REVISED
8:39 am, Jun 11, 2026
RECEIVED
By City Clerk at 8:03 am, Oct 02, 2025

1. Amesbury Planning Board Meeting Minutes

2. In Person Meeting – July 14, 2025, at 7:03 PM

3. Chairman Pascal Rettig called the July 14, 2025, Planning Board meeting to order at 7:03 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. Michael Jewell – YES
10. Tracey Chalifour – YES
11. Tom Salemi - YES
12. David Frick – YES
13. Pascal Rettig – YES

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

15. **ANR – 201 Elm St.**
16. Nipun Jain commented that this ANR is a result of Historic Special Permit that was recently approved for this project with 3 individual structures. The proposal meets the requirements because the special permit granted lot area and side setback waivers. No other relief is required by the Board.
17. Keith Ratner motioned to approve the ANR for 201 Elm St. Seconded by Joel Nice.
18. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
19. Keith Ratner – YES
20. Joel Nice – YES
21. Michael Jewell – YES
22. Tracey Chalifour – YES
23. Tom Salemi - YES
24. David Frick – YES
25. Pascal Rettig – YES
26. Motion passed by 7-0 vote.

27. **City Council Referral – Bill 2025-053**

28. Pascal Rettig commented that last time the Board had requested more information from the DPW. They sent back answers to most of what the Board requested. This is a somewhat special case. The DPW receives petitions for this all the time and turn down most of them. This is one they were already preparing to do and have already bought supplies for. The easement was the only hold up.
29. Tracey Chalifour questioned why they bought materials before having all of the procedural steps complete. Pascal Rettig responded that it sounded like they had missed the easement requirement.
30. Nipun Jain commented that the Planning Board was not being asked to approve or deny this request. They are tasked with sending a recommendation to City Council. That's where the Board's responsibility ends.
31. Pascal Rettig commented that the most important question the Board asked was does it set a precedent. DPW responded that it does not and noted that they turn down most requests. The actual details of the project are not in front of the Board as far as design and installation. Nipun Jain commented that the discussion around this issue started late last summer/early fall. The city determined they had responsibility and after looking at all avenues this was the most viable and cost-effective decision.
32. David Frick motioned to send Bill 2025-053 to City Council with a positive recommendation. Seconded by Joel Nice.
33. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
34. Keith Ratner – YES
35. Joel Nice – YES
36. Michael Jewell – YES
37. Tracey Chalifour – YES
38. Tom Salemi - YES
39. David Frick – YES
40. Pascal Rettig – YES
41. Motion passed by a 7-0 vote.

42. **Preapplication – 1-9 Oakland St.**
43. Pascal Rettig commented that the applicant asked to continue to the July 28, 2025, meeting. Nipun Jain provided a quick update. As a result of this preapplication, the applicant has gone to the Historical Commission and presented the basis of the application. They received a somewhat favorable reaction, but there is more design detail to be done. Based on the feedback they received from all of the Boards, they are looking at how much more information they need to collect. They may come to the next meeting or decide to file. Pascal Rettig commented that they did not need to motion to continue.
44. Keith Ratner questioned what a purple roof was. Nipun Jain responded it was a combination of vegetation and some hardscape.
45. Joel Nice added that it sounded like a gray water system. Nipun Jain noted that it goes towards a LEED certification associated with architecture drawings. It goes toward relief with the building code.

