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December 26, 2007

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON THE
ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT NAME: UMASS Amherst Recreation Building
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Amherst
PROJECT WATERSHED: Connecticut River
EEA NUMBER: 14135
PROJECT PROPONENT: University of Massachusetts Building Authority
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: November 26, 2007

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.06 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that this project **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Project Description

As outlined in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the project consists of the construction of a 120,000 square foot (sf) recreation center on a site located within the University of Massachusetts (UMASS) Amherst campus, on Commonwealth Avenue across from the Mullens Center and adjacent to the Grinnell Arena and Dickinson Hall. The Proponent may expand the recreation center to 200,000 sf in a future phase.

The project site is currently occupied by five buildings and associated paved parking and circulation. Three of the existing buildings are proposed to be removed in order to accommodate the recreation center. One of the three buildings is listed in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth as AMH.110. This building, known as the Cow Barn, was built in 1912 and is part of the Grinnell Arena Complex, which is also referred to as the Brooks Barn Complex. The Grinnell Complex includes additional buildings which are also

listed in the Inventory, including the Grinnell Arena, a Queen Anne-style Horse Barn, and the Farm Manager's (Blaisdell) House. The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has determined that the Grinnell Complex meets the criteria of eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Jurisdiction

The project is subject to environmental review pursuant to Section 11.03(10)(b)(1) of the MEPA regulations because it will result in the demolition of a historic structure listed in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. The project will require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Activities Permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and a Memorandum of Agreement with the MHC. The project is being funded with revenue generated by student fees, however the Proponent is a state agency and therefore MEPA jurisdiction over the project is broad and extends to all aspects of the project with the potential to cause damage to the environment.

Historic Resources

The Grinnell Arena Complex includes the Cow Barn (AMH.11), and two horse barns (AMH.109 and AMH.111). The Complex also included two buildings known as the milker's bungalow and the calf barn which have recently been demolished. According to MHC, the three inventoried historic properties together with the milker's bungalow and calf barn are important representations of varied agricultural architecture and for their associations with the growth and history of the Massachusetts Agricultural College. These buildings, along with other Agricultural College Buildings on the campus are considered by MHC to meet the criteria of eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district.

The Proponent filed a Project Notification Form (PNF) with MHC in October 2007. In an October 26, 2007 response MHC made the determination that the project will have an adverse effect (950 CMR 71.05(a)) on the historic Cow Barn through its demolition. MHC has also determined that the current condition of the Cow Barn precludes a feasible and prudent rehabilitation for adaptive reuse. Because MHC has issued a determination of adverse effect, the Proponent must enter into formal consultation as required under 950 CMR 71. In its response to the Proponent's PNF, MHC directed the Proponent to explore alternatives that would avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse effect of the demolition of the historic barn as part of the consultation process.

In the ENF and in subsequent materials provided to the MEPA office, the Proponent has provided a summary of the alternatives analysis that was undertaken during the planning process for the recreation center. The Proponent considered seven alternative campus locations for the project and also considered splitting program uses between two or more structures and two or more sites. Alternative sites were evaluated against five factors. The ENF included a discussion of the various alternatives and the Proponent's reasons for rejecting the other sites.

The Proponent states that the project site was selected as the preferred location for the new recreation center because it will:

- Reinforce the physical links within the current campus environment;
- Create visual links between the recreation center and the western athletic fields;
- Enhance the aesthetics of a primary campus entry point which has been neglected and relegated to a service and maintenance activity use;
- Create a new student life “destination place” on the campus and a separate identity for the Recreation Department;
- Allow for the utilization of existing pedestrian routes; and,
- Minimize disruption to or loss of existing campus facilities.

The Proponent must submit this additional information regarding alternatives and information on proposed mitigation to MHC for review and comment. MHC will then hold a consultation meeting with the Proponent and interested parties to facilitate the exploration of alternatives that would minimize or mitigate the effect of the project.

Various mitigation measures have been proposed by the Proponent, the MHC and interested parties. The Proponent has stated that mitigation opportunities to minimize the loss of the Cow Barn may include: photographic and graphic documentation of the Cow Barn, an exhibit on the history of the Cow Barn, and documentation of the history of the buildings and landscape that comprised the Massachusetts Agricultural College. Preserve UMASS has recommended that the Blaisdell House and the Queen Anne-style Horse Barn be moved to the UMASS Equestrian and Small Farm Animal Facility at Hadley Farm west of Route 116. While this recommendation will likely terminate these buildings’ eligibility for National Register eligibility, this proposal is supported by numerous parties. The Amherst Historical Commission has proposed preserving the silos that are part of the Cow Barn. I expect that MHC will evaluate each of the above proposals during the consultation process to determine appropriate mitigation for the demolition of the Cow Barn, the milker’s bungalow and the calf barn. At a minimum, the Proponent must locate historic photographs and architectural record drawings of each of the historic buildings in the Grinnell Arena Complex in order to create an archival record of their architecture, design and function.

As recommended by MHC, the Proponent should also undertake a survey of the UMASS Amherst campus to assess structures of historic and/or architectural importance to establish a basis for future adherence to state regulations and to identify buildings that would meet the criteria of eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Proponent should consult MHC’s comment letter on the ENF for guidance in this process.

Conclusion

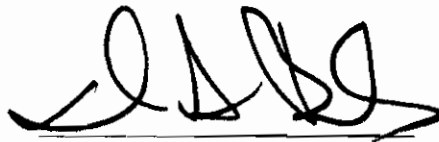
I have received numerous thoughtful and detailed comment letters on this project that also speak to the importance of other historical resources on the UMASS Amherst campus. I strongly encourage the University of Massachusetts Building Authority and UMASS Amherst to work cooperatively with MHC and interested parties to take a comprehensive survey of

structures of historic and/or architectural importance on the campus. Consultation with MHC should be a first step during the planning process for future projects and I expect that the Proponent and the University will ensure that all future projects comply with regulations pertaining to historic and archaeological resources.

The proposed project, as described in the ENF, requires no further review under MEPA. I am satisfied that the details of mitigation can be adequately resolved during the MHC consultation process. The Proponent should note comments from the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) regarding the provision of water and wastewater services to the project. All construction and demolition activity at the site must conform to MassDEP Air Pollution Control and Solid Waste regulations.

December 26, 2007

Date



Ian A. Bowles

Comments Received:

12/12/2007	Preserve UMASS
12/13/2007	Judy Markland
12/13/2007	Jane Wrisley
12/14/2007	Rosemary Battles Foy
12/14/2007	University of Massachusetts Building Authority
12/14/2007	National Trust for Historic Preservation, Northeast Office
12/17/2007	James Wald, Amherst Historical Commission
12/17/2007	Marie Phillips
12/17/2007	Joseph S. Larson/Lyle Denit
12/17/2007	Marcia Starkey, Tower Hill Consultants
12/17/2007	Gerrit Stover
12/17/2007	L.A. Pomeroy
12/17/2007	Lyle Denit, Amherst Historical Commission
12/17/2007	Mitchell Mulholland, Director, UMASS Archaeological Services
12/18/2007	Massachusetts Historical Commission

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