

**Amherst Historical Commission**  
**February 4, 2008**  
**Planning Department Office, Town Hall**  
**7:15 p.m.**

**Present:** Gai Carpenter, Lyle Denit, Lynda Faye, Louis Greenbaum, Michael Hanke, James Wald. **Absent:** Elizabeth Sharpe. **Staff:** Jonathan Tucker, Director of Planning. **Visitors:** John Sendelbach, Adrienne Terrizzi, Edith Byron, Janice Ratner, Rick Griffiths; Gerry Guidera and Peter Wilson

Mr. Wald called the meeting to order at 7:19 p.m. and asked for consideration of the minutes of January 14, 2008; Ms. Carpenter and Mr. Tucker noted two corrections. Ms. Faye moved approval, Mr. Hanke seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Wald invited Ms. Terrizzi to introduce representatives of the 250th Anniversary Committee Arts and Literature Subcommittee. She began by introducing the project proposal, saying she has always wanted to see a piece of public artwork in town. John Sendelbach has designed a work to commemorate the Amherst Academy with a "Spirit Frame" similar to one developed for Benjamin Franklin's home in Philadelphia. He has had previous public and private commissions for stone and earthworks, as well as constructions in metal and other materials. Mr. Sendelbach presented his plans for the site adjacent to Amherst Cinema and across from the Jones Library, on the location of the old Amherst Academy. He said he looked for a way to make a pedestrian connection from the CVS lot to the Amherst Cinema, and proceeded to describe design elements, the benefits of the project, materials, and siting.

Mr. Tucker questioned the committee about how the proposal conforms to deed restrictions on the site. Ms. Terrizzi reported that the deed and other documents are being checked, and said she has spoken with the Town Manager about those issues. Mr. Tucker asked Mr. Sendelbach to describe the materials for the ghost structure; he replied that he expects to use shop finish stainless steel. Mr. Hanke commented on choices of materials and surfaces treatments. Mr. Sendelbach said he has talked with a colleague about getting CAD drawings and estimates. The Commission and members of the committee engaged in a lengthy conversation about various aspects of the project design. Mr. Griffiths noted that the Trustees of the Amherst Academy fully support the concept of the "Spirit Frame." Ms. Faye moved that the Historical Commission formally support the concept of creating a ghost structure on the site of the former Amherst Academy; Mr. Hanke seconded the motion. Ms. Faye noted that the Historical Commission would like to see a final design. Mr. Denit commented further on the value of screens in the design as a possible locus for interpretive material. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Tucker distributed another revision of an Historical Commission FY09 budget for review. Mr. Greenbaum commented on the evident lack of CPAC enthusiasm for many items in the Historical Commission list. Mr. Wald questioned Mr. Greenbaum about the extent of that resistance, and whether it was because of unexpended funds or content of proposals. Mr. Greenbaum had no clear answer but noted he had gotten yet another report on appropriations and unexpended funds.

Mr. Greenbaum and Mr. Wald recused themselves and left the room on the advice of Mr. Tucker. The Commission discussed lots one and two of the Henry Hills property and a proposal from its new owners that the town should purchase these properties. Amherst College is likely to move two other houses to lots three and four, one from Spring Street and one from the Tuttle Farm. The Commission engaged in an informative discussion of the plans and proposal for the site with Mr. Guidera and Mr. Wilson. They are asking \$200,000 per lot to save lots one and two from development.

With the conclusion of that discussion, Mr. Wald and Mr. Greenbaum rejoined the meeting, and the Commission considered several items of old business. Ms. Faye and others questioned Mr.

Tucker on the status of the RFP for the West Cemetery restoration. Mr. Wald mentioned plans for possible student project(s) on literary Amherst in the fall. The Commission returned to its earlier discussion of the Community Preservation Act Committee and its views on funding projects recommended by the Historical Commission, and Mr. Greenbaum's reading of the mood of CPAC.

Ms. Faye moved to return previously appropriated publications funds, as the town counsel has ruled that publications are not a legitimate use of CPA money; Mr. Denit seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Mr. Wald reported that the CPC is still plodding on and that the consultants are still working, beyond their original contract. Mr. Wald commented on the master plan and evidence (e.g., the earlier artist's presentation) that it is being used to frame activity.

Mr. Denit invited visits to 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary website and said the history committee is looking for suggestions of an architect who might be honored, among many others in various professions, for contributions to the town. Members of the Commission had several suggestions.

Mr. Wald and Mr. Denit reported briefly on the status of the UMass mitigation agreement and survey, and noted the invaluable work Joseph Larson has done.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 25 at 7:15 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gai Carpenter, Clerk