

Amherst Historical Commission
MEETING
Monday, October 6, 2008
Planning Dept. Office, Town Hall
7:15 p.m.

Present: Gai Carpenter, Lyle Denit, Lynda Faye, Louis Greenbaum, Michael Hanke, Elizabeth Sharpe, James Wald. **Staff:** Jonathan Tucker, Director of Planning, Nathaniel Malloy, Associate Planner. **Guest:** Jim Mulcahy

Mr. Wald opened the meeting at 7:21 p.m., and asked for announcements; hearing none, he invited approval of the minutes of September 8, 2008. The minutes were corrected to reflect Mr. Hanke's attendance, whereupon Ms. Faye moved approval, Ms. Sharpe seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Mr. Wald distributed materials on historic markers and information about literary history signs made in Northampton; he suggested that his course might jump-start a program of signs in Amherst. He presented a brief slide show of literary locations in Amherst, and directed members of the Commission to the online *Literary Map of Massachusetts*.

Mr. Wald introduced Mr. Mulcahy, raconteur extraordinaire, who regaled the Commission with stories of the Alpha Tau Gamma fraternity of Stockbridge School. The fraternity has previously done landscape work at the Jones library and Frank Hart memorial as well as other projects in the Boston area. They are now interested in the Ray Stannard Baker house at 118 Sunset Avenue, which they own, and have been talking with Tevis Kimball about what might be done with Baker house. Mr. Mulcahy suggested possible locations for markers and a stone bench on the property.

In old business, Mr. Wald offered an update on the Hills lots, noting that there had been some miscommunication with Mr. Guidera and Mr. Wilson; they were expecting to hear from the Historical Commission, and vice versa, and are still waiting to hear about grant. Mr. Wald also noted that it appears that they aren't doing anything about raising any funds for the "gap" between the town's offer and their asking price. Despite the placement of signs, the front lots are not on the market, according to Mr. Guider.

West Cemetery headstone restoration continues; the Commission revisited its discussion of images to be used for signs. Mr. Wald had a conversation with Larry Shaffer about the signs and lighting.

Mr. Greenbaum has talked with Town Manager Shaffer about the Civil War tablets and about having the Commission get to see them. He reported a request from Mr. Shaffer for a motion from the Commission saying the plaques are priority # 1. Mr. Wald suggested the Commission shouldn't vote funds for something that can't be done in the current fiscal year. Mr. Wald has also talked with Mr. Shaffer. The Commission discussed whether the plaques could be a phased project, and whether it would be appropriate to get a consultant, perhaps an architect, to advise on siting and installation issues. Mr. Wald asked whether the Commission were ready to make a recommendation for expenditure of CPA funds; he noted that he supports the Town Manager, and other members of the Commission discussed the

extent of appropriate action at this time, as CPA requests for FY 10 are being solicited. The Commission returned to its earlier debate on the question of publicizing CPA or letting CPAC do it.

In other CPA business, the Commission briefly discussed endorsing the ballot question to raise the CPA assessment to 3% CPA. Ms. Faye moved that the Commission support the increase, Mr. Hanke seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Wald reported that the Comprehensive Planning Committee has at last finished its work, perhaps more with a whimper than a bang.

Mr. Denit suggested, in reporting on the work of the 250th Anniversary Committee, that the Commission might get some press space during the year, and offered some ideas about the kinds of things people might write and publish on local history.

Ms. Carpenter and Mr. Wald will pursue further use of the new town web site to provide public information on the Commission and local historic resources.

Mr. Wald reported on his conversation with the Select Board, which was receptive to the idea of creating a Local Historic District for the Dickinson. They are eager to press forward with creation of the study committee required as the first phase of the initiative.

The Commission agreed to conduct a status review of funded CPA projects on October 20.

Mr. Tucker reported that the Massachusetts Historical Commission may need interior shots of the Aaron Warner house in support of the NHR nomination.

A demolition application for an attached garage at 31 Spring Street was submitted by Amherst College in conjunction with the Lord Jeffrey Inn renovations. Ms. Faye moved that the Commission not hold a demolition delay hearing; Mr. Hanke seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Faye invited members of the Commission to participate in a West Cemetery cleanup, particularly of the area directly in front of the mural, on Wednesday, October 15, at 1:00 p.m.

Next Meetings –October 20, November 3.

The meeting adjourned unceremoniously at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gai Carpenter
Clerk