

*Amherst Historical Commission*  
**PUBLIC MEETING**  
**Tuesday, November 22, 2016, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Town Room, Town Hall**

Members Present: Jane Wald, Robert Romer, Ted Parker, Janet Marquardt, Laura Lovett

Staff present: Senior Planner Jonathan Tucker

Others present: Donna Golec, Sarah McKee, Jim Wald, William Zimmer, Bruce Coldham

1. In the absence of commission chair Meg Vickery, Mr. Parker moved, Ms. Marquardt seconded, voted 4-0-1 to appoint Ms. Wald as chair pro tem.

2. Demolition Delay Public Hearing

In an email, Hampshire College Interim Facilities Director Carl Weber requested a continuance of the public hearing concerning the Ives property to allow the petitioner to assemble information relevant to their demolition request.

Ms. Lovett moved, Mr. Parker seconded, voted 5-0-0 to continue hearing to Monday, December 5, 2016, at 7:00 pm.

3. Demolition Delay

There has been an inquiry about the existing delay placed on Hallock Street and Pleasant Street properties. The Commission discussed sending a letter to property owners notifying them that Historical Commission has completed due diligence with inspection of buildings Bill Flynn, thanking them for cooperation, and confirming expiration of demolition delay.

Ms. Marquardt moved, Mr. Romer voted 5-0-0 to authorize the chair pro tem to compose a letter to property owners.

4. New Business

A. Community Preservation Act -- Preliminary review of proposals from private owners

i. Jewish Community of Amherst (JCA) steeple restoration

Bill Zimmer, president of JCA, described proposal to repair and restore the steeple on the JCA meeting place, originally built in 1729 as Amherst's Second Congregational Church. As long ago as 1989, JCA applied unsuccessfully to the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) for a grant to repair the steeple. Since then the steeple and belfry have been even more compromised due to a lightning strike a few years ago. An architect and structural engineer inspected steeple and discovered greater deterioration than previously known. Needed repairs will be aesthetic as well as structural, and will involve removing entire steeple and making repairs on the ground rather than on rigging. The JCA recognizes that theirs is a large request and the proposal explains why JCA is not currently in a financial position to contribute more than 10% of the cost.

Commission members asked about architecture of belfry and steeple, recommended looking into Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) again to enhance JCA's application to CPA by demonstrating efforts to access other sources of funding.

ii. North Amherst Community Farm -- 1089 North Pleasant Street

Bruce Coldham, architect and member of the Board of NACF, explained that the goal of the proposal is to fund a study evaluating the historical qualities and condition of the house on the property, and a needs and feasibility analysis. Some part of the farmhouse dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The results of the study will inform NACF's next step, which is to stabilize the structure and establish it as duplex housing for farmers and apprentices. NACF requests \$10,000 in CPA funds for the historical assessment, to be matched by \$15,000 in-kind architectural services for the needs and feasibility analysis.

Commission members expressed concern about the disappearance of outbuildings from Amherst's agricultural history and encouraged Mr. Coldham to include the historic barn, which is contemporary to the house, in the study.

iii. Ithmar Conkey House – 664 Main Street

Donna Golec, Kendrick Property Management, presented a concept for CPA funding on behalf of the Trustees of the Salem Place Condominium Association, a not-for-profit owners association. The building is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places and houses individual business enterprises and one residential unit. Intended repairs and improvements include aspects of the front porch, the cast-iron fence, electrical boxes, and fire escapes.

Commission members and Mr. Tucker advised the applicant to focus any forthcoming CPA requests on preservation of the historic features of the house rather than deferred maintenance issues that should be paid from condominium dues. Recommended that the owner to look into the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) and contact the Massachusetts Historical Commission about other sources of funding for repairs.

B. Community Preservation Act -- Preliminary review of proposals from public entities

i. North Common Restoration

Leisure Services asks for Historical Commission participation in a joint request of \$400,000 in CPA funds to advance work on re-landscaping the North Common in front of town hall.

ii. West Cemetery 1870 section headstone restoration

A monument restoration contractor has provided an estimate of \$225,000 for restoration of the entire section. Phasing the work over three years would require \$75,000 a year.

iii. Hampshire County Council of Governments 0 Hampshire County Courthouse restoration

The council requests \$318,000 in CPA funds from Amherst to help with restoration of the county courthouse in Northampton. Requests have gone out to all towns and municipalities using the courthouse, with requested amounts pro-rated according to population.

5. Old Business

A. UMass Horse Barn Update

Mr. Tucker has received voluminous information from UMass addressing the Historical Commission's request for clarification about the movement, preservation, and use of the Horse Barn. He will make it available in hard copy in the Planning Department and will request a PDF of the same information.

B. Thompson Memorial Sign Update

Mr. Romer reported that the location of the new memorial interpretive sign has been staked out in the area of the Thompson graves. Dorsey Memorial estimates that the stone will be completed and ready for installation in early January. Discussion of involving members of the Massachusetts 54<sup>th</sup> re-enactors in an installation ceremony will be continued at another meeting.

C. Writers Walk Signs Update

Mr. Tucker reported that Amherst College wants to discuss the location of the three signs on or near their property and that he is arranging a meeting with Jim Brassord for that purpose.

D. Civil War Tablets

Mr. Tucker reported that consideration is being given to requesting additional CPA funding for display design and installation of the Civil War memorial tablets in a renovated Jones Library. The tablets have already been restored and an engineering evaluation of requirements for mounting the tablets at Town Hall had been completed. Remaining funds from that work (about \$35,000) can be applied to design and installation in the library project. The CPA request would add funding to ensure completion of the project.

6. Other Items

A. Nolumbeka Project

Ms. Wald and Mr. Parker will attend a forum on December 3<sup>rd</sup> in Northfield on how local historical commissions can raise awareness and help create a preservation framework around Native American ceremonial landscapes.

B. Jones Library Project Notification Form

Mr. Tucker referenced items in the meeting materials related to the Jones Library's filing of a Project Notification Form (PNF) with the Massachusetts Historical Commission in anticipation of funding for construction. One document is MHC's response to the Library's PNF, reminding the Library that it needs to participate in a historical review process. The other document contains information about historic features of the Jones Library building submitted to MHC by Ms. Sarah McKee for the "Save Our Library" committee. The Historical Commission will request CPA funding for a historic structure report for the Library. Ms. Wald noted that it was the homework you were supposed to do before embarking on changes to an historic building.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for December 5, 2016.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.