1. Amesbury Planning Board Meeting Minutes

2. In Person Meeting – June 22, 2026, at 7:00 PM

3. Chairman Pascal Rettig called the June 22, 2026, Planning Board meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
4. *To submit a public comment ahead of time email Becky Frey at freyr@amesburyma.gov. To speak live at the meeting fill out a public comment form and turn it into Becky Frey. There will be a public comment portion of each public hearing discussed tonight.*

5. *The Chairman notes that tonight's Planning Board meeting is being recorded by Amesbury Public Access Television; this legal step has been taken but does not act as the official record. The written meeting minutes by the Recording Secretary is the official record.*

6. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call -
7. Keith Ratner – YES
8. Joel Nice – YES
9. Tracey Chalifour – YES
10. Tom Salemi – YES
11. Eric Girard - YES
12. David Frick – YES
13. Pascal Rettig – YES

14. Also: Nipun Jain (Planning Director) and Becky Frey (Community Development Coordinator)

15. **Minutes 3-23-26**
16. These minutes were tabled to a future meeting.

17. **ANR – 8 Noel St.**
18. Olympia Bowker spoke on behalf of Boston Gas Company for 8 Noel St. Jennifer Platt was at the last meeting. There was a question raised about whether or not the paper street would qualify for the frontage to meet the ANR requirements. DPW Director Joe Buckley confirmed the frontage was met without the paper street, so the plan complies.
19. David Frick motioned to approve the ANR for 8 Noel St. Seconded by Tom Salemi.
20. Nipun Jain clarified that there was a note on the plan that should be made part of the record. They are creating a non-buildable lot.
21. David Frick amended the motioned to approve the ANR application for 8 Noel St. and note the lot created would be a non-buildable. Seconded by Tom Salemi.
22. The motion passed 6-0-1. Tracey Chalifour abstained.

23. **Bill 2026-106**
24. Pascal Rettig questioned if anyone was presenting for these Bills.

25. Becky Frey commented that she discussed the Bills with DPW Director Joe Buckley who could not attend the meeting. Bill 2026-106 was for a drainage access easement. This is an area DPW maintains already. It was discovered during a real estate transaction that the access easement was never properly recorded. This Bill is to correct that.
26. David Frick motioned to send Bill 2026-106 back to City Council with a positive recommendation. Seconded by Keith Ratner. The motion passed unanimously.

27. **Bill 2026-107**
28. Becky Frey commented that Bill 2026-107 was an easement needed for the utility company to maintain infrastructure.
29. David Frick motioned to send Bill 2026-107 back to City Council with positive recommendation. Seconded by Keith Ratner. The motion passed unanimously.

30. **Continued Hearings – 30 Lake Attitash Road**
31. Keith Ratner motioned to continue 30 Lake Attitash Road to the July 13, 2026, Planning Board Meeting. Seconded by Tom Salemi. The motion passed by a 6-0-1 vote. Eric Girard abstained.

32. **Continued Hearings – 84 Congress Street**
33. Payson Cahill commented that he had a few items that needed to be addressed from the last meeting. One of them was updating the plot plan to show the stairs to scale. He added a note to the plan to show that the vegetation screen will align with recommendations brought forward from the Planning Board. The certified plot plan from the surveyor shows the stairwell is 6.7 feet off the property line.
34. Pascal Rettig clarified that the proposed vegetated buffer wasn't 12.5 feet long, it will be whatever is proposed by the Board and staff. Payson Cahill confirmed that was correct. It will be from the stairs to the window. The parking on the site is shown in the photos.
35. Nipun Jain commented that that applicant has adequately updated the site plan to show the proper scale. They will need dimensions verified by the Inspection's Office to make sure it is still within the allowed dimensions. The photos clearly demonstrated that the parking fits. If the Board votes to approve this, then they should make sure to include a condition in the decision that the driveway access does not block the garage ever. They presented the landscape question to the in-house Landscape Architect, Howard Snyder. He offered suggestions based on site conditions and limited space. He suggested a mixture of variety of evergreen trees to ensure survival rates. They don't grow as fast as deciduous trees so he also suggested planting bushes but that will depend on onsite conditions. They did not provide details on the plantings ahead of time. Staff recommends that if the Board approves this application, then they should add a condition that the final landscape and buffer planting would be approved by OCED prior to installation.
36. Joel Nice questioned if they would be arborvitaes to make a fence like screen. Nipun Jain commented that they do not believe that's the best solution because it can be too rigid. They are recommending a combination of items for scale and variety. They already have a natural screening so it will compliment what is already there.
37. Pascal Rettig opened public comment.

