

**Amherst Historical Commission
Public Meeting
Thursday, January 21, 2016**

Members present: Steve Bloom, Jan Marquardt, Bob Romer, Jane Wald, Meg Vickery

Staff present: Senior Planner Jonathan Tucker (staff liaison)

Absent: Laura Lovett

Guests: Jeff Morgan, Doug Marshall

1. Announcements (none)

2. Minutes of December 14, 2015 meeting (none received for approval)

3. New Business

a. 2017 CPA Proposal Prioritization

Commission members and staff held a discussion of procedure for prioritizing proposals. There was additional discussion about the Thompson Memorial Stone proposal: Community Preservation Coalition considers the project ineligible for CPA funding. The Town has requested a legal opinion from Town Counsel, which will be added to supporting materials. Historic markers in the cemetery are part of Town's Preservation Plan and therefore should be eligible for CPA funding.

Members bringing forward proposals (Bloom, Romer, Wald) excused themselves from the room for discussion of priorities.

Remaining commission members voted to prioritize projects as follows:

Priority 1 **Due Diligence fund** of \$10,000 & **Amherst Historical Society** as the town's public history organization.

Priority 2 **Dickinson Museum** Evergreens Fire Suppression System

Priority 3 **Thompson Memorial Stone & NP-L-S Historical District Commission** expanding to western edge of Kendrick Park.

Priority 4 **First Congregational Church** proposal: part of larger project. Very large request. Recommended at \$200,000.

b. Demolition Application for 70 Taylor Street.

Addition of bathroom at rear of house facing away from street calls for removal of some exterior clapboard and replacement of a window. Commission requested a more detailed description of the locations of clapboard removal and window to be replaced by door.

Motion (Jane Wald): Schedule a demolition delay hearing for demolition application, 70 Taylor Street.

2nd (Janet Marquardt).

Passed unanimously.

Staff will schedule a hearing for February 10 at 7 pm.

- c. Other items not anticipated
Mr. Tucker provided an update about property at 257 Pelham Road where a garage had been removed prior to a demolition request.

4. Old Business

- a. Updated Information related to 236 North Pleasant/12 Hallock.
Discussion of BID proposal to change zoning in Limited Business districts contiguous to North Pleasant and North Prospect and on University Drive to General Business district. Discussion of options for encouraging preservation.
Tucker reported (1) the possibility of moving the addition to the Hallock property which was the former Vestry of the Congregational Church to First Congregational Church property; (2) that owner Barry Roberts offered to allow Historical Commission members to look at interior of North Pleasant Street property to assess its condition.
Vickery restated her opinion that the importance of these two buildings is their scale as contributing structures to streetscape in that area and her hope that architect will be sensitive to issue of scale when delay expires and new building goes up.
Motion (Janet Marquardt): Conduct forensic analysis to assess condition of structures.
2nd (Romer)
Passed unanimously.
- b. Demolition Delay By-Law
Steve Bloom, Bob Romer volunteered to form working group to review and refine draft by-law revision.
- c. Amherst Preservation Plan
Town staff will prepare summary for the Commission of what has been accomplished since the Plan was prepared. The Commission will review and determine next steps for revising the Preservation Action Plan.
- d. Committee Representation on DRB and CPAC
Design Review Board – Janet Marquardt
Community Preservation Act – Jane Wald is willing to begin fall 2016 and, in the meantime, will record minutes of Commission meetings.
- e. Historic Preservation Summary for CPA Plan – Review
The summary with new staff edits was distributed. Commission members will review and send comments to Mr. Tucker within two weeks.
- f. Ongoing CPA Projects
 - 1) Writers Walk Signs
Steve Bloom volunteered to review and edit sign texts. Staff will ask designer Michael Hanke to return the plans for updated estimates.
 - 2) West Cemetery Landscape – Consider public process

To begin implementation of the public process recommendation, Mr. Tucker advised that staff can begin to put together scope of work for a consultant to manage the public process. An allocation of \$20,000 in CPA funds is available for this project.

Motion (Marquardt) to hire a suitable professional to come up with process for public input for landscape design for African-American section of West Cemetery.

2nd (Romer)

Passed unanimously.

3) NHR Nominations

Mr. Tucker reported that work is progressing on preparing for National Historic Register nominations for which \$49,782 in CPA funds had been allocated in prior fiscal years. Six projects – approximately 75% complete -- are being managed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Specifically, the north/south cemetery documentation is 90% complete; East Village, Bay Road Corridor and Depot Districts are all 85% complete (these have been submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission and are waiting for approval); and the resource inventory is 25% complete and is planned for spring 2016. Town staff met with PVPC to encourage completion of all projects by June 30, 2016.

g. West Cemetery – Management Issues

Agreed to invite Tree Warden Alan Snow to Commission meeting to discuss sustainable methods of management.

h. Public Outreach

A discussion of public outreach concerning historic resources and the demolition application process resulted in three actions:

- 1) Ms. Wald will prepare an informational letter to residents in historic districts
- 2) The commission will raise awareness of historic resources through distribution of information about these concerns enclosed with building permit applications as well as a letter to the editor of the local newspaper.
- 3) The Commission will plan public outreach in tandem with revision of the demolition delay by-law.

i. Commission webpage – not addressed

j. Other items not anticipated

Mr. Tucker recommended that, to get through the lengthy agenda, certain long-term items should be assigned to small working groups of Commission members or address half the list at each meeting in sequence.

5. NEXT MEETING

Scheduled for February 10, 2016, at 7:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Wald