

Amherst Historical Commission
PUBLIC MEETING
November 9, 2010
Pole Room, Bangs Community Center
7:30 p.m.

Present: James Wald, Chair; Gai Carpenter, Clerk; Lyle Denit, Lynda Faye, Anurag Sharma, Elizabeth Sharpe. Staff: Nathaniel Malloy, Associate Planner. Absent: Michael Hanke. Guests: Angela Robles, Rhonda Gordon, Keith Middleton, Kaitie Gallagher, Scottie Faerber, Rev. Crystal Roberson, Rachel Kingsley, Judy Roncalli, Mary Ellen Shea, Robert Romer, Rev. Pura Patenaude, Charles Fuller 3rd (Hope Church), Sarah McKee (Jones Library)

Mr. Wald was unavoidably delayed, so Ms. Carpenter called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. following the announcement by Mr. Malloy that representatives of the Hope Church and the Jones Library were in attendance to present CPA proposals. While awaiting Mr. Wald's arrival, members of the Commission reviewed a letter from the Hope Community Church to CPAC describing the institution and its facility needs. Mr. Wald invited Ms. Robles to present the church's request. She provided a history of the founding and evolution of the church, and of the structure. She noted that the church will celebrate its centennial in 2012, and that she and other members are investigating whether it might be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Ms. Robles provided the Commission copies of two additional estimates for repair and renovation work on the church, but indicated that the two attached to the letter were the priorities: \$19,000 for a drainage system around the foundation, and \$26,500 for roof repair and replacement. She also distributed several photographs of the interior and exterior of the building. Members of the Commission discussed the proposal, and the larger context of the church's plans. Ms. Carpenter inquired about additional initiatives, and Ms. Robles and others mentioned that the church expects to do fund raising to support some of the work, but agreed that there might be other restoration work for which they would seek CPA support in the future.

Mr. Denit asked about the bowing walls mentioned in the letter, and Mr. Middleton replied that they had been assured that removal and replacement of the two or three layers of old roofing, one of which may be slate, would relieve the load and prevent further bowing, while the addition of collar ties would correct the existing problem. Ms. Faye inquired about plans for the exterior in later phases, and whether they expected to keep the present materials; Mr. Middleton assured her that they did, and Ms. Robles referred again to the possibility of an NHR nomination and the role of NHR guidelines in helping the church plan its renovations. Mr. Middleton replied to a question from Mr. Denit about the roofing materials, indicating that they are not absolutely sure what comprises the layers, but believe that the original roof was shingle of some kind. Ms. Sharpe asked about the

ramp, and Mr. Middleton said the immediate plan was just to remove and reinstall the existing ramp to allow the drainage project to be completed. Ms. Sharpe followed up by asking whether the present location and design of the ramp work for the NHR possibility, and was assured that the church will continue to look closely at NHR guidelines in formulating its plans. Mr. Sharma asked about the history of the building and any prior renovations; church members did not have documented details of earlier work.

Mr. Romer questioned whether there might be an issue with CPA funding for a church, and Mr. Wald noted that a proposal from the North Amherst Congregational Church was the one CPA proposal not approved by Town Meeting last year. Other towns and cities have, as Ms. Carpenter and Mr. Wald noted, funded portions of repairs on several churches, recognizing them as historic structures in the community, regardless of their religious roles. Mr. Wald also pointed out to the Hope Church representatives that CPA funding would require an historic preservation restriction on the property.

The Commission asked the church to prepare an additional document which would outline the entire renovation and restoration project, and to indicate other parts of the program that might be candidates for CPA funding, as well as those for which the church anticipates doing independent fund raising. The church hopes to provide that information for the Commission's next meeting.

Ms. McKee summarized five projects that the Jones Library will propose for CPA 2012 funding, which will be reviewed and approved by the Library Trustees at their next meeting. The initiatives include the conservation of six oil paintings, five from the Burnett collection and the Robert Frost portrait. The estimate for the first five is \$12,465, and the Frost is expected to be in the range of \$3-4,000. The second project would involve adding insulation for the area over the Special Collections archival storage area, estimated at \$9,635. The addition of this insulation would allow the present HVAC system to serve an enlarged archival area that would accommodate six additional ranges of shelving at a cost of \$9,000.

