

**Amherst Historical Commission
Public Meeting
March 5, 2012
Pole Room, Bangs Community Center
7:15 p.m.**

Present: Michael Hanke, Chair; Lynda Faye, Matthew Cornell, Elizabeth Sharpe, Meg Vickery, and staff liaison, Nathaniel Malloy

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Dec. 6, 2011 were approved

Appearance: Hope Community Church: CPA funds

Attending on behalf of Hope Community Church: Laura Fitch, architect, Steve Rogers, Matt Massingil, Rhonda Gordon, Keith Middleton.

Representatives reported on the progress of the project, pointing out that the work has gone further than anticipated and now includes: replacing the roof system; re-working the drainage system, repairing masonry; repairing and/or replacing shingle siding; some interior structural work; custom storm windows; insulation and re-wiring depending on the availability of funds; and possibly a new accessible entrance ramp.

Nate gave the committee some background for the project, pointing out that \$45,000.00 was allocated from the CPA funds via Town Meeting and the remainder from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, sponsored by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). Lynda Faye asked how much the project was estimated to cost and Steve Rogers reported that they have \$87,000 and that things have taken longer than anticipated, in part because of the requirements of MHC. The project was out to bid at the time of the meeting and construction is expected to start on April 1, 2012. As part of the requirements to received funding from the Mass Historical Commission the work must be completed by June 30.

Lynda also asked about a Preservation restriction and Steve reported that this will be in perpetuity because of the involvement of the MHC. The committee agreed by consensus that it would expedite the approval of invoices so that the project will meet the requirement of MHC funding.

Hope Community Church announced that it will be celebrating its centennial anniversary on June 11, 2012.

Announcements

Nate reported that the North Amherst Community Farm (NACF) has some reservations with the preservation restriction that would accompany use of CPA funds for physical repairs and stabilization of their large barn. NACF would like to reduce the term of the restriction and would like to omit any mortgage subordination clause.

The commission discussed at length how to craft clear criteria for deed restrictions, and whether a permanent restriction was overly burdensome for small project, especially when the life of the material is limited. After hearing both sides of the argument, Lynda moved that the Historical

Commission vote to consistently require permit preservation (deed) restrictions when projects receive CPA funds, regardless of the amount of funding. Motion was seconded by Matt Cornell and the vote was unanimous.

New Business

- 1) Local Historic District: the Planning Board is reviewing the proposal to designate the area around the Dickinson Homestead a Local Historic District. This proposal will then go before the 2012 Annual Town Meeting in the spring. Nate reported on the opposition to the designation by various residents and that typically it takes a serious threat to galvanize support for this type of historic district. Nate outlined some of the benefits which include economic potential. Lynda reminded the committee that this is unlikely to pass the first time, but that we should persevere.
- 2) CPA Meeting: Lynda and Mike Hanke discussed the previous CPAC meeting and reported that CPAC approved funds for the FY2013 historic preservation projects: restoration of the Dickinson fence, physical restoration of the Strong House (which is the home of the Historical Society), and development of an archival database for the Historical Society. CPAC warned the commission that these projects need to be completed in a timely manner.
- 3) West Cemetery Improvements: There are remaining CPA funds a few projects that could be spent on the signs and mural lighting. An effort to lead a public outreach campaign was discussed with help from a consultant for the oldest parts of the cemetery, including the African American section and circulation and seating. While there is an existing landscape plan in the West Cemetery Preservation Plan, it was asked whether the commission should rely on this or come up with a new one.

Old Business

- 1) Cemetery Lighting. The lighting designers gave a quote for approximately \$5,000 for a design and specifications. Mike pointed out that we only have \$15,800 for the total project and he is skeptical that lighting can be installed for \$10,000. He will ask the designer for a lower quote so as to leave more money for the actual lighting costs.
- 2) Town Tomb: Nate reported that we have \$5,000 for an engineering study leaving \$30,000 for repairs, and that the amount for the engineering study is less than many consultants would charge for this service.
- 3) Signage: While we have about \$15,000 for signs, Mike reported that one double-sided sign usually costs about \$10,000 and we will need 2 and an interpretive sign. Nate said he will look for quotes to see what we can afford.
- 4) Amherst College: The commission sent a memo to Jim Brassord at Amherst College, praising much of their proposed work but made recommendations and suggestions for the planned addition to the Church at 79 South Pleasant Street. Mike reminded the commission that Amherst College will need to apply for a demolition delay application.
- 5) Discussion of Town flag: The commission was in agreement that new flag is a great improvement.
- 6) Lynda requested that we have an article in the Bulletin about the LHD before it goes to Town Meeting and Nate said he would get in touch with the paper.

Material distributed at meeting—available at Town Hall

Agenda

Minutes from 12-06-2011
Plans for Hope Community Church
MHC publications regarding LHDs
Memo from commission to Amherst College

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 pm