

Amherst Historical Commission  
PUBLIC MEETING  
May 3, 2011  
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall  
7:15 p.m.

Present: James Wald, chair, Elizabeth Sharpe, Lynda Faye, Anurag Sharma, Lyle Denit, and Nathaniel Malloy, staff.

Absent: Michael Hanke

Meeting convened at 7:25pm.

Mr. Wald announced that Barry Moser has agreed to design a flag for the Town pro bono.

Mr. Louis Greenbaum attended to speak to the proposed taking of land by the Town along Main Street between the Jewish Community of Amherst (JCA) (the old Second Congregational Church) and the Noah Dickinson house, to accommodate pull off bus stops and shelters. While he is a member of the JCA, Mr. Greenbaum stressed that he was not appearing as their representative. He spoke to the historical and architectural importance of the Second Church building, designed by Warren Howland, and that the landscape is an integral part of the design. He noted that previous takings of lawn by the Town to widen Main Street have already hurt the site. The current proposal with a bus shelter would be too much he said. He also presented a letter from Lisa Selkirk and Angelika Kratzer, owners of the Noah Dickinson house (across Main Street from the JCA), stating their concern that the taking would harm the site of that building. Both are contributing structures to the East Village National Historic Register District.

Ms. Faye said she was concerned about the process that has led to this plan, namely a lack of consultation by the Department of Public Works with the Historical Commission. She noted that several years ago the DPW had removed a corner of the East Common green without consulting the Commission. Mr. Denit noted that a similar situation appears to be happening

with road repaving and widening at the South Common. A few years ago, when work was proposed at the South Common, there was a series of public meetings at which citizens, DPW and the Historical Commission agreed that no changes would be made (to the Common) without a public process.

Ms. Faye moved that the Commission send letters expressing its concern about this project to the appropriate town bodies and community groups - Select Board, DPW, Design Review Board, JCA, etc. Mr. Denit seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Faye moved that a policy be put in place where DPW projects planned for historic districts or that can affect historic resources be brought to the Commission for input, at the conceptual stage, and again at the beginning of the 75% schematic phase—formalizing inter-departmental communication as expressed as a policy goal in the Master Plan. Mr. Denit seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

A meeting was tentatively scheduled for May 17 with representatives of Amherst College to learn about their proposed demolitions and construction of a new science building.

An Application for Demolition of a barn at 158 Flat Hills Road was presented. The same structure came up for demolition review in 2007, at which time the Commission took no action. This time, Ms. Faye moved "to sadly allow demolition provided there are photos, measurements, and other documentation to be added to the Town's paper and digital files." Ms. Sharpe seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

There was some preliminary discussion of a house at 179 Northampton Road, whose owner has proposed changes to the site, including possible demolition.

There was discussion of the Dickinson Local Historic District study committee. The committee has expressed concern about the balance between resource protection and ease of permitting for residents, apparently preferring to err on the side of easy permitting.

The Commission then discussed the Dickinson iron fence restoration in West Cemetery, and voted to keep as much of the existing fence and material as

possible, with their imperfections, and repaint them. If new parts and sections need to be fabricated, the Commission voted to maintain consistent material; ie. Cast iron replaced with cast iron.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by Lyle Denit

**Documents distributed at the meeting—available at Town Hall:**

Agenda

Letter from Massachusetts Historical Commission re Lord Jeffrey Inn NHR nomination

Amherst Bulletin article re Barry Moser designing Town flag

Town Common Policy adopted by Select Board on 11-03-2005

Article 20—CPA requests

Aerial image of barn at 158 Flat Hills Road

Map/aerial image and photograph of structure at 179 Northampton Road

Map of the proposed bus pull offs along Main Street

East Village Common report completed by Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2007

5 photographs of street and sidewalk in front of the JCA.