Ms. McKee also presented two projects for the North Amherst Library; the first, masonry, would include work on the foundation, estimated at \$5,100, and repointing mortar at \$3,800. The second would involve insulating the ceiling/roof, walls, and basement, at an estimated cost of \$11,100. If it were necessary to construct a firewall around the boiler, that would cost an additional \$3,857. In discussion, Ms. Carpenter inquired whether there would also be a request for continuing support of the document conservation work that has been ongoing in Special Collections. Ms. McKee said she would follow up on the question. Ms. Faye asked what the next steps would be, and Mr. Wald asked whether these requests would be all the Jones is seeking. Ms. McKee replied to Mr. Wald that she believed this was the whole list, and that a formal proposal would be forthcoming after the Trustees meet. Ms.

Carpenter and Mr. Wald commented on the desirability of the Jones Library's long-range plan. Ms. McKee also mentioned that a team of Smith College students is restoring the frame of the Portrait of an Anonymous Nobleman, with funding from the Friends of the Jones Library.

Mr. Malloy reported that David Fichter, who created the West Cemetery mural, was in town recently and noticed some graffiti on the mural. He offered to clean and retouch it, and the Commission agreed with the suggestion from Mr. Wald and Mr. Malloy that \$250. be allocated from existing funds for the cemetery project to pay Mr. Fichter. Mr. Wald mentioned that he had heard complaints that there were no mural brochures available, and questioned whether they were not being supplied or were being vandalized. Mr. Malloy responded that there had not been time to copy the brochures on a regular basis.

Mr. Malloy reminded the Commission of the contest to design a town flag, and that the Select Board has indicated it would like input from the Historical Commission and Design Review Board before making its decision on the design. The Commission agreed to schedule a joint meeting with the DRB for December 14 to discuss the entries.

Mr. Malloy reported that no progress had been made on the West Cemetery lighting, and that his department and Public Works are at an impasse. This stalemate has persisted for some time, and once again the Commission discussed the need to either get the work done, as earlier promised by Public Works, or to go out to bid. Mr. Wald agreed to speak with the DPW director, Guilford Mooring, to see whether he might be able to get a firm commitment.

Ms. Sharpe reported on the survey of Town Hall that she and Mr. Hanke had done, looking for possible locations for installation of the Civil War tablets. Mr. Hanke was unable to attend the meeting, and sent an email suggesting that the structure of the walls would need to be evaluated by an engineer to be sure they could bear the weight of the tablets. The Commission embarked on an extended discussion of the possible displays, with Ms. Faye asking about free-standing sculptural display, Ms. Sharpe about framing and wall mounting, and Mr. Denit about mechanisms for supporting the panels against a wall. The discussion resolved to three issues: the structural strength of the walls, the integrity of the display, where two panels need to be kept together, and the overall aesthetics of display in Town Hall spaces. Ms. Sharpe also suggested looking at the space off the Town Room, now used for storage, to see whether the panels might be arranged there somehow. Ms. Carpenter moved to hire a consultant to evaluate the engineering/structural needs; Mr. Denit seconded, passed unanimously.

Ms. Faye moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of September 21; Ms. Carpenter seconded the motion, passed unanimously. Ms. Faye moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of October 5; Ms. Sharpe seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Mr. Malloy reported that 45 people had attended the 235 East Pleasant Street walkthrough. The Commission discussed the further study of costs associated with alternatives for the Hawthorne house, as requested in its demolition delay motion, and the suggestion that the Commission fund the studies. Although there are some funds available, the Commission was concerned about the precedent, and Ms. Carpenter agreed to raise the question with CPAC to see whether the funds might be available there.

Next meetings are scheduled for November 23 and December 14.

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gai Carpenter, Clerk

Documents distributed at the meeting—available at Town Hall:

Agenda

Minutes of September 21, 2010, 5 p.

Minutes of October 5, 2010, 6 p.

Hope Community Church letter, November 9, 2010, to CPAC, with estimates from Creative Construction Resolutions [sic], Inc., and Roberts Roofs Co., Inc., 6 p.

Hope Church, estimate from Bourke Builders, 2 p.

Hope Church, estimate from Renaissance Builders, 8 p.

Tyler, Norman. *Historic preservation: an introduction to its history, principles and practice*, / Norman Tyler, Ted J. Ligibel, Ilene R. Tyler. 2nd ed., New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 2009. copy of t.p. and pp. 136-138

Photos of possible locations for Civil War tablets in Town Hall, 4 p.