review, 260 Northampton Road

Ms. Auth asked the other members, if the building is moved could the group make the condition that the new foundation needs to have the same appearance as the existing foundation.

Mr. Parker stated the Commission was addressing the demolition of the foundation and they are not able to look at the future outcome. He suggested that if the foundation was a significant aesthetic feature of the home, then a hearing should be held. He also believed that they could not require the homeowner to construct the new foundation with a rock appearance.

Ms. Wald added that the Commission could encourage the home owner to look at creating a foundation that appeared to be rock. Yet, she pointed out that more importantly they were saving the home itself.

Ms. Fordham believed that moving the home back would impact the historic integrity of the home and its relation to the street.

Mr. Parker agreed that it has an important location on Northampton Road, yet was very close to the road itself.

Mr. Toponce stated that other homes along Northampton Road were back 100 feet. If each home had the same setback and the visual appearance of this was significant, then it would be an impact to the historic integrity. However, the homes are not found at the same setback.

Ms. Fordham responded that the commission could still recognize the damage to the historic visibility to Route 9

Ms. Wald stated the commission had two courses of action, the first would be to hold the public hearing and perhaps receive more detail from the owner. Second, would be to move forward without holding a hearing. She believed it would be an undue burden on the applicant to hold the hearing.

Mr. Parker made a motion to not hold a public hearing and to allow the demolition of the foundation, Ms. Auth seconded the motion.

Ms. Wald suggested the following findings be included in the motion:

- The home owner is stabilizing the existing structure and improving the overall vitality of the structure (Section 13.12, Zoning Bylaw)
- Preservation of the building is encouraging continued private ownership (Section 13.16, Zoning Bylaw)

Ms. Fordham seconded the amended motion with the findings, the motion passed 4-0.

Nomination of a Vice-Chair

Since Ms. Marquardt was not in attendance, the Commission believed this item should be rescheduled for November 7.

Demolition Delay Bylaw, Article 13, Committee Update

Mr. Parker updated the Commission by stating the Committee would be meeting an hour prior to each Historical Commission Meeting. He added that since this was the first meeting the group looked at how the work would be divided and next steps in proceeding. He concluded that sections with more controversy, would be left blank in order for the full Commission to discuss these sections in full

Ms. Wald reminded the group to take into consideration the time frame for public hearings.

Mr. Parker agreed this would be addressed.

CPA Updates

Mr. Toponce stated that Ms. Walsh was starting the outbuilding inventory this coming week and would be giving him updates as the work progressed. He also discussed the writers walk and asked the group how they would like him to proceed.

Ms. Wald said that since Ms. Marquardt was a huge part of this project and would have more information to contribute, this item be moved to the November 7 Meeting. She also suggested that Mr. Toponce get the breakdown of cost for the Commission to review.

Mr. Toponce updated the Commission on the Jones Library, by informing them of a change in the law concerning the selection process for research, reports and plans. He stated that now the Town can select consultants if the cost is under \$30,000. He made contact with Max Page, who was originally going to work on this project, and sent him an updated contract to complete.

Ms. Wald suggested that an outside consultant may want to be selected, as they might have a different perception of the library as they would be from outside of Amherst.

Mr. Toponce stated that he was under the impression that the Commission already approved Mr. Page, his students and colleagues to conduct the work.

Ms. Wald believed the Commission had not done this and perhaps Mr. Page could do other work in the community, such as an architectural report for the East Street School.

Ms. Auth added that since the Historical Commission were the ones distributing funds, they should have a chance to select the consultant.

Proposed CPA Projects for 2019

The group discussed several options for CPA projects and came up with an Inventory of the East Street School and the second round of repairs for the West Cemetery.

Ms. Wald suggested that an inventory of the significant homes in Amherst could be conducted using the Survey and Planning Grant, and requested Mr. Toponce to look into this.

The group then discussed the plans for the North Common and each expressed great concern over the new plans. The Commission believed that removing all parking would have a greater and more positive impact into the future on the overall improvement of the site.

Adjournment

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, November 7, at 6:00 PM. Mr. Parker made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Fordham seconded the motion, which passed 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15.