

**Amherst Historical Commission**  
**Public Hearing**  
**Minutes**  
**Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at 5:00pm**  
**Virtual Zoom meeting:** <https://amherstma.zoom.us/j/99884834949>

**Attendance:** Jane Wald, Patricia Auth, Janet Marquardt, Hetty Startup, Jane Sheffler, Nathaniel Malloy (Town Staff) and Benjamin Breger (Town Staff)

**Guests:** Anika Lopes, Hilda Greenbaum, Dorothy Pam

**Documents and Handouts:** 330 Pine Street Demolition Application, 330 Pine Street Email, Cell Tower Information, Commission-DRAFT Demo Delay Bylaw, MA Demolition Delay Guidebook, Morra-Article 13 Amendment FINAL

**Call to Order:** 6:04 pm

**1. Announcements:**

Jane Wald asked about the minutes from the June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Jane Sheffler needs to review the video of the meeting to make an update and then they will be available for review.

**2. Discussion of Demolition Delay Bylaw and July 7 workshop:**

1. Nathaniel suggested that we discuss the following from the workshop:
  - a. thresholds for a demolition application and/or hearing--age, list, geography
  - b. a 2-step process--first determining significance, 2nd determining if it should be preferably preserved
  - c. determining significance--can this be done administratively by staff and a representative from the commission, or should be it by the commission at a hearing? currently, most of the hearing is determining significance
  - d. if a 2-step process, need to develop criteria about determining preferably preserved. These could include future plans for the property, how it impacts the streetscape, the structure's architecture and if it reinforces historic character of the surroundings, etc.
  - e. updated definitions, particularly for a structure/building, and for demolition--do we want the demolition bylaw to apply to removal of trim and features or to removing a percentage for a building's exterior?
2. There was a robust discussion about the Bylaws that led to the following:
  - a. The Demolition Delay Bylaw will hereby be known as the Bylaw for the Preservation of Historically Significant Buildings.
  - b. There is a strong preference towards:
    1. Having a clear, transparent 2-step process
    2. A percentage-based determination for demolition
      1. i.e., 25% of the structure that is visible from the street.
    3. An age-based determination for demolition application
      1. Currently 50 years.

### 3. General Updates:

- a. **Discussion of Civil War Tablets and site visit:** Logical next step in the process is to go and see the tablets in person for Commission members. Ben is working on getting this organized and has also offered the visit to the Restoration experts.

i. **Questions:**

1. Do we want to see all the tablets or just the one that is the most accessible?
2. Jan: *Do we have a condition report for the tablets from when they went into storage?*  
Nathaniel: *Yes, there is a cleaning report from before they went into storage, but the crates that they are in were not meant for long term storage or moving.*
3. Hetty: *Are there any photographic records of the tablets so that we could see them without having to actually open the crates?*  
Nathaniel showed us documentation from the cleaning report and the photos of the tablets that were included in the report.
4. Anika: *It would be helpful to know if there has been any color transfer from the crates or if there are any issues with how they have been stored that have lead to damage.*
5. Nathaniel: *The Restoration experts indicated that there is some damage due to the age of the tablets, but otherwise the tablets are intact. Emailed the following documentation to the Commission:*
  - a. Conservator's report.
  - b. 2 images of cleaned tablets
  - c. History of the tablets
  - d. Proposed schemes for displaying the tablets in front of Town Hall.
6. What is the roll of the Historical Commission vs. the roll of the committee of citizens who are working on this?
  - a. Recommendations on where to display in Town?
    - i. Jan recommends not displaying them outdoors because of the delicacy of the tablets.
    - ii. Nathaniel recommends that the Commission think about accessible indoor locations.
    - iii. Pat asked about the Bangs Center. Could this be a possibility?
    - iv. Can they be incorporated into a landscape design? Like making it its own plaza.
    - v. Location and design are something that there needs to be a larger discussion about. We will continue this discussion the August Historical Commission meeting.
  - b. Citizens are interested in fundraising to ensure that the tablets get displayed. How does this work with the roll of the Historical Commission?

- i. Nathaniel: *The Commission can help advocate. However, we need to look at the finer details, especially around the idea of ownership. Nathaniel will start looking into these finer details.*

#### **4. Review of demolition application for 330 Pine Street**

*Motion to allow demolition made by Pat Auth and seconded by Hetty Startup. Roll call vote of those in favor: Pat Auth, Hetty Startup, Jan Marquardt, Jane Sheffler, and Jane Wald*

#### **5. Review of notice of proposed cellular tower near intersection of Route 116 and West Pomeroy**

Historical Commission has asked that the staff collect their comments and convey them to the correspondent.

#### **6. Public Comment:** None

#### **7. Next Meeting:** August 12, 2020 to continue the following items:

- a. **Review of 132 Northampton Road Comprehensive Permit**
- b. **Bylaws for Preservation of Historically Significant**

*Motion to allow adjourn meeting made by Jan Marquardt, seconded by Jane Sheffler. Roll call vote of those in favor: Pat Auth, Hetty Startup, Janet Marquardt, Jane Sheffler, and Jane Wald*

**Meeting Adjourned:** 7:38pm

***\*Note: meeting ended early due to storm causing technical disruptions. Jane Wald and Jan Marquardt were disconnected from the meeting for a period of about 5 minutes. No official business was conducted while waiting for them to reconnect.***