

Amherst Historical Commission
MEETING
Tuesday, October 13, 2009
Lower Floor Meeting Room, Bangs Community Center
7:15 p.m.

Present: James Wald, Chair; Michael Hanke, Vice-Chair; Gai Carpenter, Clerk; Lyle Denit, Louis Greenbaum, Elizabeth Sharpe. Staff: Jonathan Tucker, Director of Planning, Nathaniel Malloy, Associate Planner. Guest: Guilford Mooring, Director, Public Works Department.

Mr. Wald called the meeting to order at 7:21 p.m. There were no announcements. Mr. Denit moved approval of the minutes of 9/29, seconded by Ms. Carpenter, approved. Ms. Sharpe asked for clarification of the minutes on the subject of the grant application for the Gray Street lots.

7:28 p.m. Demolition Delay Hearing DDA 1120 Bay Road (Map 25B-22, 23, 24) Requests to demolish one (1) c. 1830s vernacular farmhouse, one (1) 2,200 sq. ft. wood-frame building, two (2) 1,800-2,000 sq. ft. pole barns, and one (1) 300 sq. ft. shed in association with the West Street/Bay Road intersection improvement project.

After some discussion with Mr. Mooring about the planned disposition of the properties, Ms. Sharpe moved to close the public hearing, Mr. Denit seconded, passed. The Commission then undertook the standard review of the properties under section 13.40 of the Zoning Bylaw.

	Y	N	
13.40		N	It is listed on, or is within an area listed on, the National Register of Historic Places, or is the subject of a pending application for listing on said National Register, or;
13.410	Historical Importance		The structure meets the criteria of historical importance if it:
13.4100	1	3	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;
13.4101		N	Is the site of an historic event, or;
13.4102		N	Is identified with a person or group of persons who had some influence on society, or;
13.4103		N	Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community.
13.411	Architectural Importance		The structure meets the criteria of architectural importance if it:
13.4110		N	Portrays the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style, or;
13.4111		N	Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type, or;

13.4112		N	Is the work of an architect, master builder or craftsman whose individual work has influenced the development of the Town, or;
13.4113		N	Contains elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant innovation.
13.412	Geographic Importance		The structure meets the criteria of geographic importance if:
13.4120		N	The site is part of, or related to, a square, park, or other distinctive area, or;
13.4121	3	2	The structure, as to its unique location or its physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, village center, or the community as a whole.

Ms. Sharpe moved that the Historical Commission find the structure historically significant under 13.4121, second Mr. Denit, vote 4 yes and 1 no. Mr. Denit moved that the Historical Commission approve the request to demolish, second Mr. Greenbaum, unanimous. The Commission noted that its members would work with the Town to photographically document the structures before they are demolished.

Mr. Tucker asked about the status of the archaeological survey of the affected area. Mr. Mooring said state reported no significant findings and probably plans to do nothing more, but if the Historical Commission would like more to be done he would be willing to help. Mr. Tucker suggested that UMass Archaeological Survey staff might help. Mr. Mooring also said there may be interesting material in some of the barns; he will contact Mr. Tucker so that Historical Commission members can see that material before it is removed.

Mr. Hanke presented the latest designs for historic district signs to be included in the RFP, and reviewed the discussion from the last meeting. Members who were unable to attend the last meeting voiced their opinions about the choices of designs including fonts, colors and the outline of the sign. Mr. Hanke also presented a revised design for Amherst Writers Walk signs, and invited further comment on the design elements. The Historical Commission reached consensus on several elements of the design, which Mr. Hanke will incorporate in final drafts.

Mr. Tucker reported that the RFP for work on the Civil War plaques has been issued. The Commission reviewed the RFP for NHR nominations, and agreed that three structures should be included. Mr. Tucker also reported that MCC has completed restoration work on West Cemetery. The Commission discussed additional inspection of the work and final approval of invoices. Ms. Carpenter moved that the Historical Commission approve final payment to MCC, subject to a final field inspection scheduled for Friday October 16 at noon; Ms. Sharpe seconded; passed.

Ms. Carpenter reported on her meeting with Mr. Malloy, and their ideas about expanding the Historical Commission's website presence, including putting the inventory of historic properties online. The Public Outreach Committee will also prepare a press release on the completion of the West Cemetery restoration project, and other CPA-funded projects related to the cemetery.

The application for a preservation grant for inventory updates is being prepared for submission next month.

Mr. Greenbaum cited an article from the *Gazette* suggesting that UMass funds to be used for demolition of historic buildings were still included in major construction appropriations.

Mr. Wald reported that the Local Historic District Study Committee met again today, and will use the Dickinson Historic District with some other nearby properties as the model for Local Historic District planning.

Mr. Greenbaum raised issues about an apparent lack of coordination between offices in town hall, specifically the building inspector and the planning office as they relate to projects like the installation of a religious symbol on the Second Congregational Church (JCA), and the construction of a garage or whatever it is adjacent to the Henry Hills house. Mr. Tucker responded about the criteria and circumstances of each decision, and the legal nature of personal liability and responsibility in the performance of town officials' duties.

Historical Commission agreed not to hold hearing on a demolition request for a Sunset Avenue garage.

Mr. Tucker commented on several articles on the Fall Special Town Meeting warrant, noting that 11 & 12 were most likely to be of interest or concern to the Historical Commission.

Next meetings are scheduled for November 12 and December 8.

Ms. Sharpe urged adjournment at 9:50

Respectfully submitted,
Gai Carpenter, Clerk