



TOWN HALL
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HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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Amherst Historical Commission
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING
Monday, December 14, 2015

Members present: Jane Wald, Steve Bloom, Laura Lovett, Meg Vickery, Jan Marquardt
Staff present: Senior Planners Nate Malloy and Jonathan Tucker
Others present: Ralph Faulkingham, Doug Marshall, Niels la Cour

The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. in the Pole Room of the Bangs Community Center.

1. **Announcements** – none
2. **Review and Approve Minutes** – November 23, 2014. Moved by Wald, seconded by Bloom, approved unanimously
3. **New Business**
 - a. **Review proposed Goodwin Church Project**

The study was conducted and this is a report to show us what is being proposed. Goodwin Church sits back from Woodside Avenue. About 110 years old. Was DIY project. Small; only about one room, ca.1200 sq. ft., wooden. 30-35 people attend weekly. Needs rehabilitation. This generation wants to improve it. Repairs, maintenance, upgrades planned. Basement no longer heavily used except for storage, Cagan center across the street instead. Only two toilets are down there, however, and want to add two unisex toilets upstairs, one in vestibule and one replacing current stairs and one pew—one wheelchair accessible and one not. But rickety staircase to basement needs reinforcement. Disability ramp needed for entrance which needs to be upgraded anyway; will have to be 8 ft. because height of main floor—want to run it along the south length of building with outer rail and handicapped handrails. Entrance on side. Want to add stairs that wrap around south and west corner for basement entrance.

The building is in good structural shape. The engineer is running figures through MA commission. Reinforce central support planned. Amherst College owns the driveway where they park. Right of usage granted from origins. But unclear about easement allowance for ramp and staircase additions. Goes to Architectural Access Board for variance. If granted, we could be asked to write letter of support. Question raised about appearance of both current and planned doors. Original look might be considered from old photographs for both. Same for windows; suggest matching the ratios with two small narrow windows

rather than one completely of different proportions. 1910 cornerstone will continue to be visible because pickets will be open.

b. Review 2017 CPA Proposals

i. First Congregational Church

Ralph Faulkingham, who prepared proposal, Doug Marshall from building committee, and the pastor attended.

Needs a fire protection/sprinkler system added. Timber frame under granite.

Congregation wants to make better ADA accessible with elevator. Raised \$770,000 for this purpose. Wants \$358,000 CPA funds to help with the fire protection to be done at same time.

Church was Dickinson family church, many visitors to town want to see it. Integral to town image and history.

Nate suggested this project is also eligible for the Massachusetts Preservation Projects funds, since CPA will ask about other sources.

Committee members suggested downplaying the elevator and other changes they plan to support on their funds; rather, make a compelling argument for only the fire protection in order to protect a key historic structure of the town. This has already been submitted, but opportunity to make presentation better focused.

ii. Emily Dickinson Museum

Also for fire suppression system, this for the Evergreens. Part of larger infrastructure project among other upgrades cited as critical as preparation for restoration. Only currently have detection system in place—approximately 10 minute response time. Specs developed for high pressure mist system. Able to match CPA funds. This winter they hope to put system in the Homestead; next year the Evergreens. Latter is key as it has historical objects and decorative finished that are original from family.

Need \$200,000. Matching funding probably from Amherst College, as it owns the properties. Prefilled water system powered by nitrogen, works without electricity. Mist does not do as much damage as full water sprinklers. 30 minutes then would need refill. Housed in cellars.

Agreement with AC is that they provide their own funding for maintenance and restoration projects. Have exhausted all public funds in previous projects. All admission ticket income and shop sales go into annual operating budget, rest made up from fundraising.

iii. Amherst Historical Society

Presented by Niels La Cour

Proposal linked to the Society's new collaboration with Jones Library. Shoestring program; 6 Hampshire College work study students and small income producing events such as garden tours.

Three projects—

- 1) To pay legal fees for study of leeway within terms of original testament in order to fulfill mission yet grow with community's needs,
- 2) Want to undertake dendrochronological study to better understand history of site,
- 3) Minor but essential structural improvements for next 5-10 years in tandem for exterior repainting. (Eventually building will need much more work).

iv. Lincoln-Sunset LHD Study Committee

Presented by Steve Bloom.

Very culturally and historically significant neighborhood. Approximately 200 Form Bs are necessary to research and complete for the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Need someone to help prepare this material. UMass graduate student currently working well; need to pay her. Has been paid by members of Committee at \$15/hr. Suggestion was made that she should be paid \$19/hr.

v. Historical Commission

Presented by Bob Romer.

Christopher Thompson Memorial Stone as discussed last meeting. See minutes from 23 November 2015.

c. Review AAB application by Emily Dickinson Museum

Presented by Jane Wald.

Applying for waiver of accessibility requirements as an historic site. If 30% of assessed value of property is spent on structure, triggers review and requires ADA renovations. But exemptions may be requested. Since museum is planning on \$2 million total in projects, began requests for Homestead and Evergreens. Asking the Historical Commission to support partial exemptions in order to keep buildings as close to original form as possible. Both in local historic district and on National Register. Specific details to exempt were enumerated, such as addition ramps to front door of elevators, addition of toilets, telephones, et cetera.

Every place that cannot be reached would have materials to show to first-floor chairbound visitors.

d. Review demolition requests

12 Hallock Street and 236 North Pleasant Street
Barry Roberts, Kurt Shumway presenting

They own adjacent properties on No. Pleasant and Hallock Streets; would like to demolish two structures and replace with shared commercial building.

They are part of town historic structures, though buildings have been moved in the past. Had key historical functions previous to their commercial and residential uses. Members voted to hold a public hearing to be held on January 6.

e. Other items not anticipated

Meg reported that Woodside Preschool is interested in taking the interior finishings of the Little Red Schoolhouse. Since it is unlikely the building can be moved; this would save the most important parts of structure.

4. Old Business

a. Discuss and review changes to Demolition Delay Bylaw

Members should mark up Jonathan’s draft and the Southampton sample. Return to staff for preparation. Place on agenda for second meeting in January. Laura suggested that at same time we look at CPAC language and coordinate, such as “preserving streetscape”.

Two points: 1. Move out of zoning into general bylaw
 2. Change language

Other old business tabled for a future meeting.

5. Next Meetings

Public demolition hearing January 5.

Meeting to focus on bylaws January 21.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm