

Amherst Historical Commission

Wednesday, January 22, 2020

Members Present: Jane Wald, Robin Fordham, Nathaniel Malloy(staff representative), Jane Sheffler, Pat Auth

Members of the Public Present: **Hilda Granbaum, Molly Turner, Meg Gage, Pat Holland**

Meeting Location: Bangs Community Center

Meeting Start: 06:04 pm

1. Review Minutes—December 18 and December 30
 - a. Correct spelling of Hetty and Nathaniel's names.
 - b. Nate will send Jane new format for minutes
 - i. Add last names
 1. Motion to accept minutes from 12.18.2019
 - a. Motion carried unanimously (with edits)
 2. Motion to accept minutes from 12.30.2019
 - a. Motion carried with 3 ayes and 1 abstain
2. Review and discuss FY2021 CPA Proposals
 - i. CPA is currently hearing proposals for funding.
 - c. Headstone restoration in West Cemetery
 - i. \$50,000 ask. Part of a 3-year plan. Last money was granted in July 2019. Hoping to begin work in Spring. There is not a maintenance budget capable of keeping up with the needs of the cemetery. Additionally, the cemetery is part of the Town's preservation plan.
 - d. Update Inventory Forms
 - i. \$25,000 to complete the inventory forms for outbuildings in the area. These inventory forms help us identify and preserve historic properties.
 - e. Jones Library Special Collections
 - i. Looking for \$1.5 million (bonded) over a 5- or 10-year period. The Historical Commission is in favor of the CPA providing funding to preserve this collection.
 - f. Window restoration at North Amherst Community Farm
 - i. Requesting \$4,500 to replace the windows in the basement. Have also done fundraising on their own to help fund the work.
 - g. North Amherst Library
 - i. Library needs updates, including an elevator, increased accessibility, and restrooms. Historic preservation in need of maintaining the historic building. Budget is not determined at this time and there are many questions about how the structure can be updated and what needs to be done. Can an addition be added before the foundation is repaired? Total project cost around \$1.3 million dollars for the whole project. Work could begin as early as summer. There are two

structural beams that very likely need to be replaced. Historical Commission recommends

- h. Ranking of proposals:
 - i. North Amherst Farms Windows
 - ii. Headstone Restoration
 - iii. Updating the Inventory Forms
 - iv. North Amherst Library (contingent on budget being provided and funding availability).
 - 1. Stabilization of the structure
 - v. Jones Library Special Collections
 - 1. HVAC
 - 2. Fire suppression
 - 3. Appropriate document and artifact storage
 - 4. Secure space
 - 5. Up to a total of \$1 million over a bonding period of 10 years.
 - i. Move to recommend all projects to the CPA
- 3. Review draft revisions to Demolition Delay Bylaw
 - a. In process.
- 4. Review outbuildings identified by PVPC
 - a. Look at the list and consider other options
- 5. Discussion of signs for West Cemetery and the Amherst History Mural
 - a. No new information
- 6. General updates
 - a. Barn at 562 Montague Road
 - i. White Oak Timber Framers looked at the barn. The walls are bowing, and the roof isn't sized correctly and is not structurally sound. Wood should be salvageable. Waiting for the report.
 - b. 462 Main St
 - i. Owner has republished the ads. Has had some interest, but is not looking like we will have any luck saving it.
- 7. Public Comment
 - a. Meg Gage
 - i. The farm is an important part of our community. People should feel encouraged to purchase food from their farm stand.
 - ii. North Amherst is a national registered historic district and the library is a crucial part of this. The members of the North Amherst community are very committed to

preserving the library. The library is one of the oldest buildings that the Town owns.

- b. Molly Turner
 - i. North Amherst library is a Putnam (?) building who is a historic architect. It is a wonderful building worth preserving.
 - c. Pat Holland
 - i. My father gave \$300,000 to help preserve the library several years ago. There are 6 stairs that need to be climbed in order to get in the building. The librarian frequently has to bring people their books.
 - d. Sarah McKee
 - i. The Jones library HVAC system was outdated when it was put in in the 1990's. I am concerned about the "up in the air" nature of the work. The plan is to demolish some of the building and build an addition. I was very concerned to hear that the large meeting room is going to be moved which has other impacts. In addition, there aspects of the plan that involve changing parts of the outer structure of the building, however, the building is part of a historical preservation district. Additionally, concerned about where the special collections will be placed because it would be susceptible to theft. We have a large and extensive collection that is invaluable. Considered that the architects are not looking at the safety of the collection. (See also Sarah's letter to the Historical Commission)
8. Old Business:
- a. Pat found grazing sheep!! Can't make assessment until Spring, but is very excited about potentially taking on this project. Pat will get an assessment in March or April.
 - b. Demolition Delay Bylaw workshop. End of February?
9. Next Meeting Date: February 19, 2020

Meeting End: 20:20