

Amherst Historical Commission
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING
Tuesday, August 27 , 2013
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
7:15 p.m.

Present: Michael Hanke, chair; Nathaniel Malloy, town liaison; Matthew Cornell, Meg Vickery, and Laura Lovett. Jim Wald. Guest: Ann Lowell.

Minutes: Matt moved to accept the minutes, Laura seconded, all in favor.

New Business:

- a. Staff reported that the Town has submitted an RFP for designs to install the Tablets outside the Town Hall, south of the main entrance. Thus far, the town has only received one submission. The Town is hoping the project can be done for \$50,000, but Staff suspects the cost will be higher, as the Tablets must be protected from the elements, glassed in and well lit. Ron Bohonowicz will use money from the State for lighting and \$40,000 from CPA. Plans include having a consultant work with the Historical Commission to ensure a role for the HC, but the HC may have to apply for more funds from CPAC for the project. Mike pointed out that this is a tricky, complex project, that it is rare to have such plaques standing alone and that some interpretation will be necessary as well. Jim added that the Historical Society is compiling a database with info on soldiers from Amherst who fought in the Civil War which could be very helpful down the line.
- b. MHC Grant: for neighborhoods, proposals for an inventory of downtown outbuildings. Staff reported that Elizabeth Raireigh has been on leave and is behind in her work, but the Historical Commission needs to pin down which properties it wants included.
- c. Dickinson Historical District. Mike reported that a new sign for the Congregational Church had been reviewed – he thought it was still quite poor with a waving rainbow, but that the HC can mostly stay out of these debates.
- d. West Cemetery: there have been complaints of vandalism and issues surrounding maintenance. Some residents have complained that the gates are left open at night – it is not clear whether this is a job for the DPW or the police and members questioned whether the gates can actually keep people out. In older areas the DPW is not doing much pruning or cutting back of foliage. Members decided a letter should be written to the Town Manager, the Select Board and the DPW asking that the gates be kept closed at night and to support a better plan for maintenance. Jim Wald recommended getting in touch with the Stockbridge school or a fraternity, Alpha Tau Gamma to do a twice yearly cleanup.
- e. Amherst Block Party: scheduled for Sept. 12. Meg agreed to ask Hope Croilus and the Goat Girls if they would like to advertise their goats in West Cemetery to raise awareness of the benefits of goat grazing. Staff said he will check about this idea with John Musante.

- f. N. Common Public Process: the Town manager would like the HC to schedule another public meeting to discuss plans and goals for the North Common, so we would be in a good position to apply for grant money next summer.
- g. Demolition Delay: 332 West Street: Does the commission want to hold a hearing to determine the fate of the barn on West Street? The owners want to demolish it as their insurance company will raise their premiums if they don't fix it up or tear it down. Ann Lowell represented the owner. It was agreed that members would visit the barn in the next couple of weeks to decide on whether to hold a hearing or not.
- h. Demolition Delay by-law: needs to be put in the General by-laws. This needs to be amended and worked through by the Spring Town Meeting, and must make its rounds to the Select Board etc. Questions were raised about the appeal process and how its managed.
- i. West Cemetery Projects:
 - Town Tomb: work is moving forward on this and should begin in earnest in October.
 - Lighting: there is no source of electricity for the lights which are ready to be installed. Staff will ask Jerry Gates if the Town can plug in the lights in his building as they are only security lights.
 - Signs: these are waiting on Mike to finalize the work as a new drawing is needed to accommodate new adhesive techniques.

Demolition Delay: returned to: request from owners of 330 Market Hill Road: the Commission agreed no hearing was necessary.

71 Middle Street: this includes the renovation of an older, intriguing outbuilding. The commission was very supportive of the owner's plans to convert this structure into a small studio residence and praised the sensitive and intelligent plans.

Signage for the Writer's Walk: Laura reported that this is a project that is on the course syllabus and the work should be completed by December.

Old Business:

- a. CPA criteria for private property: need criteria such as age and quality, Staff used the example of barns or the fence at Salem Place, and how to financially support these efforts in the private sector. Mike thinks we should take a proactive role in this and Judi argued for strong criteria as CPA funds have real limitations. Staff will email around ideas.
- b. Goats and west cemetery: Sept. 12
- c. Preservation Awards: probable recipients: Cushman Market, Amherst College and possibly Toby Baskins' house on E. Pleasant Street. The Commission was asked to take photos of possible recipients and bring them to the next meeting.
- d. NHR nominations
- e. Other

Next meeting to be held in September

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15