38. Karen Weber of 86 Congress Street commented that her primary concern is the landscape design and she would like another stage of approval on that. Ms. Weber disagreed with the evergreen selection because there are existing evergreens that have to come down. If Mr. Snyder came out and looked at the property he would see it's not easy to landscape. Ms. Weber did not disagree with the project but wanted more detail on the plantings. The property has a pinch point, and they should measure it out to see what it looks like.
39. Nipun Jain commented that the fence goes quite a way up so that is a constraint with the landscaping. It goes past the enclosed porch. Any vegetated planting would happen on the applicant's property. They cannot block access to the stairs.
40. Tom Salemi questioned if staff was comfortable with having the final say on the vegetation. Nipun Jain confirmed he was. It is a minor issue, and the applicant is willing to work with Howard Snyder on the plan. If they cannot agree, then it will come back to the Board.
41. Keith Ratner motioned to approve the site plan and special permit applications for 84 Congress with the following two conditions:
    1. Garage and driveway access cannot be blocked by parked cars.
    2. The final landscape plan is approved by OCED.
42. Seconded by Joel Nice. The motion passed by a 6-0-1 vote. Eric Girard abstained.
43. Keith Ratner motioned to close the public hearing for 84 Congress Street. Seconded by Joel Nice. The motion passed by a 6-0-1 vote. Eric Girard abstained.

44. **Continued Hearings – 29 Water Street**
45. Nipun Jain commented that the applicant has provided the information requested for this project for the Wetlands and Flood Plain and Historic Preservation Special Permits as well as the site plan. They have met all the requirements for the Historical Commission. The only outstanding item was the discussion about the affordable unit required with the Historic Preservation Special Permit. The Board asked staff to come back with payment in lieu recommendation. Staff formulated a recommendation based on the sale price of the units. Based on that assessment they recommend that the payment be 4% of the average sale price of the units in the project. They don't know what the sale price would be. At the time of sales, the number would be verified.
46. Joel Nice questioned how many units were in the project and what's the anticipated average sale price. Nipun Jain responded that there are 6 units in the project. There are 4 united on the second floor and 2 on the third floor. They could sell for approximately 900K to 1 million on the third floor and 750K for the units on the second floor. The 4% average could result in a payment around $96,000.
47. Tom Salemi clarified that this number would be determined after all the units have been sold. Nipun Jain commented that there would be a covenant in place to establish the number owed and it would be determined by the purchase and sales.
48. Tracey Chalifour commented that there has been a formula that has been in development. This should be consistent with that formula. What happens if a developer decides to sell well below market value to a family member or something like that. That's a possibility that could change the whole equation.
49. David Frick commented that they should get 2-3 Planning Board members to meet with staff to talk through this at a more global level.

50. Pascal Rettig commented that it's complicated and however it's approved they need to make sure it's documented in writing. Nipun Jain commented that the developer needs to be able to support the decision of the Board as well and come back and address comments made here.
51. Mike Sanchez commented the number was initially a sticker shock. They would be very happy if the predicted comps are correct. They think the top floor would sell for 800-900K and the second for 700-800K. If it's a percentage, then that makes sense. As far as the floor goes, they could put a condition in there to prevent disrupting the formula. Pascal Rettig commented that they could make it based on the assessed value.
52. Nipun Jain commented that these were excellent points of consideration and they are asking the Board to let staff talk to the developer in more detail and come back with a more reasonable option. Pascal Rettig commented that they were most likely looking at 4%. Nipun Jain confirmed that was correct. They will work to make sure it's realistic. Mike Sanchez commented that he agreed to that. Nipun Jain commented that the goal for the next meeting is they will have a working draft and wanted to address this major aspect of the project.
53. Pascal Rettig questioned if the Board had any objections to the number. Keith Ratner commented it made sense. David Frick commented that this did need more discussion around it. He wanted to make sure they were not burdening a project with a percent. It may make sense to make it a percent between the affordable and market rate.
54. Mike Sanchez noted then it becomes less consistent. If there is an established percentage, then developers can put it in the pro forma at the beginning and understand the payment in lieu ramifications. They should do a flat percentage and keep it simple.
55. Nipun Jain agreed it was important to keep it simple and clarified this would only apply to local affordable units. It would not apply to state statutes like a 40R or 40B development.
56. Keith Ratner noted they had done some payment in lieu options in the past and questioned what the percents were for those. Nipun Jain responded that they did look at that and the numbers fell into the range of 3.5 -4.5%. The reason why the zoning change has not been filed yet is because they are still working some parts out.
57. Joel Nice questioned what the challenges were for just building the affordable unit. Nipun Jain responded that unit needs to be similar to the other units. In this project they are considering where it is located and the mechanics and finishes they need to put in. There are circumstances where it is not economically viable to build it out.
58. Joel Nice commented that one unit would affect one family vs a payment in lieu could impact the larger community. Nipun Jain agreed. They can collectively use the funds to help provide better options. It will serve a purpose.
59. Tracey Chalifour agreed with David Frick that there should be more discussion on the overall formula. They could make it part of a meeting in the administrative portion of the agenda. Pascal Rettig agreed. They did not need to hold this project up, but the Board could have a larger discussion on the topic in general.
60. David Frick commented that the Board received a memo written by Sam Colombo at Millennium Engineering regarding the flood plain compliance and he was comfortable with that memo. Pascal Rettig agreed the memo justified what they were asking for.

