

Meeting Minutes
Amherst Historical Commission
Wednesday, May 18, 2022
6:30 PM

Commission Members: Jane Wald (Chair), Pat Auth, Hetty Startup, Becky Lockwood, Robin Fordham (joined late), Jan Marquardt (joined late).

Staff: Ben Breger

Attendees: Barry Roberts, James David, Michael Schafer

Public: Hilda Greenbaum, Jeff Lee, Farah Ameen, Alex Lefebvre, Tom Harris

Meeting called to order at: 6:37

Fordham joined at 6:39

The Historical Commission established the next meeting date for June 22nd at 6:30pm.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

406 Northampton Road (13D-47) Zbylut Realty, LLC – Request for the full demolition of the circa 1900 wood-frame, single-family farmhouse.

Wald opened the public hearing for 406 and continued the hearing at the request of the applicant to June 22nd at 6:30pm.

244 Stanley Street (18A-5) James David – Request for the full demolition of the circa 1940 wood-frame, two-family house.

Mr. David, the applicant, had no further information to share.

A public comment made by Tom Harris questioned how to access information in the Historical Commission packet. He is using Edge browser and is not able to open the documents.

Auth made a motion to close the public hearing. Fordham seconded. Passed unanimously.

Wald went through the criteria for significance.

Auth made a motion that the house and associated outbuildings at 244 Stanley St are not significant and the demolition permit should be approved. Lockwood seconded. Vote passes unanimously.

266 Stanley Street (18A-6) James David – Request for the full demolition of circa 1860 wood-frame, single-family farmhouse.

Mr. David, the applicant, had no further information to share.

Fordham asked if the windows were historic. Mr. David shared that they were vinyl windows.

The house has a metal roof and a shallow wet basement.

The barn at 266 Stanley is in very poor condition.

Auth made a motion to close the public hearing. Startup seconded. Passed unanimously.

Startup made a comment that though the house is not distinguished or architecturally significant, it is part of a story of how a neighborhood grew up around the fairground.

Fordham said that there may be missing information to look into before making this decision.

Wald went through the criteria for significance.

13.4100 Has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the town of Amherst, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the nation, or; (Lockwood NO **Startup YES** Auth NO **Wald YES Fordham YES – PASSES**)

13.4101 Is the site of an historic event, or; (**Unanimous no**)

13.4102 Is identified with a person or group of persons who had some influence on society, or; (**Unanimous no**)

13.4103 Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the Community. (Lockwood NO **Startup YES** Auth NO **Wald YES Fordham NO**)

Architectural importance – (**Unanimous no**)

Geographic importance – (**Unanimous no**)

House is found to be **significant**

Marquardt joined the meeting at 7:22pm

Startup expressed that she would like to see the house saved or have alternatives explored.

Fordham said that the house still reads well as a farmhouse and she would like to learn more about the history of this property.

Lockwood asked if the owner had looked into the cost of restoration. Mr. David expressed that the roof is currently failing, so the metal roof would need to be moved.

Auth questioned the condition of the rest of the house. Mr. David shared that it has been a student house since 1975. Sheet rocking and wiring has been done in that time. Conditions are very poor. Roof leaking, mold, mice.

Fordham asked if the interior still resembles an 1860s farmhouse. Mr. David shared that the floorplan has changed and the finishes are not original.

Fordham made a motion to grant the demolition permit given the deteriorated state of the roof and the lack of adjoining farmland. Lockwood seconded. Motion amended to also include that the Commission help the applicant document the house on MACRIS. Vote passes unanimously.

Wald shared that the house had a charming appearance but that there is a lack of any abutting farmland or association with the fairground.

37 North Pleasant Street (14A-49) Barry Roberts – Hearing continued from April 20, 2022. Request for the full demolition of the circa 1900 wood frame, 2-story, commercial building. The previously issued demolition permit expired, necessitating a new demolition permit application and an Article 13 public hearing.

Mr. Roberts stated that due to the pandemic, the demolition permit expired before he could act on it.

Breger said some historical information on the property.

