

**Amherst Historical Commission
MEETING
Monday, April 7, 2008
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
7:15 p.m.**

Present: Gai Carpenter, Louis Greenbaum, Michael Hanke, Elizabeth Sharpe, James Wald. Absent: Lyle Denit, Lynda Faye. **Staff:** Jonathan Tucker, Director of Planning. **Visitors:** Nick Grabbe, Jerry Guidera, Rus Wilson, Tom Davies; Honoré David, Libby Klekowski,

Mr. Wald convened the meeting at 7:17 p.m. There were no minutes for the March 24, 2008 meeting as Ms. Carpenter was absent and Mr. Tucker had not had time to prepare them.

The Historical Commission considered the National Register nomination request from the Jeffery Amherst Bookshop, and noted that a single structure already within a district is not eligible for separate nomination. Mr. Wald will write a letter to the Gerstens explaining the regulations, and thanking them for their interest.

The Commission briefly discussed TM warrant Article 20, the CPA appropriation for historic preservation.

The discussion was suspended to go to the schedules 7:20 p.m. Appearance by Amherst College regarding Scott House and Seelye House Renovations. Amherst requested support for its requests for AAB variance. Tom Davies, director of design and construction for the college, explained that Amherst wants to make the ground floor accessible, but not to construct an elevator. Ms. Sharpe moved that the Historical Commission support the college's request, Mr. Greenbaum seconded the motion, and the Historical Commission voted unanimously to ask the chair to write to the Massachusetts Historical Commission in support of the variance.

The conversation moved to the issue of plans for Scott house. Mr. Tucker noted that the application for a demolition permit was received on April 7. Mr. Greenbaum posed several questions to Tom Davies about the plans. Mr. Greenbaum and Ms. Sharpe expressed their concerns about preserving the original staircase. The Historical Commission reached consensus on holding a demolition delay hearing and tentatively agreed to schedule it for April 22. Mr. Tucker will email all members to confirm the date.

Mr. Wald inquired of the Amherst Woman's Club representatives whether there were anything in particular they wanted to address. Ms. David commented on the issues raised about the choice of carriage house roofing materials. Ms. Klekowski mentioned the Amherst Town Meeting agenda, and the evolving working relationship with Mr. Guidera; he and the Amherst Woman's Club have

made progress on landscaping, but she noted that the Woman's Club is still concerned about the future of the lots on Main Street.

Mr. Greenbaum commented on the most recent CPAC meeting, and Mr. Hanke, Mr. Guidera and Mr. Wald added their observations about conversations in CPAC.

Mr. Wald noted that at this point, the Historical Commission needed to adjourn its open session and convene an executive session to consider the acquisition of real property. Mr. Greenbaum recused himself, citing a conflict of interest, and left the room. Mr. Wald said that an executive session was necessary because open discussion of these matters might have a detrimental impact on the negotiating position of the Town. He pointed out that the Historical Commission would reconvene in open session following the executive session.

Ms. Sharpe moved that the Historical Commission adjourn its open session and convene an executive session. Mr. Hanke seconded the motion, and the members were polled: Ms. Sharpe aye, Mr. Wald aye, Mr. Hanke aye, Ms. Carpenter aye.

The executive session was convened at 8:10 p.m. [See separate minutes for this executive session.]

Resuming the regular meeting, the Historical Commission reviewed the most recent roster of Community Preservation Act FY09 Projects. The CPAC hearing is scheduled for April 15. Mr. Tucker noted that the Town Hall and North Amherst School funding appear as separate warrant articles and are not tied to the CPA historic preservation appropriations included in Article 20. Mr. Tucker also commented on the CPA match from the state, which is declining from 85% to 65%. The Historical Commission agreed to reprioritize the rest of its request and to make \$10,000 of the archives request and another \$10,000 second priorities if necessary, but to stop there.

Mr. Tucker reported that eight responses have already been received to the RFP for West Cemetery and that the due date is shortly before the next the Historical Commission meeting.

Mr. Tucker spoke about the Civil War plaques. Larry Schaffer brought in a consultant to look at the tablets, and now thinks they might be cleaned, etc. Schafer would like a preliminary reading from the Historical Commission on where they might be installed. Ms. Sharpe and Mr. Hanke will take a look at the plaques and report back; they noted that some structural work may also be needed to be able to support them.

Mr. Wald reported that the CPC consultants are working on an executive summary/overview of the report, and that it is still likely to be out by mid-May.

Mr. Tucker noted that warrant article 35 seeks an appropriation for celebration of the 250th anniversary, leading to a discussion of the proposed spirit structure and funding for it.

In a brief summary of activity on the UMass buildings, members noted that the stucco barn has been knocked down, but it took longer and required heavier equipment than they had planned, which seems to contradict their "engineering assessment" of the structure. Mr. Wald plans to write a letter with Joe Larson to the Massachusetts Historical Commission on UMass' action, and whether they can be trusted to respect regulations and procedures.

Mr. Tucker reviewed the Town Meeting warrant noting that article 22 comprises part of the compensation for the Kimball House and article 24 addresses the proposed increase in the CPA surcharge. Mr. Wald would like the Historical Commission to take a position on the surcharge increase before it goes to a vote in town election. Mr. Tucker also noted Article 28 on zoning and the design review board, observing that this article would clarify roles and map the areas of responsibility. Article 32 represents an effort to rezone properties near to the Dickinson District/Hills houses.

Next Meetings: April 22 will be confirmed by email with all members.

Ms. Carpenter moved adjournment, Ms. Sharpe seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gai Carpenter
Clerk