61. Joel Nice questioned if there was a decision on the transformer location. Mike Sanchez responded not yet.
62. Keith Ratner motioned to continue the application for 29 Water Street to July 13, 2026 and ask staff for a final draft decision. Seconded by David Frick. The motion passed by a 6-0-1 vote. Eric Girard abstained.

63. **Continued Hearings – 9 and 9 RR Oakland Street**
64. Jeff Roelofs commented that their last meeting was in April. The goal is to get through any substantive questions the Board may have. The focus of this meeting will be to fill out any additional items needed for the decision for a final vote on Jully 13th. On June 2nd and 3rd they submitted a revised architecture set showing that they pulled back the building to improve sightlines. The affordable housing units have been proposed and there is a template for the local initiative program regulatory agreement. They updated the project narrative to correlate those details. They have a waiver request list and provided an overview of applicable requirements and justification for each of those. The Planning Board has the authority to waive the normal 15% affordable housing requirement down to 10%. As noted in the original application they proposed 10%. That has been discussed since the beginning and that request was driven by the financial challenge of the historic component. The second waiver request is the parking requirement. We believe we are providing a sufficient number of parking spaces. They submitted a zoning compliance statement on June 3rd. It outlines the criteria that they needed to provide and why they have satisfied those requirements. On June 17th they submitted the revised preservation restriction. The draft is almost finalized with the Historical Commission. That can be a condition of approval that it needs to be finalized before building permit. The project document list was submitted to help in drafting the decision.
65. Stefano Basso, architect, reviewed affordable unit details. They labeled each affordable unit with size and bedroom and broke them down by type. 10% of each type of unit will be affordable. The goal is to disperse them equally across the building. One of the live work units will be affordable.
66. Bob Bollinger spoke to the traffic. There are a couple minor items they wanted to address. As the Board has heard this evening the original intention was there would be sufficient parking. The peer reviewer, VHB, asked them to supplement that with more data. After more review VHB came to same conclusion. The parking provided meets the peak parking demand onsite. The building was pulled back for the sight distance for the driveway on Chestnut Street. They meet the standard.
67. Joel Nice commented that he was all for less parking overall, but questioned if they had been in contact with 34 Water St. about any overflow parking issues. Jeff Roelofs responded that they have not had any discussions because they do not project the need to make a deal with them for overflow. If there is a need for additional parking, then those discussions should happen at that time.
68. Tracey Chalifour commented that she was looking at the November 3rd memo from the Chief of Police where he noted he was concerned with the parking count. Jeff Roelofs commented that memo was issued in November before the peer review. Tracey Chalifour commented that it would be good to see if the Chief has a new opinion based on the VHB

study. Jeff Roelofs commented that the Green and Peterson reports and the VHB responses both sign off on the parking. The hope is that he will agree with that. Nipun Jain commented that they would make sure police were aware of the findings and recommendations.