No public comment.

Fordham made a motion to close the public hearing. Marquardt seconded. Vote passes unanimously.

Marquardt made a motion to grant a demolition permit for this property. Startup seconded. Vote passes unanimously.

164 Sunset Avenue (11C-9) Fearing Sunset, LLC – Request to demolish breezeway and garage and relocate the remaining c. 1942 wood-frame, single-family house to a parcel in the Town of Hadley.

Mr. Roberts shared that the house at 164 Sunset will be relocated to a property in Hadley. The house must be relocated due to a new development at this location.

Breger shared that the Local Historic District Commission has already approved the relocation of the house.

Fordham made a motion to close the public hearing. Marquardt seconded. Vote passes unanimously.

Wald went through the criteria for significance. House found to be not significant.

Auth made a motion to approve the demolition permit for this house and adjoining outbuildings in association with the approved plan to relocate the house approved by the LHDC. Lockwood seconded. Vote passes unanimously.

174 Sunset Avenue (11C-299) Fearing Sunset, LLC – Request to demolish back porch and detached garage and relocate the remaining c. 1923 wood-frame, single-family house to the vacant parcel located at 46 Fearing St, Amherst, parcel 11C-123.

Roberts explained that the house will be relocated down the road, to 46 Fearing St. The house would be too wide with the back porch to relocate. The detached garage is not in great condition and cannot be moved.

Fordham made a motion to close the public hearing. Marquardt seconded. Vote passes unanimously.

Auth made a motion to approve the demolition permit for this house and adjoining outbuildings in association with the approved plan to relocate the house approved by the LHDC. Fordham seconded. Vote passes unanimously.

43 Amity Street (14A-36) Jones Library – Request to remove and relocate groundcovers, perennial plants, shrubs, and small trees from the Kinsey Memorial Garden, located on the north side (rear) of the Jones Library.

Wald stated that this public hearing is being held in consideration of the Jones Library Preservation Restriction.

Sharon Sharry, George Hicks-Richard, Jane Bryden joined the meeting.

Sharry began a presentation explaining that due to the planned expansion project at the Jones Library, they are proposing to relocate plants and hardscape at the Kinsey Garden to a location in South Amherst. The garden will be kept mostly intact at its new location. The Kinsey Garden is 23 years old.

Hicks-Richards shared he thought this was an incredible opportunity to celebrate and preserve Carol Pope's vision for the garden. The Kinsey Garden is not visible from Amity Street.

Jane Bryden shared she is planning to move as many plants as possible to their new location in South Amherst on Bay Road.

Startup wondered whether the plants which are not being moved could be part of a plant sale or given away in some fashion.

Marquardt made a motion to close the public hearing. Fordham seconded. Vote passes unanimously.

Breger explained the focus of the Preservation Restriction and provided an overview of Exhibit F.

Marquardt shared that she thought the garden relocation was a wonderful solution and did not feel that the historic library would be impacted.

Auth agreed that the garden was a private donation and not part of the original library landscaping. Auth has faith in the Kestrel Trust to relocate the plants and make the garden available to the public.

Wald made a motion to approve the plan to relocate the Kinsey Garden as presented. Marquardt seconded. Vote passes unanimously.

PUBLIC MEETING

1. Preservation Plan Update

Marquardt suggested that there be a press release about the Preservation Plan. Or, there could be an article in the paper to chronicle the progress. Lockwood added that it would be good to get the word out about CPA funds as well.

2. Public Comment

Greenbaum shared the Commission could be more proactive in sharing the work of local architects and their historical significance. This could become a column on the Amherst Indy.

3. Unanticipated Items

Commission members discussed upcoming membership issues.

Wald's term will end on June 30, 2022 necessitating a new Chair.

Katherine Davis has had to relinquish her term because she has had to relocate away from Amherst.

Marquardt will likely need to leave the Commission in December 2022 due to time constraints.

Breger will work to recruit new members.

4. Next Meeting Date

June 22, 2022

Vote for Robin to be CPA representative at the next meeting and for the next Chair.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08pm