

**Amherst Historical Commission  
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING  
Tuesday, December 10, 2013  
Room 101, Bangs Community Center  
7:15 p.m.**

**Attendance**

Meg Vickery, Mike Hanke (Chair), Matt Cornell, Laura Lovett, Lynda Faye, Nathaniel Malloy (staff liaison).

**Guests**

Jon Olsen (UMass professor), Ms. Porta and Emily Hunter (UMass students), Dave Ziomek (Assistant Town Manager/Director Conservation and Development), Lynn Badget (Wright Builders), Nancy Schwartz (architect), and Josh Lewis

**Announcements**

Staff told the commission that everyone but Matt needs to send drivers licenses to him for town records.

**Minutes-approve minutes**

10/013: unanimously approved (5-0) as submitted

11/013: unanimously approved (5-0) as submitted

**New Business**

**Writer's walk project (not on agenda)**

Two UMass History Graduate students (Ms. Porta and Emily Hunter) presented their project to design Historic Writers plaques for Amherst. Their presentation included a project description, an introduction to the public history course, and the two components: a research handbook for docents, and plaques for the 13 different writers' residences. The Commission received a presentation powerpoint and then discussed the choice of writers, image choices, and sources including dates of residence. They discussed whether a brochure could be put together, to which Mike said it sounds easy but is complex to do well. The Commission talked about tours using smart phones (downtown is wireless) and heard from Jon Olsen of the UMass history dept about his digital initiatives such as <http://digitalamherst.org/civilwar>.

The Commission deliberated next steps: Mike will put text from powerpoint into PDFs to circulate to Commission for review. He still need photos.

**MHC Grant-buildings to inventory**

Staff asked that commission members identify and prioritize properties to inventory by next week. The Commission reviewed ones collected so far by Mike and Lynda, and reviewed unchecked areas.

**CPA**

**i. Proposals—Civil War Tablets, Barn at 332 West St.**

### **Civil War Tablets:**

Dave Ziomek, Assistant Town Manager/Director Conservation and Development for the Town, presented projects he hopes we will review and participate in. He also brought up CPA Committee representation, which he is scolded about by the chair (Peter Jessup) when he makes presentations. Dave said it is important to have a Commission representative to champion projects. Meg said a rotating basis (e.g., per-month) would help, but Mike and Staff said cited state law prohibiting that. Dave suggested a possible alternative of the representative being excused from regular Commission meetings during CPAC season. He noted competition for funds is getting increasingly tight, e.g., affordable housing is becoming a higher priority.

On Thursday the 19th Dave will give a review of all current outstanding projects from all categories. Staff will provide a budget status spreadsheet to the Commission later. CPAC wants all committees to think about projects that are ending, and, if not, asks committees to release money for reuse. Lynda asked about a problem due to the minimum 10% CPAC contribution to historical preservation, and how it is tracked. Dave said he doesn't know and could find out, but speculated that the money would return to the pool for new spending.

Mike spoke to challenges of interacting with CPAC. In the past nearly all projects have been funded. But Commission reps have complained over the years about CPAC members perspectives, e.g., suggestion the Commission use Kickstarter for funding. He asked if all CPAC projects undergo this kind of scrutiny (many pages of questions). Dave said some of this may be true, in part because over nine years of historic preservation projects, some are still outstanding. It would help to finish them up or give money back. He noted that although the Commission's members are volunteers, they actually do some professional work like staff does.

Regarding the Civil War Tablets, after five years the Town decided they could not be put in Town Hall. The Commission and Town then supported an RFP for an architect to design a memorial, and HAI Architects (Don Hafner) have been chosen. Staff described next steps, including two presentations to the Commission, working with a steering committee, going before the Design Review Board and the Planning Board, etc. Mike expressed concerns re: the conservation of tablets themselves and whether the architect has experienced staff to consider exposure, etc. Dave said the presentations would cover that. He also said Town Manager Musante would like to see the project completed. Dave mentioned the WWII roll call installation before town hall as a precedent for a design in this location. Mike said it's a very complex project, and that it might not be possible to do correctly. Lynda wondered whether reproductions could be put up instead. Lynda talked about the North Common project not being done yet, so possibly the project is premature.

### **Barn at 332 West St:**

Staff hasn't gotten anyone to go there yet for estimates. Lynda mentioned preservation restrictions and National Park Secretary of the Interior guidelines, esp.

standing seam roofs. Staff said different levels of restrictions are possible. The Commission thought \$70K would be reasonable for an estimate for restoration based on the cost estimates at North Amherst Community Farm.

## **ii. Review prior projects**

None.

## **iii. CPA Committee representative**

Laura asked about the commitment required. Mike said the Civil War Tablets were not controversial and so would probably pass, but that during review of proposals the CPA Committee meets regularly. Laura will research possibility of her being the representative, given Dave Ziomek's idea of being excused from normal Commission meetings.

## **Demolition delay applications**

### **i. 172 State Street**

The Commission received a presentation from Lynn Badget of Wright Builders, Nancy Schwartz (architect), and Josh Lewis the new homeowner that discussed the history of the house (originally a warehouse) and barn, and the future plans. The plans for the house include new windows, adding a dormer and changing doors. The new owners will also add a garage attached by a breezeway. The barn will be stripped to the framing and rebuilt with the façade along Mill Lane being replicated. Most of the changes to the barn will occur in back with an addition along an existing roofline.

Staff asked about specifics re: garage, driveway, etc. Lynda said she loves the house, and expressed two major concerns. First, the north and south elevations show new gables that are not compatible with the existing house, which needs to be resolved. The charm of the existing house is in the details—roof brackets, quatrefoil columns on the porch, window grille pattern, size of trim—and the work and addition should match this detail to keep the integrity of the architectural character. Mike shared Lynda's opinion and said the design doesn't look sophisticated, and asked about reusing architectural elements from the existing structure. Lynda's second concern was in regards to the partial shed dormers: They are not in keeping with the house's character and appear out of scale and pattern with the house. The Commission and guests then discussed other concerns, such as the treatment of the doors leading to the porch on the house, the size and detail of the trim, and type of new siding. Lynn and Nancy said they would take the Commission's into consideration and integrate them into the design.

Mike asked whether the Commission wanted to hold a hearing to review whether or not to impose a delay. Lynda said the property is historically significant, both the site and the history of the house. She also wants existing photos of the current house prior to renovation. She thinks renovations are being done carefully, and if the windows and architectural details are maintained, then a hearing is not necessary. The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to not hold a hearing because

the builder and architect would integrate their recommendations into a final design and the structures will remain on the site, only significantly rehabilitated.

**ii. Application Fees**

None

**Other items not anticipated**

None

**Old Business**

**CPAC budget spreadsheet (not on agenda)**

Staff took the Commission through the outstanding work of historic preservation CPA projects, noting the Commission has accomplished a lot and still has a lot to do.

**West Cemetery Projects**

Lynda asked for an update, which Staff summarized from last meeting.