

Amherst Historical Commission
MEETING
Tuesday, September 29, 2009
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
7:15 p.m.

Present: James Wald, Chair; Michael Hanke, Vice-Chair; Gai Carpenter, Clerk; Lyle Denit.
Staff: Nathaniel Malloy, Associate Planner. Guest: Joe Larson, PUMA. Absent: Louis Greenbaum, Elizabeth Sharpe, Jonathan Tucker, Director of Planning.

Mr. Wald called the meeting to order at 7:24 p.m. There were no announcements.
Mr. Denit moved and Mr. Hanke seconded approval of the minutes of the meeting of August 13, passed.

Mr. Larson commented on the UMass files he had just given to Mr. Malloy which include detailed information from the consultants engaged to evaluate the historic structures on the UMass campus. Larson said the consultants are being kept on to evaluate the more modern structures designed by various architects. Their report adds 82 structures and one landscape to the state's inventory of archaeological and historic resources. The total on the UMass campus is now 112 structures, and the consultants recommend 53 for National Historic Register nominations if the campus were to become a district; only the Old Chapel is recommended as an NHR candidate on its own. Larson said he has been impressed by the consultants' (Einhorn Yaffee Prescott) presentations and reports, their thoroughness, professionalism, and objectivity.

Mr. Hanke presented some new and additional designs for review and approval in conjunction with the RFP for signs, including West Cemetery and the Amherst Writers' Walk. The current plan is to ask sign makers to provide bids based on these designs and specifications for materials, colors, etc. The Commission discussed design and readability for both drivers and pedestrians. After a lengthy discussion of the design and content of the signs, Mr. Hanke said he would rework the preliminary design for the Amherst Writers' Walk signs, and make some final revisions to the historic district marker for the next meeting.

Mr. Tucker's notes on CPA project updates led to brief discussion of the RFP for NHR nominations and the possible addition of other outlying residential structures. In other CPA projects, West Cemetery items like ironwork and town tomb repairs will be pursued once the first round of RFPs are complete.

Mr. Malloy briefly reported that the Local Historic District Study Committee took a walking tour of the Dickinson district, and is still studying other communities' precedents.

MCC has submitted two more invoices for West Cemetery headstone restoration and documentation. Ms. Carpenter moved and Mr. Hanke seconded approval to pay, motion passed.

Ms. Carpenter and Mr. Wald summarized activity on the NHR nomination of the Aaron Warner House, including conversations with Hampshire College and a letter to the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Mr. Hanke reported that Bill Flynt has inquired about when he might visit. Mr. Wald will write to Mark Capello, Director of Facilities at the college, to inform him of the Flynt inquiry and ask when he might visit.

Mr. Malloy reported that the planning department has stopped the application for a preservation grant to acquire the Main/Grey Street property from Mr. Guidera because the funding would not meet the owner's demands. Mr. Malloy said that Mr. Guidera is feeling confident that the recession is turning around and has raised the price per lot. Mr. Malloy also reported that another planning/survey grant will be prepared for December submission, to fund expansion of the historic properties inventory.

The Commission agreed that no action was necessary on the demolition application for 27 Newell Court. A Demolition Delay Hearing is scheduled for October 13 on the Public Works Department's demolition application for five structures affected by the Atkins Corner / Bay Road / Route 116 intersection redesign.

Mr. Malloy presented information on two proposed developments: a mixed-use building behind Judie's Restaurant and a professional office building on Meadow Street.

Next Meetings: Tuesday, October 13; Thursday, November 12 2009

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gai Carpenter, Clerk