

**Amherst Historical Commission Meeting, April 9, 2007**  
**Second Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall**  
**7:15 p.m.**

**Present:** Gai Carpenter, Lyle Denit, Lynda Faye, Michael Hanke, Edith MacMullen, Elizabeth Sharpe, James Wald; **Absent:** Jonathan Tucker, Director of Planning.

Ms. MacMullen called the meeting to order at 7:16 p.m. She shared Joseph Larson's recent newspaper opinion piece on UMass campus historic preservation. The minutes of the meeting of March 12 were presented; Ms. Carpenter moved their approval, Mr. Hanke seconded the motion and the minutes were approved with five votes in favor and two abstentions.

Ms. MacMullen suggested changing the name of the West Cemetery Improvements Committee to Cemetery Improvements, and naming Ms. Faye to chair the renamed committee. Ms. Sharpe moved the change, Mr. Denit seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Ms. Faye expressed concern about tombstone restoration and noted that there still are issues about getting things done. She specifically mentioned putting up the boxes for mural brochures; it was agreed that Mr. Hanke and Ms. Faye will get the boxes installed.

Ms. MacMullen presented a letter from Jane Wald about Dickinson Museum and her efforts to secure a local preservation restriction to allow releases of funds previously approved for the Museum's landscape restoration project. The Museum already has a Massachusetts Historical Commission restriction, and Commission discussion revealed that it is not entirely clear why an additional restriction is needed to allow release of funds. The Town has been dilatory in responding to Ms. Wald's inquiries. Ms. Sharpe moved to pay the \$15,000 allocated from CPAC and to request signed copy of the Dickinson Museum's MHC restriction. Ms. Faye seconded the motion. Mr. Denit raised a question about the reciprocity implicit in allocating CPA funds and requiring a preservation restriction in return. Ms. MacMullen noted that the state restriction already in place is stronger than a town restriction would be. The motion was called, and passed unanimously. Ms. Faye moved that the Commission request copies of preservation restrictions to accompany any request for disbursement of approved funding for historic preservation; Mr. Hanke seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously. The Commission agreed that we should also have a copy of the Strong House agreement and asked Ms. MacMullen and Mr. Tucker to request copy of the Strong House preservation restriction. The Commission also agreed to take the initiative to develop a local restriction; Ms. Faye will get some samples from other communities on which we might model a restriction for Amherst.

Ms. MacMullen reported that the CPAC synthesis of proposals resulted in all the Historical Commission's top priorities being included in the articles to be presented to Town Meeting.

Mr. Wald reported that the CPC workgroups will review input from recent community meetings and plan additional workgroup meetings on April 28. The Committee wants to do more public outreach, but they still have to do the planned scientific survey and to get something to town meeting this spring.

Mr. Denit reported on the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee. Plans for the parade are moving along, as well as ideas for creating banners for light poles. There is ongoing conversation about preparing some publications, and design of the logo is progressing. Ms. Sharpe is attending the history committee meetings.

The Commission agreed that next steps on the South Amherst Common project should include asking Bonnie Parsons and the DPW for suggestions about restoration or preservation of space. Since the DPW has held public discussions of traffic around the Common, and Ms. Parsons has

surveyed its historic uses, we would be looking for ideas to synthesize the open space and roadway aspects of the Common.

The contract with PVPC to survey the East Village Historic District has been signed. Ms. Sharpe will be working with Ms. Parsons to evaluate possible easterly expansion of district.

The Commission discussed its ongoing relationship with the PVPC, which has both written RFPs and been selected as the contractor for the East Village project. While the Commission has been entirely satisfied with the PVPC's work, it was suggested that Commission avoid any appearance of conflict in its relationship with PVPC. The Commission considered whether we might create an ongoing consultancy contract, but also wondered whether we have other bidders on these contracts. Ms. MacMullen will talk with Mr. Tucker about procedures for consultancies, and the subject will be on the Commission's next agenda.

The isolated residence NHR nominations still have not been submitted. The Aaron Warner House nomination is complete and has been reviewed by the PVPC. At last report, the forms for the Dana House had been mislaid and need to be located and reviewed. A couple of other nominations may be in the pipeline, with the homeowners taking the initiative to prepare initial documentation.

The Commission reviewed Richard Loesby's proposal to add curbing to the plans for restoration of the Isaac and Amos Goodale headstones area in West Cemetery. Ms. Faye and Mr. Hanke will check out the site and Ms. MacMullen will check with Mr. Tucker on the relevant standards from the cemetery preservation plan to be sure the curbing is conforming.

The Commission reviewed items on the Town Meeting draft warrant, including a proposed cell phone tower. The article on Atkins corner easements did not provide detail, and the Commission agreed that we should find out more about the easements and possibly use this article as a teaching opportunity for Town Meeting. Ms. MacMullen noted that the Commission's CPA funding requests might be challenged because of the amounts of previously approved funds still unexpended. The Commission reviewed the accounting of funds and project status, and Ms. Faye suggested that we prepare an executive summary, possibly accompanied by some graphs for Town Meeting members. After a discussion of how to present data, it was agreed that Ms. MacMullen, Ms. Carpenter and others will work on a document for distribution.

The Commission discussed demolition applications and the Commission process for reviewing them. Commissioners noted that contrary to the information in Mr. Tucker's email, all members of the Commission had forwarded comments to the Chair on the most recent application, even though not all of them had visited Town Hall to examine the application documents. The Commission will review its processes at its next meeting, and will also review the wording of the Article describing Demolition Delay Hearings.

Ms. Faye asked that the Commission schedule a future discussion of creating local historic districts in Amherst.

Next meetings are scheduled for May 1 at 7:00; and June 4 or 5, depending on the possible Town Meeting schedule, also at 7:00.

Ms. Faye moved adjournment, the motion was seconded by Ms. Sharpe and the meeting concluded at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gai Carpenter, Clerk