

Amherst Historical Commission
Minutes of Meeting May 1, 2012

Present

Lynda Faye, Mike Hanke (chair), Matt Cornell, Meg Vickery, Robert Brainin, and staff liaison Nathaniel Malloy

Meeting opened at 7:22pm in first floor meeting room of Town Hall.

Announcements

Discussed upcoming vacancies on the Commission. Commissioners were encouraged to recommend citizens who may be interested in volunteering.

Staff noted that the White Houses public art installation was now open at the Emily Dickinson Museum.

Minutes

None

New Business

Final Town Meeting Preparation

Discussed the Local Historic District presentation, which will focus on the history and significance of the district and the benefits of approving the LHD. There are still a number of concerns and worries from residents of the district and Town Meeting members, so it is difficult to gauge the likelihood of the article garnering the 2/3 majority to be approved. There was a brief discussion about improved methods of public outreach before the Town Meeting vote to help alleviate those concerns.

The commission also discussed the CPA articles and presentations

Mike Hanke will present these items to Town Meeting, and the other commissioners were encouraged to attend.

Frank Lloyd Wright House—Shays Street

Discussed the house's history and importance as the sole construction of FL Wright design in Massachusetts; it is one of the most historically significant homes in Amherst. The commission had concerns about a two-family development on the adjacent property at 28 Shays Street. Matt moved to write a memo to the ZBA re: concerns with interruption of viewshed from the house, possible vandalism and damage if not owner-occupied, and scale of the housing. Seconded by Robert, passed unanimously. Meg volunteered to work with Nathaniel to draft it.

Discussed other significant modern houses in Amherst, with the realization that this would be a worthy theme for future public outreach and a topic on which to conduct an inventory, one that identifies and catalogues modern homes in town.

Demolition Delay Applications

Amherst College—79 South Pleasant Street

Lynda move to approve demolition, Meg seconded, passed unanimously.

Amherst College—Dormitory

Lynda moved to allow demolition, Robert seconded, passed unanimously.

104 Belchertown Road-Barn and Garage

No discussion; the buildings have already collapsed.

FY2011 Annual Report

No discussion.

Other

Conversion in Zoning Bylaw—allow demolition if same footprint, massing, and volume

Staff said that Coldham & Hartman Architects, the consultant selected by the Town to prepare an assessment and feasibility study, noted that the large New England barn would be a candidate for a converting dwelling if it was not in such disrepair. Its massing and volume complements the house, completing a courtyard-like space at the end of the driveway. The architects may recommend that the zoning bylaw be amended to allow for demolition and reconstruction to qualify as conversion if the new structure has the same footprint and volumetric massing as the original.

30 Boltwood Walk—Pioneer Valley Pizza

Discussed 30 Boltwood Walk pizza plans. Meg moved that a memo to ZBA to concerning exterior changes being inappropriate and inconsistent with important style of the existing building. Perhaps change to look like a porch that's part of the structure. Commission also had concerns about the restaurant becoming a student hang out. Would prefer not to see a new structure built on this property. Lynda seconded, passed unanimously. Lynda and Matt volunteered to write it.

Old Business

Committee Reports: LHDSC, CPAC

No discussion.

CPA Projects

Discussed need for new CPA liaison from Historical Commission. The CPA process starts in the fall of each year.

West Cemetery Tomb

Nathaniel is still waiting for the engineer.

West Cemetery Lighting

Nathaniel is still waiting for Gillford re: purchasing lighting. Mike volunteered to call him.

West Cemetery Signs

No activity.

Consultant Projects

Nathaniel is still waiting on contract negotiations for PVPC. Discussed other options.

Public Outreach—Website and Online Material

Postponed for next meeting.

Preservation Awards

Lynda suggested two houses: the recently-renovated one on the corner of Cottage and East Pleasant, the Frank Lloyd Wright house on Shays Street, and the Scott house.

NHR Nominations

No discussion.

Other

None.

Material Distributed at Meeting (on file at Town Hall)

Agenda

Images of FL Wright House

Amherst College Demolition requests

Pioneer Valley Pizza—plans and elevations

Next Meeting

June 5, 2012, place TBA