

Amherst Historical Commission
PUBLIC MEETING
Monday, February 22, 2016
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
7:00 p.m.

Present: Vickery, Lovett, Marquardt, Romer, Wald

Absent: Bloom

Guests: Joel Greenbaum, Adrian Fabos

1. Announcements

None

2. Minutes

Motion (Wald) to approve minutes of the meetings of December 14, 2015, and January 21, 2016, seconded (Marquardt), and voted 4-0-1.

3. New Business

A. Appearance – 7:05 p.m.

Coldham-Hartman Architects, Request for Letter of Support for Massachusetts Historical Commission Preservation Award

Rehabilitation of Amherst College's Garman House (built 1916) creating universal access and improving life safety while retaining ties to existing streetscape. On exterior, the central brick walk was not accessible. The firm created a screen wall for new lift out of salvaged original bricks from walkway. On interior, bathrooms were reconstructed in traditional style, accessible handrails were added discretely, transoms were rejuvenated transoms, and original wood floors rehabilitated. The project restored the flat-seamed copper roof and fixtures as well as the wood sashes, improving energy efficiency at the same time. A letter of support from the Amherst Historical Commission can include reference to Coldham-Hartman's general sensitivity to nature of the building, long-term aesthetic choices, and use of salvaged materials.

Motion (Marquardt) to authorize Chair to send letter of support to MHC for 38th annual preservation award 2016, seconded (Lovett), and voted 5-0.

B. 2017 Community Preservation Act Proposals

i. CPAC Meeting Review

AHC liaison to CPAC Laura Lovett reported that CPAC has received grant requests totaling more than funds available. Historic preservation requests made strong cases to CPAC on February 2, 2016.

ii. CPAC Requests & Feb. 23 Public Hearing Prep
Members of AHC requested to attend.

- a) Thompson memorial issues
The CPA Committee requested an opinion from Town Counsel about the eligibility of the Thompson memorial monument for CPA funding. Jonathan Tucker provided an outline of the opinion for CPAC's use, reflecting Counsel's opinion that the Thompson memorial qualifies as a "rehabilitation" project allowed under CPA provisions.

Memorial sign design

The goal is to make the marker an interpretive sign with broader purpose than only memorializing Charles Thompson. Wording will be refined to achieve this goal.

- b) Due Diligence funding
On behalf of AHC, Jonathan Tucker forwarded a request for \$10,000 in CPA funds, accompanied by historical information about previous use of funds and list of items coming up in town development issues.

iii. Other CPA Issues

Little Red Schoolhouse – Town Counsel's opinion is that photo-documentation of the schoolhouse is not eligible for CPA funding. Jonathan Tucker reported that Amherst College will complete documentation of the structure and will remove and save unique fixtures for use at Woodside Daycare.

C. Dickinson Museum AAB Variance Request

Jane Wald reported the outcome of the Emily Dickinson Museum's request to the Massachusetts Access Advisory Board for accessibility variances. MAAB granted variance requests for the Dickinson Homestead, with conditions to provide signage and limit use of the second floor to current programs. MAAB denied the request for a variance to accessible handrails on The Evergreens stair, and did not take action on the request for a variance to the elevator requirement. The Dickinson Museum will request a letter of support from AHC for an appeal to MAAB concerning the accessible handrail.

D. Demolition Applications – 296 North Pleasant shed

Joel Greenbaum requested approval of demolition. Commission members inquired about whether the structure is included in the outbuilding survey conducted by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

The date Monday, March 14, was set as a date for a demolition delay hearing, contingent on Jonathan Tucker's research about the structure's inventory status and whether it is within the proposed Lincoln-McClellan local historic district. Commission members will vote electronically about whether to hold a hearing in advance of the selected date.

4. Old Business

- A. Projects – 12 Hallock/236 North Pleasant – Preservation Options Update
Jonathan Tucker has contacted owners Roberts and Shumway. Consultant Greg

Farmer will provide an estimate for forensic analysis to confirm age of building materials and to see what pieces of properties could be saved and moved.

B. CPA Plan Historic Preservation Summary – Final Review

The purpose of the summary is to provide guidance to CPAC on historic preservation priorities. Commission members expressed concern that there is little reference to preservation of historic resources in the draft and that there are too many priorities that are currently unrealistic. Agreed that Jonathan Tucker will re-draft the summary using the Town Preservation Plan and consolidating priorities into larger categories.

C. Amherst Preservation Plan – Preservation Actions Update

This document is an annotated summary of the Town Preservation Plan indicating progress to date on each recommended action. New items include recognition of Native American and immigrant communities in the history of the Town. Commission members recommended alterations that would acknowledge responsibilities shared with or referred to other Town committees or community organizations.

D. Other Items Not Anticipated

Writers Walk: design work needs to be completed. Jonathan Tucker will discuss with Nate Malloy how to retrieve and complete designs. Steve Bloom has edited the text for the Norton Juster sign.

5. Next Meeting

March 14, 2016, 7 pm.

6. Adjournment

8:40 pm