46. **Continued Public Hearings – 26 Friend St.**

47. David Frick recused himself from the application.
48. Nipun Jain commented that he would quickly summarize the Special Permit and Site Plan Decision for 26 Friend St. The existing building will be converted to a first-floor commercial space with 3 residential units above it. The site is tight and there is not a lot of site work involved. Most of the conditions are fairly simple. The bulk of decisions deals with the 3 edges of the parcel: the front sidewalk, side parklet, and back parking access. It is important for the Board, the public, and the developer to be on clear on how the edges interact. There are key conditions that relate to the public infrastructure. The decision includes findings based on the application material. There is a waiver associated with parking which has been discussed given the location across from the parking lot. They are going to be small units and each will have at least one parking spot on site. That is adequate to meet the needs of the project. There are conditions that relate to the infrastructure associated with utilities and sidewalk/driveway repairs. Page 7 includes two conditions that he wanted to highlight. The first is the legal documents for the storm water management, snow removal, and waste management. They ensure the parcel will be maintained and taken care of by the residents. The plans propose to contain all runoff on the site. The second condition is that the applicant is responsible for fixing any damage to the walkways or lighting. Page 8 condition eight talks about preconstruction access easements. They don't need to grant easements because it is a temporary access. There is already a 6-foot-wide easement on the parklet side. They will most likely will require a license from the city in the back to create an area for construction loading and/or a dumpster. They will also need a temporary license for staging. Page 9 includes conditions around as built plans and repairs. It also allows the city to confirm what has been approved has been built on site. The improvements around the building envelop also ensure any deviations approved by the Board. The most important is the covenant which requires the developer to post an erosion control bond and performance bond. This ensures the architecture plans have been approved and the park is done to the satisfaction of the city. It also ensures that the public infrastructure is done to the satisfaction of city. The covenant will stay in place until the applicant has completed their obligations. Prior to the issuance of an occupancy permit, they need to provide a certification from the project architect that stated it was designed and built as per the approved plans and the as built will show all that the infrastructure built was completed to the satisfaction of the city. The public park is addressed on page 6 condition 3. It relates to the final plan that has been presented with a concept plan that shows the general improvements. Staff has worked with the applicant to further develop the plan. The applicant has expressed a willingness to do the phase 1 portion abutting the building. The six-foot passageway is the easement that runs with the property that's where walkway will be formalized. It will lead up from Friend Street to the side entrance of the building. The point of that condition is that OCED will work with the developer to make sure it is part of the granting of the license associated with the temporary use of public spaces. The improvements on the plan can be further developed.
49. Joel Nice clarified that phase one would be performed by the project owner and phase 2 would be at the expense of the city. Nipun Jain confirmed that was correct. There is a line item in the state budget to grant money for these kind of spaces. If the city is not granted that not for whatever reason, then they could apply for funding through CPA. The goal is to

reengage the park to create walkable connectivity. VHB did an exercise for the city to see what is missing in the park and lack of visibility and purpose were two of the biggest reasons. Staff envisions that this area could be used for outdoor dining with string lights. The goal is to invite people to come through.

50. Tracey Chalifour commented that the exhibit is not in the folder. Nipun Jain commented that they have not developed it further. They will continue to further develop it. There is more detail to come, but this condition captures the intent. Pascal Rettig clarified that phase one was marked by the magenta line. Nipun Jain confirmed that was correct. It is about half of the park.
51. Tracey Chalifour questioned what would happen if the grant doesn't come through. Nipun Jain responded that they could apply through the CPA. However, even if phase 2 does not happen, this is still an improvement from what is there now. Hopefully it will reengage 14 Friend St. and 51 Main St. Hopefully this will energize the space.
52. Tom Salemi questioned who would be responsible for the maintenance. Nipun Jain responded that it was a public park. Hopefully it will be less labor intensive. It will be largely paved with brick pavers and there will be evergreens and ground cover. There will be more permanent hardscape and low maintenance landscaping. The idea is to select materials and make it low maintenance.
53. Tom Salemi questioned if there would be rear access. Nipun Jain confirmed the residents can come out and use that as a pedestrian walkway.
54. Nipun Jain commented that prior to the issuance of a building permit the applicant will need to submit documents to the planning office to confirm the plans have not changed. Prior to the issuance of an occupancy permit the project architect will need to certify there were no deviations.
55. Michael Jewell questioned if there would be lighting for the back parking. Nipun Jain responded that they have proposed some wall mounted motion sensor lighting.
56. Keith Ratner motioned to approve the application for the site plan and special permit application for 26 Friend St based on the draft decision. Seconded by Michael Jewell.
57. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
58. Keith Ratner – YES
59. Joel Nice – YES
60. Michael Jewell – YES
61. Tracey Chalifour – Abstain
62. Tom Salemi - YES
63. David Frick – Recused
64. Pascal Rettig – YES
65. Motion passed by 5-0-1 vote

