

Amherst Historical Commission
Public Hearing And Public Meeting
October 19, 2010
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
7:00 p.m.

Present: James Wald, Chair; Michael Hanke, Vice Chair; Gai Carpenter, Clerk; Lyle Denit, Lynda Faye, Anurag Sharma (late arrival), Elizabeth Sharpe. Staff: Nathaniel Malloy, Associate Planner. Guests: David Ziomek, Glenn Hawthorne, Janice Doyama, Kerry Strayer, Denise Barbaret, Jan Eidelson, Carol Vincze

Mr. Malloy reported that the Massachusetts Historical Commission looked at some sites in Amherst for possible archaeological significance, in conjunction with the work being done by the electric utility on major power lines, but found none. That Commission has also contacted the architect of the Lord Jeff for more information relating to an application for grants.

Ms. Faye moved approval of the minutes of Sept 7; seconded by Mr. Hanke; passed unanimously.

The Commission resumed its deliberation on the demolition delay requests DDA2011-0004,-0005,-0006, 235 East Pleasant Street Request to demolish one (1) c. 1830s vernacular Greek Revival farmhouse; one (1) c. 1850s barn; and one (1) c.1950s barn. Mr. Wald reviewed the status of Hawthorne house findings and deliberations to date. Ms. Faye recused herself and left the room.

Ms. Carpenter moved to find the Hawthorne properties historically significant; seconded Mr. Hanke; passed unanimously. Mr. Ziomek responded to a question about a possible replacement structure for affordable housing by saying that the town hasn't gotten that far in its planning.

Ms. Carpenter moved to impose a demolition delay with conditions on the house: 1) get estimates for new duplex keeping general streetscape, massing, etc. of current structure, with the associated costs of demolition, disposal, etc., and share those findings with the Historical Commission and CPAC; 2) thereafter, if necessary, look at removal and reuse of the house. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sharpe and passed unanimously.

Mr. Wald reminded the Commission that they needed to consider the barns individually. Mr. Hanke moved to impose a demolition delay on the large barn; second Mr. Denit; passed unanimously. Mr. Denit moved to allow demolition of the small barn; seconded Mr. Hanke; passed unanimously. Mr. Ziomek commented that the Town was committed to the

previously announced public process regarding the property, and would work with all the relevant boards and committees going forward.

Glenn Hawthorne, who had not been present for the earlier public hearings, asked to speak and offered comments on the property, the town's acquisition of the land and buildings, and some of the history of the structures.

Ms. Carpenter left to attend a CPAC meeting at 8:10 p.m., and Ms. Faye returned; notes for the demolition delay hearing courtesy of the Chair.

At 8:15 p.m., Mr. Wald opened the Demolition Delay Public Hearing DDA2011-0009, 138 Sunderland Road (Map5A-26) Request to demolish a c. 1853 timber frame barn. Jan Eidelson of the Amherst Survival Center and Carol Vincze of Ford Gillen Architects made the presentation for the Survival Center.

The applicants explained how the site plan, program, and cost come together. Their goal is to renovate and expand Roosters. Because the house is right up against the north boundary, the barn to the south is in a critical and undesirable spot. They would love to dismantle and move it to another location or use it for storage, or reuse materials, but not at the original location. They have determined that rehabilitating the structure for human occupation would be prohibitively expensive.

Questions from the Commission focused on the issue of alternatives to demolition. Ms. Sharpe asked how the structure might be moved? Ms. Eidelson replied that she did not know; the priority is to get the program up and running.

Ms. Vincze noted that the barn might be used for storage, *e.g.* for the annual furniture sale, reminding the Commission that a full rehabbing (i.e. for human occupation) would irrevocably alter the character of what she called a beautiful structure. One possible site for relocation would be to the west on the foundation behind house (in manner of big house, little house, back house, barn).

Right now, given constraints of cost and scheduling, the priority is to secure the envelope of the house structure, so as to preserve it for future decades and increase its energy efficiency.

Mr. Denit provided some very useful historical and stylistic analysis of what he called "a really interesting barn." Although the materials clearly dated from the mid-nineteenth century, the proportions and design reflect the earlier English three-bay barn style. It was fascinating, he said, "to find all the little textbook elements" present in this manner. There followed a brief discussion of the integrity or defects of various parts of the structure. Commission and applicants

generally agreed. Mr. Denit felt that the barn retained the “good bones of a building.” Mr. Hanke and Ms. Fay seconded Mr. Denit’s overall assessment. Mr. Hanke called it an excellent example of this type of structure, and Ms. Fay noted the regret that she would feel if the building were not to be reconstructed, given the ongoing loss of outbuildings, which has been a concern of the Commission.

Mr. Wald closed the public hearing at 8:36 p.m.

The Commission evaluated the structure under Article 13 criteria with the following findings:

	Y	N	
13.40		[n.a.]	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	6	0	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	0	6	Is the site of an historic event, or;
13.4102	1	5	Is identified with a person or group of persons who had some influence on society, or;
13.4103	6	0	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	6	0	Portrays the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style, or;
13.4111	6	0	Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type, or;
13.4112	0	6	Is the work of an architect, master builder or craftsman whose individual work has influenced the development of the Town, or;
13.4113	0	6	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	0	6	The site is part of, or related to, a square, park, or other distinctive area, or;
13.4121	3	3	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. Carpenter returned at 8:45 p.m. Ms. Faye moved to find the structure significant; seconded by Mr. Sharma passed unanimously, 6-0 with Ms. Carpenter abstaining because of her absence from the preceding discussion.

Ms. Faye moved to impose delay, no second

Mr. Denit moved to allow demolition; Mr. Sharma seconded the motion. Mr. Hanke offered, as friendly amendments, the suggestion of possible conditions or requests: 1) incorporate barn into plans for new structure; 2) attempt to relocate barn on property or 3) relocate it off site or 4) reuse materials onsite. Mr. Denit rejected the friendly amendments; vote Mr. Hanke, Ms. Faye, Ms. Sharpe no; Ms. Carpenter abstain; Mr. Wald, Mr. Denit, Mr. Sharma yes.

Mr. Hanke offered a new motion, to allow demolition with the conditions previously discussed, Ms. Sharpe seconded, vote five yes, one no (Ms. Faye), Ms. Carpenter abstaining.

Ms. Carpenter reported that the Community Preservation Act Committee was engaged in discussion on Article 7 for fall Town meeting.

Mr. Malloy reported that only two of the Civil War plaques could go in the Town Hall entry, Ms. Sharpe and Mr. Hanke will take another walkthrough to try to identify spaces in Town Hall large enough to accommodate them.

Next Meetings - November 9, 23
Adjournment 10:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gai Carpenter, Clerk

Documents distributed at the meeting—available at Town Hall:

Agenda

Minutes of September 21, 2010

DDA2011-0009 138 Sunderland Road c. 1853 timber frame barn (8 p.)

Pages from North East Environmental report on barn (2 p.)

Section 13.4 Standards for Designation as a Significant Structure

Community Preservation Act Committee Call for Proposals, October 4, 2010