

Amherst Historical Commission
MEETING
Monday, September 8, 2008
Planning Dept. Office, Town Hall
7:15 p.m.

Present: Gai Carpenter, Lyle Denit, Linda Faye, Louis Greenbaum, Michael Hanke, Elizabeth Sharpe, James Wald. **Staff:** Jonathan Tucker, Director of Planning, Nathaniel Malloy, Associate Planner. **Guests:** House of Teriyaki representatives,

Mr. Wald called the meeting to order at 7:20 and invited introductions to Nate Malloy, the new Associate Planner. Minutes of the meeting of August 11 were amended at Mr. Wald's request to say "historic markers" rather than "historic district markers". Ms. Sharpe moved approval; Mr. Denit seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

In an item of new business, the Commission heard a request from the House of Teriyaki in North Amherst to install new signs. The restaurant is a contributing structure within the historic district and was the North Amherst Post Office. The Commission discussed the color and design of the proposed signs and awnings. Ms. Sharpe moved that the Historical Commission ask the ZBA to use the Design Review Board's criteria to evaluate the design and materials proposed for the signs; her motion was seconded by Ms. Faye and approved unanimously.

Mr. Tucker reported that there was no real news about the Hills Lots, except "for sale" signs have been posted on the front lots, and the Hills House is also on the market.

West Cemetery headstone restoration is continuing, and MCC has submitted an invoice for part of Task #3, the actual restoration work. MCC supplied before and after pictures of 74 markers. Mr. Denit moved approval of the payment, Mr. Wald seconded, and the vote was unanimous. Ms. Faye proposed that the Historical Commission visit the cemetery to view the work, and the Commission agreed to meet on September 22, 2008 at 2:30 p.m. at West Cemetery.

The Commission held a detailed discussion of sign design for West Cemetery including the text(s), materials, and mounting. There was general agreement on the suggested placement of signs and a suggestion that there should be some planting behind the identification sign on Triangle Street at the Burnett Gates, or that the sign there should be two-sided. The Commission agreed to change the image on the signs. Ms. Faye and Ms. Carpenter agreed to look at the stones for iconic images, to be discussed with the Commission during the visit on September 22. The Commission will further review the final design. Mr. Tucker will send the revised text to Jean Thompson for review.

Proposals to the Community Preservation Act Committee will soon be solicited. Mr. Tucker asked whether the Historical Commission should actively solicit CPA proposals, or simply wait for local citizen/organization initiatives. Ms. Sharpe advocated publicizing CPA and making an effort to let the public know that history needs help. Mr. Wald noted it really is CPAC's job to solicit suggestions. Ms. Faye remind the Commission that it does have criteria, and that any grant to a private property owner would carry some constraints. Ms. Faye recalled the idea of revolving fund for projects, which was discussed last year.

Mr. Wald thinks CPC is done and ready to pass the final report along to the Planning Board. Mr. Denit had no further report on work of the 250th Anniversary Committee; the full committee meets next week. He did mention Ms. Sharpe's work on the *Amherst A-Z* book; she has designs for general layout and graphics, and will seek review and input from other Commission members. Ms. Carpenter agreed that the Public Outreach Committee should see what can be done about CPA publicity and West Cemetery work. Mr. Greenbaum agreed to invite Scott Merzbach to join the Commission for its September 22 visit to the cemetery.

Mr. Wald reported he has heard nothing more about the MoA on UMass buildings; he and Mr. Tucker exchanged brief remarks on the question of the relationship between UMass Amherst and the UMBA. Mr. Tucker noted that there will be a CPA request for conservation and mounting of the Civil War tablets, but there are no further immediate developments.

The Commission reviewed a newly received demolition applications for a structure at 353 Pelham Road, and reached consensus to request additional documentation of the structure, and to suggest resale of old building materials. Ms. Faye so moved, Mr. Greenbaum seconded, and the vote was unanimous not to hold a demolition delay hearing.

Mr. Wald has written to Gerry Weiss requesting a meeting with the Select Board to discuss steps to create a Local Historic District Study Committee. As a reminder of the process for creating such districts, the "Establishing A Local Historic District Flow Chart" was distributed.

Ms. Sharpe reported on the DCR's meeting in Westfield on the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. Ms. Sharpe thinks there might be opportunities for support and to have others available to talk with. Mr. Greenbaum said he thinks that the Commission might pursue Ms. Faye's idea of bringing in other communities that have local historic districts. Ms. Faye will work on inviting other towns to discuss their local historic districts.

Mr. Wald reported that Historical Commission minutes and agendas are now on the town website, and suggested the Commission could use that site for other public communication.

Members of the Commission interested in visiting the Bunker agreed to ask for a tour at 8:30 a.m. on September 24.

Next Meetings -

Continue to hold September 22 if needed
October 6, hold October 20 if needed

Ms. Sharpe moved adjournment 9:51 p.m.; the motion was not debatable.

Respectfully submitted,
Gai Carpenter, Clerk