

Amherst Historical Commission
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING
Monday, October 19, 2015
Pole Room, Bangs Community Center
7:00 p.m.

Attendance

M. Vickery, J. Marquardt, J. Wald, R. Romer, S. Bloom

Guests: N. Malloy and J. Tucker (staff), Smith St. resident Jess Andrews, 870 So. East St. resident Jim Huerle

Introductions

Commission members introduced themselves as there were new members in attendance.

Announcements

At the November meeting Amherst College and Carol Gray will report on progress of research and cost estimates for preservation of the Little Red Schoolhouse. Based on the information presented, the Commission may decide to hold a public hearing to lift the delay.

Discussion of Responsibilities

Discussion of committee responsibilities from 1972 bylaws. Consideration of revision to demolition delay bylaw. Decision to place on agenda for next meeting in order to begin research, outreach, and timeline to bring public town meeting.

Minutes

Minutes from the meeting of September 21, 2015 were revised to add word "Plan" at bottom of page 1 after "*Review Historic Preservation*" and final sentence of first paragraph on page 2 should read: "Members recommended to send further comments to Laura before she must present it to CPAC on Sep 28." Move to approve minutes as revised by M. Vickery and seconded by J. Wald. Pass unanimously (3-0-2).

Demolition Delay

Review of 870 South East Street Barn

Resident from 870 So. East St. presented on demolition request for barn. Although there has been a house on the property since about 1800, current one is from 1880 while the barn is only about 50 years old and in very poor condition. It appears to be cheaply constructed and has not endured well; it has a sagging roof and bowing walls. It will be replaced with historically appropriate structure. J. Marquardt moved to allow demolition, J. Wald seconded. Passed unanimously (5-0).

Management of West Cemetery

Management of West Cemetery discussion from last meeting continued. CPA landscape funds are available, primarily for the African-American section. Regular upkeep is in the Town's

General budget. Resident from Smith St. presented concerns over height of hedge between her property and cemetery as well as disturbing transient population sleeping there and raucous behavior at night. Requested that the hedge on cemetery side of four-foot chain link fence at boundary to her property be maintained at about 8 feet. Historical commission made recommendation to invite Alan Snow and team to visit the site. Discussion of open gates at night, night lighting plans. To be placed on December agenda with Snow's report after visit. Street and welcome signs will be updated after new building at 1 East Pleasant is complete.

FY2017 CPA Proposals

FY2017 CPA proposals will be reviewed at December or January meeting. Suggestion that we look at Amherst's Preservation Plan which is more than fifteen years old and propose funds to update it. Although some CPA projects are complete, it should still be a priority of the commission to complete outstanding projects—Writers Walk, West Cemetery landscaping, and West Cemetery sign projects—before applying. Plan is to apply next year. Members asked to help distribute proposal information to interested residents.

Board/Committee Representative

Need one representative to Design Review Board. M. Vickery suggested someone interested in serving whom she will contact. If that person unavailable, J. Marquardt offered to take on in lieu of serving as secretary.

Writer's Walk Signs

Writers Walk status held up by design issues. J. Marquardt will send texts she and Lovett wrote around to members. Must complete all plans over winter so installation can begin in spring. Nate working with M. Hanke on technical details.

CPA Historic Preservation Plan

Historical Preservation Summary for CPA plan—Lovett absent for report.

Public Outreach

Public outreach discussion continued from last meeting. Plan to mail letters to targeted audience—those with homes in national historic districts, national historic properties, Amherst historic registry, and those considered significant modern architectural structures. Members asked to help get residents to identify such latter candidates. The registry of outbuildings is incomplete, about 120 currently, but only those associated with houses. J. Wald agreed to draft letter for review by commission. Should go to about 1000 addressees.

Letter to South East Property

M. Vickery presented letter she drafted to Gorths regarding last meeting decision on no demolition delay but concerns about replacement structure. Commission revised details and suggested more authoritative tone, listing specific place on historic district documentation and our role as representatives in charge of protecting town buildings. Raised issue of pre-review process we might add to the demolition delay bylaws and change to form to require more information. Suggestion to list criteria that automatically leads to a public hearing on the form.

Downtown Wayfinding/Branding Grant

J. Tucker presented results of grant for tech assistance from design consultant for downtown branding signs. Committee members made recommendations for further refinement of visual ideas which J. Tucker will take to designer.

Commission Webpage

Members asked to look at our webpage and come with suggestions for improvements next meeting.

Next Meetings

November 23;

December 14.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet T. Marquardt