69. Steve Sawyer from Millenium Engineering commented that last month he submitted updated materials and response to comments. To date they have not received comments back from Stantec. Nipun Jain commented that they have discussed the remaining comments and basically all of them have been resolved or would require sign off from DPW which will involve sign off in the construction phase. They will not spend applicant money to get peer review to say yes they have complied. Steve Sawyer commented that they will coordinate with DPW on utility connections and sewer line. There are currently no easements for that sewer. Any of the maintenance would fall upon the owner of the project. The city would not be responsible for that.
70. Pascal Rettig commented that the Board should review the list of waivers requested and see if there are any that they would like to discuss further. Joel Nice commented on the affordable units going from 15% to 10%. Looking at this project with the baseline building they would not get to 12 units doing 15%. The HSP allows for the expanded footprint, so they are getting more units total. They are still getting 10% and more units. He did not see it as a loss. Tom Salemi agreed.
71. Pascal Rettig commented that the parking is the other waiver. Tom Salemi commented that he was moving toward being more comfortable with it. The area will need to be managed and it will cost the city money to manage it. Tom Salemi requested the Board hear from the Chief of Police that they will manage it.
72. Keith Ratner commented there were waivers about reducing some spaces a foot, but they will still fit compact cars. Tracey Chalifour questioned if they voted on each waiver individually or together as a list. Pascal Rettig commented that they have done it both ways. Typically, unless there's a specific concern, they don't go through each individual waiver. It is better to raise any significant issues now.
73. Nipun Jain reminded the Board that the purpose of the HSP is to preserve existing structures in an organic environment. Some of those waivers for open space setbacks cannot be met and have the buildings be preserved in a manner the city would like them to be. This proposal is a package. The Board can't start pulling out pieces and have the project be successful. Most of the dimensional related waivers were part of the preapplication and formal application and revisions. The Historical Commission has viewed this as a built project. If the Board has concerns, then now is the time to speak. Parking is the second major bucket. It has also been discussed and plays a role in the building envelope and what the finishes are.
74. Nipun Jain requested that the Board give any general outstanding concerns or comments now because they would like to wrap this up at the next meeting.
75. David Frick commented that he was on board. Joel Nice agreed it looked good. Tom Salemi commented that he loved the product but would like to know the city is aware of the parking for this project. Pascal Rettig noted they already formally asked staff for a decision. Nipun Jain confirmed they were working on the draft.
76. Keith Ranter noted he was excited for the project. Tracey Chalifour had no concerns.

77. Keith Ratner motioned to continue the application for 9 and 9RR Oakland St. to the July 13, 2026 Planning Board meeting and look for a final draft of the decision. Seconded by Tom Salemi. The motion passed by a 6-0-1 vote. Eric Girard abstained.

78. **New Hearings – 12 Oak Street**
79. Pascal Rettig commented the Board would take a 3 minute break.
80. Nipun Jain read the legal notice into the record.
81. Jim Fritz of 12 Oak Street was present for the application. Pascal Rettig commented that the plan as outlined is to build an ADU and questioned if they had staff comments on the submission.
82. Nipun Jain commented this will need to go before the DRC and will go to TRC on July 9th so they will have comments from them at a future meeting.
83. Pascal Rettig commented that one of the issues is that the plan submitted is not an engineered site plan. Is that a requirement? Nipun Jain confirmed that was a requirement. Pascal Rettig commented that the survey plan was fine but the by hand drawing for the ADU was not. They need a stamped site plan showing the proposed ADU in the site and the proposed parking. That is the main thing besides the structure which will be looked at by the Design Review Committee.
84. Pascal Rettig commented that they will need to grant a waiver on the setbacks, so it would be good to see what it looks like in the context of the property. They need to ensure it will not overburden the property.
85. Pascal Rettgi agreed this should go in front of DRC and TRC and then come back to the Board.
86. Nipun Jain commented that it would be good to clarify the height of the building as it relates to grades of the site and the total height.
87. Joel Nice commented that the double roof line looked a little awkward with the 2 different pitches. Jim Fritz responded that he had talked to staff, and they indicated they wanted the look. Nipun Jain commented that these plans have not been reviewed internally in detail. They will resolve it.
88. Pascal public comment for 12 oak street.
89. Tyler Chasin of 15 Oak Street commented that he was overall in favor of the proposal. The existing building is very close to the lot line and if they have a chance to improve the setback by moving it over that would be great. The new structure will benefit the overall neighborhood. He was not opposed to this property having an ADU.
90. Kate Lallas of 12 Oak St. questioned if they would be involved in the design discussion. Pascal Rettig confirmed they would.
91. Tom Salemi motioned to continue the application for 12 Oak St. to the July 13, 2026 Planning Board Meeting. Seconded by Tracey Chalifour. The motion passed unanimously.

92. **Administrative – Invoices**
93. David Frick motioned to approve invoices listed below. Seconded by Tracey Chalifour.
    1. A Stantec invoice for 29 Lake Attitash Road in the amount of $140.25.
    2. A Stantec invoice for 29 Lake Attitash Road in the amount of $140.25.
    3. A Stantec invoice for Bailey's Pond in the amount of $1,361.25.

94. The motion passed unanimously.

95. **Adjournment**
96. Keith Retner motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 pm. Seconded by Tom Salemi. The motion passed unanimously.