

Amherst Historical Commission
MEETING
Monday, August 11, 2008
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
7:15 p.m.

Present: Gai Carpenter, Lyle Denit, Linda Faye, Elizabeth Sharpe, James Wald. **Absent:** Louis Greenbaum, Michael Hanke. **Staff:** Jonathan Tucker, Director of Planning. **Guests:** Jean Thompson, Gerry Peterson

Mr. Wald called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. He invited introductions of the guests from the First Congregational Church, and asked for announcements. Mr. Denit moved, and Ms. Sharpe seconded, approval of the Minutes of the July 14 meeting; the motion passed unanimously

Mr. Peterson made a presentation on an historic plaque proposed for the church, describing its design, wording, and placement. Mr. Tucker asked a question about placement, and other Commission members raised questions about the design and text, as well as the history of the church as a building and as an institution. Ms. Sharpe moved that the Commission express its support for the First Church proposal; Ms. Faye seconded the motion. Mr. Denit offered compliments to the church for its initiative in conjunction with the Town's 250th anniversary. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Tucker offered an update on the Hills lots, indicating that there actually was no news, and observed that no one seems to have been working to raise additional funds. He said that there have been some other conversations about alternatives to sale, but again, nothing has happened.

MCC invoices for tasks 1 and 2 of the West Cemetery headstones restoration project were reviewed. Ms. Faye moved that they be approved for payment, Ms. Carpenter seconded, and the vote was unanimous.

Mr. Tucker reports Mr. Hanke came in to talk with him about an RFP for signs at West Cemetery. The work would include both entrances and a sign at the mural. The Commission had a spirited discussion with Ms. Thompson about signs, their form, placement, content, sources of funding, and a suggestion to include interpretation of the mural in a permanent sign or series of signs. Mr. Tucker commented on the demands of creating an RFP; Ms. Carpenter and Ms. Faye volunteered to work on an RFP for general signs in historic districts and may include Mr. Hanke in that work.

Mr. Tucker reported that power, soon to be followed by lights, is coming soon to West Cemetery. Ms. Thompson noted the unsightly display of beer bottles on a window that forms part of the mural; the Commission agreed that the chair would contact the landlord to try to ensure removal of the offending bottles.

The Commission again discussed the Civil war tablets and a proposal to install the dedication and sacred dead tablets in the

foyer of Town Hall. The discussion explored the feasibility of that idea, and possible support for use of CPA funds to restore and install them. Commission members raised the possibility of other appeals for Community Preservation Act funding from other churches.

Commission members from the Comprehensive Planning and Public Outreach Committees had no news. Mr. Denit also had little news from the 250th Anniversary Committee, and while he said he moans a bit when he has to report, really lots of people are doing lots of things. He noted particularly Ms. Sharpe's work on the *Amherst A-Z* book, plans for reenactors in cemetery, and bulb planting. Ms. Sharpe commented at some length on the book, and solicited help from other members of the Commission in editing content. She also has a question on copyright of *Lost Amherst* and is trying to determine what the Historical Society owns.

Mr. Tucker provided an update on the UMass buildings and commented on Mr. Larson's letter published in UMass newsletters. Mr. Wald noted the continuing issues with the MoA.

Mr. Tucker reported that the structure on Bridge Street in Cushman was given an emergency demolition permit.

Mr. Wald asked Mr. Tucker about the process for creation of Local Historic Districts and how long the process might take. Ms. Faye responded that it could take years. The Commission discussed aiming for spring Town Meeting with a preliminary proposal for the Dickinson District.

Mr. Wald mentioned his course, which will be working on historic markers.

Next Meetings -
hold August 25;
September 8, 22;
October 6, 20

Ms. Faye moved adjournment at 9:22 p.m.; members voted affirmatively à pied.

Respectfully submitted,

Gai Carpenter, Clerk