

Amherst Historical Commission
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING
Monday, September 21, 2015
First Floor Meeting Town Hall
7:00 p.m.

Attendance

Meg Vickery (Chair.), Jan Marquardt, Laura Lovett, Jane Wald, Bob Romer

Guests: Nathaniel Malloy (staff); John Kuhn: Tim Tomlinson

Introductions

New member Jane Wald

Announcement

Meg expressed grief for everyone at sudden passing yesterday of John Musante.

Cowls' barn discussions are now focusing on retaining original exterior, with repair, and redesigning only the interior.

New Business

Update on CPA Proposals

Little Red Schoolhouse committee got good bids for moving and planned to apply to CPAC for funding but as they do not have a location, nothing has moved forward so far.

North Common PARC grant will go on to Town Meeting. Proposed preliminary design approved to match historical character of town center.

Management of West Cemetery

Preservation Plan is in ongoing conversations—some done, some concerns remain about 1730 knoll, mowing not maintained, et cetera. Brief discussion of grazing proposal for older section. Decided on latter issue to make a recommendation to try grazing in parts, with continued use of machines in newer sections but to avoid herbicides as much as possible.

Review of Writers Walk signs and material

All text and most images ready—awaiting redesign of plaque to accommodate. Lord Jeff Inn did not respond to funding request. Will write to director of AC facilities, Jim Brassord.

UMass faculty hosting website has corrected parts of website upon request and will continue to update as we need for town walk. Need to approach residents to approve if on their front lawn.

Review Historic Preservation Plan

Using Marquardt's priority ratings, Laura suggested we move up priority for Regulation/Review and clarify the Demolition Delay Bylaw guidelines to priority 1. Jane suggested regular public outreach for people in historic districts reminding them to come talk to us before starting any projects that might affect the buildings under their stewardship and to let them know that we might be able to help them find funding. Laura suggested adding preservation of modernist structures. Discussion of other items and some additional text for introductory text was suggested. Members recommended to send further comments to Laura before she must present it to CPAC on Sep 28.

Review Demolition Requests

1081 South East -Carriage House

[Disclosure by Jane Wald that applicant is member of Board of Governors for ED museum to which she reports.]

Probably older structure than appears though unknown. Architect and builder representing applicants/owners of house (since late 1970s). Special permit granted to previous owner for changes; the outbuildings are currently and will continue to be used for garage and office. Moving away from side lot line within appropriate boundaries. Have permit. Ready now to demolish and begin rebuilding. Architect says existing structure is falling down—new photos show condition. Not worth repairing and blocks view of large open parcel behind the house.

Meg asked if just removing 1970s structure would suffice rather than entire constellation of buildings. Architect said yes for sight lines but not for new usage. Laura asked if there are any plans are to reuse materials, like the doors, in the new. Architect said no, will look similar but all new materials.

Staff explained the different ways the commission can respond. Architect clearly stated that the owners do not want to have a hearing but new design is very different from the original so the members were concerned. He also stated they have been through long design process and are not interested in redesign at this time. Neighbors were informed during special permit process and no concerns were raised. Jane read from materials that this is only carriage house remaining in district, dates from 1860. Architect stated design concerns should have been part of special permit; feels he has worked with style of the house. Staff explained our concern is with value of original building and appearance of replacement. This was not part of the permit request or we would have considered before design was finalized.

Time short now to review if just for site visit and re-meeting to decide on delay. Federal district designation names it as contributing structure. Staff read article 13 of bylaws regarding historic structure.

Motion to not hold hearing for demolition delay made by Jane, seconded by Jan. Discussion period. Architect promised to take design concerns back to owners. Motion did not pass with 2/2 vote. Laura then made a motion to table until next meeting while Meg writes letter to owners. Seconded by Jan. Passed with 3 for, 1 abstention. Then realized there is

not enough time to effect period for demolition delay. New motion by Jane to not hold demolition delay hearing but directing Vickery to send letter about loss of federal historic district contributing structure and visual impact on neighborhood to owners. Passed 3 for/1 abstention.

Old Business

Tabled for lack of time.

Next Meeting

October 19 is the next meeting date.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet T. Marquardt