

Amherst Historical Commission
PUBLIC MEETING
Tuesday, October 16, 2012
Lower Meeting Room, Bangs Community Center
6:00 p.m.

Present: Michael Hanke, chair; Lynda Faye, Matthew Cornell and Meg Vickery. Jim Wald of the Select Board. Nathaniel Malloy, town liaison

Announcements: Mike Hanke reported that he had gone before the Select Board the previous evening and asked that they support a North Amherst Local Historic District Study Committee. Which they agreed to do.

Staff also announced that two new members will be appointed shortly by the Town Manager.

No Minutes were approved

New Business:

- a. 290 Lincoln Ave. the issue of the demolition of the barn is going to the Zoning Board of Appeals according to the appeal procedure. If new evidence is given the issue could return to the Historical Commission. Mike said he went back to the barn and the siding in certain areas appears to be quite old and maybe original, Lynda pointed out that the barn has been altered, does not look as it did and is no longer a barn. Mike agreed but said the shape of the barn mirrors that of the house and would have been intentionally designed that way. Lynda wondered about Warren Brown and his significance historically, although no one on the Commission knew of him before this application. Meg said she's look into this. Commission decided to re-instate site visits to many properties with demolition applications. Mike responded to a letter in the Amherst Bulletin with one of his own, explaining that even if the Commission does not want a barn or outbuilding to be demolished, it cannot stretch the bylaw to apply to all cases.
- b. 235 E. Pleasant, Hawthorne Farm: The Town reiterated that proposed use of CDBG funds to mitigate hazardous materials and demolish the house and barn on the Hawthorne property triggered review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). MHC will need to review all plans and proposals before this project proceeds. Staff also noted that the proximity to the wetlands is a factor that could delay this process if CDBG funds are used. MHC may ask the Historical Commission to review the property again.
- c. N. Amherst Local Historic District: the Select Board gave permission to the town to solicit members for the LHDC study Committee; the commission supports this.

- d. N. Common PARC grant Application: The Town Manager wants to apply for these grants to help fund a variety of projects; this year it is the revitalization of the North Common, with the understanding that the project is more about Historic Preservation than recreation. Apparently, the LSSE would only contribute \$30,000 to the project. The rest would need to be contributed through the Historical Commission which will take about \$160,000 out of our CPA funds over the next 2 years, leaving less money for other projects. The Historical Commission struggled with this issue and Mike argued that if the commission agrees to contribute the funds, it should have control and final say in the design of the North Common. Mike said that this a very prominent, public space that has a lot of potential and looks neglected. He said that this is an opportunity for the Commission to work on a high profile project. Nate noted that the Historical Commission does have the statutory ability to manage contracts. Lynda was frustrated that the Commission was not more involved in the grant application and the overall conversation about funding. She would have liked a more formal presentation from the Town. The Commission discussed writing a memorandum to the Town Manager and Select Board regarding a Town Policy for grant applications and projects that require CPA funding and funding from other boards/committee. The policy would include procedures to include the boards/committees early in the process during the initial phases to keep all informed.

The Commission voted to support the North Common PARC grant CPA project, with the condition that it fund 10% more of the project cost than LSSE, and that the commission have a stake in the review of proposals and selection of architect and engineer, and that the commission continues to have a partnership in reviewing the final design and implementation.

- e. CPA Criteria for Private Property: The Historical Commission needs to look into this issue as staff receives calls about this and it is a perennial question during the CPA application. Staff pointed to the Department of Revenue's guidelines on use of CPA money, and that it can be used to fund projects on private property. It was agreed that the Historical Commission needs to write a memorandum to clarify the procedures with clear guidelines and a decision about permanent deed restrictions. Meg moved to accept the guidelines of the town of Weston MA with changes. Lynda seconded but wants to review this issue again at the next meeting.
- f. Meeting with new PVPC preservation planner: Nate said he would invite the new preservation planner at PVPC, Elizabeth Rairigh to the December 11th meeting. .
- g. Membership: two new members will be coming to the next meeting: Laura Lovett and Judy Moran.

Old Business:

- a. Civil War Tablets: the town has sent out an RFP but has gotten no responses. Nate said they will re-issue the RFP. Mike and Lynda asked Nate to contact the Museum of Natural History at Amherst College to ask who they worked with to hang their heavy fossils etc. Nate said he

will send the Commission the RFP.

- b. Potential Changes to the Demolition Delay By –Law: Jonathan Tucker is working up some changes, such as 18 months instead of 12, and staff also pointed out that the bylaw could contain an expiration, transferability, and an administrative mechanism to review applications when they are first submitted at Town Hall. The Commission will discuss in more detail at a future meeting.

Committee Reports:

- a. CPA committee went through the budget identifying what has been done and what hasn't. The Commission agreed that a motion sensor light is all that is needed for the mural in West Cemetery. The Commission will also press to get the signs finished for \$25,000. The Commission will ask electricians, including DiBenedetto , for a cost estimate to install motion sensor lighting on the mural. The Commission also agreed by consensus that the outbuilding inventory being completed by the PVPC consultant should focus on in-town buildings and not farm buildings. This inventory could start in the neighborhood of Sunset, Lincoln, through Gaylord and Prospect, about 80-100 buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm