

Amherst Historical Commission
PUBLIC MEETING
November 23, 2010
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
7:15 p.m.

Present: James Wald, Chair; Gai Carpenter, Clerk; Lyle Denit, Anurag Sharma, Elizabeth Sharpe.
Staff: Nathaniel Malloy, Associate Planner. Guests: Sarah McKee, Pat Holland, Pat Lutz, Phil Shaver. Absent: Lynda Faye, Michael Hanke.

Mr. Malloy reminded the Commission of the contest to design a town flag, the new/revised entries, and the joint meeting with the Design Review Board on December 14.

Mr. Wald called the meeting to order at 7:22 p.m., and invited Ms. McKee to present the Jones Library's updated CPA request. The \$9,000 for shelving is on hold until there is a place to put it. The revised quote for conservation of paintings totals \$ 14,290. Ms. Sharpe asked about provisions for transportation, handling, and insurance of the paintings. Ms. McKee agreed to check with Tevis Kimball to determine how those issues are addressed in the conservator's bids. Ms Holland presented the quote for insulation for the North Amherst Library \$10,700, and an estimate of \$8,900 for masonry repairs.

Mr. Shaver and Ms. Lutz presented a request from the Amherst Historical Society and Museum for \$25,000 to fund a feasibility study for an extension on the Strong House and to answer questions about the continuing structural viability of the Strong House. Mr. Denit asked about the footprint and capacity of a possible addition. Ms. Lutz responded that they planned space for secure storage below grade and display above. Mr. Denit asked how an addition would hurt the existing structure. Ms. Lutz suggested it could disturb the foundation, just as traffic vibration can.

Mr. Wald asked for announcements. Mr. Malloy reported there will be a 79 Taylor Street site plan review; the addition is by right, but the Planning Board could condition the design. There was no substantive comment from the Commission.

Ms. Sharpe moved approval of the minutes of October 19 and November 9; Mr. Denit seconded, approved unanimously. Ms. Carpenter mentioned a request from the CPAC clerk for draft Commission minutes; members agreed that every effort should be made to produce and approve minutes expeditiously, but that they should not routinely be circulated before approval.

Returning to discussion of CPAC proposals, the Commission agreed to ask the Historical Society & Museum for sketches, drawings, and more detail in its presentation for CPAC funding.

The Commission agreed that sufficient funds should be available to afford consultants' evaluation of Town Hall spaces for the Civil War Tablets. Ms. Sharpe suggested asking the conservators about possible displays, then looking for three bids from consultants to determine strength of tablets and the strength of wall and floor surfaces in Town Hall.

Ms. Carpenter reported on the CPAC conversation about more detailed studies of 235 East Pleasant Street (Hawthorne property). The Commission agreed to wait for CPAC/Town Meeting action in the spring and to support parallel proposals from the Commission and the Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee. Mr. Sharma posed a question about the further studies and their objectives; the Commission agreed to include \$10,000 in its CPA request for the project.

Several items relating to ongoing work in West Cemetery have already received CPA funding, but need other types of action.

- Mr. Wald and Mr. Malloy will talk with Guilford Mooring about completing the lighting work.
- Mr. Malloy said the RFP for signs is virtually complete; he needs to do a final review with Mr. Hanke. Jean Thompson is reviewing the text.
- The Commission agreed that we are not ready for anything new yet on headstone restoration.
- Other continuing work, for landscaping and ironwork, is not ready for FY12 estimates or requests
- Mr. Denit will work with Mr. Malloy, and consult Martha Lyon, on specifications for town tomb engineering work
- Mr. Wald will pursue the possibility of working with Hope Church on the public process for landscaping the African American section.
- Because of the difficulty of maintaining the paper brochures, consider a project to replace them with an interpretive display for the mural.

Members of the Commission commented on finishing the projects already underway in West Cemetery and other work already funded and strongly agreed that work should be the priority for FY2012.

In other CPA FY 2012 discussion, the Commission agreed to support the original Hope Church letter requesting \$45,500 for critical repairs and the revised Library request for \$34,000.

Ms. Carpenter sent a note to Sandra Burgess about funding for ongoing preservation and digitization of Town Hall documents; the Commission will use \$10,000 as a placeholder for that work. Ms. Carpenter and Mr. Malloy will follow up with Ms. Burgess about submitting a proposal.

Mr. Malloy had nothing new to report from the Local Historic District Study Committee.

Mr. Malloy reported that David Fichter suggested a West Cemetery web page would be useful; Mr. Wald and Mr. Malloy will work on it.

Ms. Carpenter will work with Ms. Sharpe, Ms. Faye to draft the Joe Larson/PUMA Preservation Award voted by the Commission. The Commission needs criteria for future awards, a call for nominations for 2011 and a calendar for the awards process. Mr. Hanke previously volunteered to design an award, but both a certificate and a more detailed citation are needed.

Mr. Malloy commented briefly on the owner's request for a NHR nomination for 576 Main Street and the response from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Ms. Sharpe spoke about the inventory project. \$20,000 was appropriated from CPA as a match for a state grant. That grant was not available last year, and a decision on this year's application is not due until late this year. Ms. Sharpe urged that we not wait for a grant, but just begin the work with the existing funds, and perhaps request additional CPW funds as needed. Mr. Malloy noted that the going rate for completing an inventory form is about \$400, and that he has identified several hundred structures that might be included in the inventory expansion.

Mr. Denit asserted that, given the already overextended Town staff, the Commission must assign more tasks to Commission members, both to do substantive work and to follow up on work in progress. Mr. Sharma suggested that the Commission should also develop a systematic procedure and tracking system to match name to task to deadline. Subcommittees may be necessary to pursue project goals.

The Commission agreed to schedule an extra meeting on December 7 to review the priority matrix, project status, and funding as well as other unfinished agenda items.

Next Meetings -December 7, 14,

The meeting adjourned at 10:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gai Carpenter, Clerk

Documents distributed at the meeting—available at Town Hall:

Agenda

Amherst Flag Contest web pages printout, 3 p.

Jones Library CPA: Painting Conservation Proposal, 11/16/2010 10 p.

Proposal to the Amherst Historical Commission and the Community Preservation Act Committee:

North Amherst Library, November 23, 2010 4 p.

Amherst Historical Society, Proposal for CPA Funds, November 15, 2010 1 p.

Minutes of October 19, 2010 4 p.

Minutes of November 9, 2010 4 p.

Letter from Hope Community Church to CPAC, November 19, 2010 [follow up information requested 11/9] 20 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. 136-139

Amherst Preservation Plan: Overview and Triage, (Oct. 2008) 7 p.

Letter to Brona Simon, Massachusetts Historical Commission, from Preserve UMass, November 22, 2010 2 p.