

Amherst Historical Commission  
MEETING  
Tuesday, December 8, 2009  
Pole Room, Bangs Community Center  
7:15 p.m.

Present: James Wald, Chair; Michael Hanke, Vice-Chair; Gai Carpenter, Clerk; Lyle Denit, Louis Greenbaum. Staff: Jonathan Tucker, Director of Planning. Absent: Elizabeth Sharpe. Guests: Pat Lutz, Amherst Historical Society and Museum; Jane Wald, Emily Dickinson Museum.

Mr. Wald called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. The minutes of October 13 and October 16 were presented; Mr. Denit moved approval, Mr. Hanke seconded, approved.

Mr. Tucker mentioned that the Lord Jeff project is back on a scaled-back basis. Amherst College hopes to have it out to bid by March, and representatives of Amherst would like to meet with the Historical Commission before January 20. The Commission will meet on January 14.

Pat Lutz presented a CPA proposal from the Amherst Historical Society and Museum to include roof replacement on the west ell, window frame replacement and UV protection, and electrical and lighting updates totaling \$42,900. In ensuing questions and comments, Mr. Tucker noted the need to add some contingency percentage to the proposal. Mr. Hanke asked whether there were other estimates for the roof; Ms. Lutz replied that she found only one contractor that does cedar shingles. Mr. Hanke was reassured that these are only estimates and the actual work would be put out to bid. Mr. Greenbaum posed a question about DAR material formerly located in the Strong House that may have been moved to other locations (Lord Jeff, Amherst College) and whether it might/ought to be returned. Ms. Lutz will revise the proposal and submit it to Mr. Tucker before the CPA deadline.

Jane Wald reviewed the recent calamity at the Emily Dickinson Museum when the ceiling of the south parlor fell in October. About a dozen artifacts were in the room and some suffered limited damage. Other ceilings in the house have been examined by a structural engineer to determine if there were any related structural issues. Although the Museum has no actual CPA proposal at this time, Ms. Wald posed the question of whether there might be any possibility of emergency funding. The first rough estimate of the cost of repairing all the defective ceilings is about \$200,000.

Ms. Carpenter moved and Mr. Hanke seconded support for the request from the Amherst Historical Society; passed. Mr. Denit moved and Mr. Greenbaum seconded a motion of support for a proposal from the Dickinson Museum; passed with Mr. Wald abstaining.

Mr. Hanke apologized for not having been able to finish work on the sign designs for the RFP, and asked for a firm deadline.

Mr. Wald will check on the property owners' interest in having their West Pomeroy Lane property be part of a group of NHR nominations for isolated residential properties.

Mr. Tucker reviewed the initial draft of FY11 CPA project proposals with the understanding that the presentations from the Amherst Historical Society and the Dickinson Museum would be reflected in the next draft.

The Local Historic District Study Committee just met and members are talking a bit about the relationship between the boundaries of the current Dickinson District and a possible local district.

Ms. Carpenter reported that the press release she had sent to Scott Merzbach had not attracted his interest. The release will be posted on the web site.

The Commission briefly reviewed the status of West Cemetery projects; the second phase of headstone repairs is included in the draft FY 2011 CPA budget proposal. Mr. Wald noted that while visiting the cemetery with Mr. Tucker and Ms. Carpenter, they had tentatively concluded that the meadow landscape should include most of the central area of the cemetery, and that the Commission should use some of the funding it has to expand the plantings, regardless of what Alpha Tau Gamma may contribute.

Mr. Wald reported on his conversations with Hampshire College about the NHR nominations of the Aaron Warner House. The college wants a consultant to complete a review of the property before allowing the Commission further access to the structure, and now estimates that the consultant's work may be done by March.

The application for grant funding to support the completion and expansion of the inventory is being filed this month, according to Mr. Tucker.

Mr. Tucker distributed a copy of a letter from Brona Simon at the Massachusetts Historical Commission to James Cahill, Director of Facilities at UMass, requesting

an additional copy of the Final Survey Report and other documentation in compliance with the Memorandum of Agreement.

Jeff Shrimpton of the DOT led the archaeological survey of the Atkins Corner project area, and has raised questions about the Thayer House. While he noted in his conversations with Mr. Tucker and in his report that the structure reviewed by the Commission in its hearing on November 13 is not likely the original Thayer House, he did ask whether the current structure might be a contributing element of the proposed Bay Road corridor historic district. Mr. Denit moved that the Historical Commission reaffirm its finding that the Thayer house, although it met one of the Chapter 13 criteria of historic significance, would not contribute to a potential historic district, seconded by Mr. Hanke, passed.

Next Meeting: January 14, 2010

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gai Carpenter, Clerk