

**Amherst Historical Commission**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, January 31, 2017, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Town Room, Town Hall**

Members present: Steve Bloom, Janet Marquardt, Ted Parker, Meg Vickery (chair), Jane Wald  
Staff present: Nate Malloy, Planning Department  
Guests present: Maurianne Adams (Local Historic District Study Committee), James Wald (Select Board liaison)

Meeting called to order 7:05 p.m.

**1. Appearance: 7:05 p.m.**

**Lincoln-Sunset Local Historic District proposal - Review and Recommendations.**

Steve Bloom, Chair of LHD Study Committee, presented the proposal for a Lincoln-Sunset Local Historic District. He reviewed the timeline for the project beginning in 2012 and pointed out the Committee's work in completing a Massachusetts Historical Commission Form B for each of the 211 properties in the proposed district. The Committee's public outreach has included neighborhood meetings, newspaper articles, a trolley tour, and a letter & questionnaire to residents of neighborhood. The overwhelming response has been to preserve the historic character of neighborhood. The Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the proposed local historic district in December. Town approval of the Lincoln-Sunset Local Historic District would not affect zoning, setbacks, demolition, or other similar requirements. It would, however, preserve the variety of architectural styles; example of social diversity of area, interwoven histories. The social significance of the district emphasizes both notable residents and interesting patterns of social movement. Designation of a local historic district might help avoid unrestrained development of properties on west side of North Pleasant Street, i.e., buildings that are too tall, streets that are too narrow, as compared to communities such as Storrs, CT.

Discussion included the following issues:

- If developers wanted to build within the LHD, will size and scale of structures be regulated?
- Dickinson LHD regulates only what is visible from the public way. The new LHD could impact scale, proportion, and mass, parking lots, depending on the guidelines adopted by the commission for the new district.
- Clarification that the design guidelines can preserve/enhance a variety of vibrant architectural styles, including contemporary expressions of architectural suitability within the district.
- The LHD by-law would create the district. The district commission would then develop design guidelines. It is impractical to include design guidelines in the by-law because every subsequent change must be approved by town meeting.
- The composition of the commission should be varied enough that residents of the district do not end up regulating themselves.

Mr. Bloom and Ms. Adams described the preliminary presentation to the Planning Board and its outcome. Planning Board members generally favored the district proposal, and discussion centered on inclusion of the west side of North Pleasant Street in the LHD. Architect John Kuhn and BID director Sarah La Cour made a compromise proposal to remove the B-L (Limited Business) zoned properties from the LHD and to limit new construction to four stories. Planning Board will meet again to complete discussion and vote.

Ms. Adams asked for Historical Commission's endorsement of the North Prospect-Lincoln-Sunset Local Historic District as presented.

Ms. Marquardt moved, Mr. Parker seconded, voted 4-0-1 that AHC supports, in principle, the creation of a North Prospect-Lincoln-Sunset Local Historic District, subject to further discussion of boundaries and design standards.

## **2. Advisory Review. 7:30 p.m.**

### **North Square Comprehensive Permit - Review and Recommendations re Historical Issues.**

An attorney for a neighboring property claimed that the plan as submitted had not taken into consideration the impact on two historic structures within the footprint of the renovation. The Massachusetts Historical Commission found that there would be no impacts. The Zoning Board of Appeals wants an opinion from the Historical Commission on whether there would be impacts on the two properties.

Mr. Parker moved, Ms. Wald seconded, voted 5-0-0 that Beacon 40B project as presented has no impact on two historic properties on Montague Road.

## **3. New Business:**

### **a. North Common Design Process**

The Commission reviewed a draft RFP to prepare a schematic plan for the North Common. Mr. Malloy explained the design process and role of the Historical Commission, indicating that the design timeline will provide for input from boards/committees, creation of a schematic design, and cost estimates. He encouraged AHC members to review the RFP and send suggestions for changes and vendors to Mr. Tucker.

### **b. Unitarian Society letter – 2017 schedule for Tiffany window public access**

The Commission accepted the schedule of public access in 2017 in compliance with preservation restriction held by the town in exchange for CPA funding to restore the Tiffany window.

### **c. Other Items Not Anticipated.**

Revisiting of CPAC recommendations and responses to CPAC questions. Most prominent concern is Mr. Parker's reservation about funding for JCA steeple and that grant monies awarded might be fungible and applied to other project components.

## **4. Old Business**

### **a. Writers Walk signs – Update & Next Steps**

Ms. Marquardt and Ms. Lovett will meet with Jim Brassord to ask for support for five of the markers. Mr. Brassord has stated that he prefers rusticated granite, which elevates the cost to \$5,000 for each marker.

## **5. Next Meeting: February 15, 2017, 7:00 pm.**

## **6. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.