66. Tracey Chalifour motioned to close the public hearing for the site plan and special permit application for 26 Friend St. Seconded by Tom Salemi.
67. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
68. Keith Ratner – YES
69. Joel Nice – YES
70. Michael Jewell – YES

71. Tracey Chalifour – YES
72. Tom Salemi - YES
73. David Frick – Recused
74. Pascal Rettig – YES
75. Motion passed by 6-0 vote

76. **New Public Hearings – Planning Board Rules and Regulations**
77. Nipun Jain read the legal notice into the record.
78. David Frick motioned to approve rules and regulations as presented in the June 24, 2025, draft. Seconded by Michael Jewell.
79. Tom Salemi commented that the vice chair section is inconsistent to what they have done to appoint a chair in the absence of the chair and vice chair. Pascal Rettig commented those were legacy rules. They did not change that piece.
80. Nipun Jain commented that the Board can discuss future amendments after they accept the rules and regulations as they find them in the future. Any future amendments will not require a public hearing; they can be done administratively. The Board can look at this on a quarterly basis for the next year and make updates.
81. Tom Salemi questioned if the meeting schedule section should specify the location is the auditorium or should it just say City Hall. The last item is the site visits section. It notes they are not open to the public. Tom Salemi questioned if that was a definite rule or if they would be open to the public sometimes. Pascal Rettig responded that site visits would have a quorum of members, and in those situations they have to be careful not to have discussion on the project.
82. Nipun Jain added that there is a liability issue as well. They cannot bring the public on private land without authorization of the property owner and there also should not be any discussion. A site visit is just to allow the adjudicating body to see the site. Pascal Rettig commented that it does not prohibit the developer from inviting them on. Tom salemi questioned if the special permit required 5 members to vote yes. Pascal Rettig responded that it requires 2/3 of the full body of the Board. They clarified that was 5 members.
83. Pascal Rettig clarified that the two suggested edits are to remove the word auditorium and update how the Board elects a chair in the absence of a chair and vice chair.
84. Tom Salemi noted that the Board should ratify the member filling in as chair.
85. Pascal confirmed they will remove auditorium. Tom Salemi commented that in the absence of both a chair and vice chair, the Board members will elect an acting chair. David Frick commented that it was nice that Pascal Rettig could call someone ahead of time and prep them. Pascal Rettig noted that he could still do that, and the Board would ratify it in the meeting. Nipun Jain noted that they could change it to include something like, provided that such appointment is ratified at the meeting.
86. Keith Ratner commented that the word recorded is missing from section 5.5.
87. Nipun Jain commented it would be good to file this draft and make amendments administratively.
88. Tracey Chalifour commented it would be better to get draft decisions on the Friday before at the latest to provide time to review. It may be good to include that. Nipun Jain

commented that would be up to the Board. These rules and regulations are more for the applicant than the Board. It would not make sense to tie the Board to strict guidelines. Tracey Chalifour commented she understood trying to minimize risk but is also trying to make sure volunteers have time to do their due diligence.

89. Tom Salemi commented staff timelines would be more something from the chair to implement.
90. David Frick commented that some older planning members were used to the decisions and what is standard vs. what specific conditions they need to pay attention to.
91. Tracey Chalifour commented that it should not be a rule, but it was a request.
92. Nipun Jain commented that the decisions have a lot of standard conditions. The specific conditions change in scale depending on the scope of the project. Tonight they reviewed the specific conditions in the 26 Friend St. decision.
93. Tom Salemi agreed that they should get more time to review the decisions.
94. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
95. Keith Ratner – YES
96. Joel Nice – YES
97. Michael Jewell – YES
98. Tracey Chalifour – YES
99. Tom Salemi - YES
100. David Frick – YES
101. Pascal Rettig – YES
102. Motion passed by 7-0 vote.

103. Keith Ratner motioned to close the public hearing for the Planning Board Rules and Regulations. Seconded by Tom Salemi. Unanimous.
104. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
105. Keith Ratner – YES
106. Joel Nice – YES
107. Michael Jewell – YES
108. Tracey Chalifour – YES
109. Tom Salemi - YES
110. David Frick – YES
111. Pascal Rettig – YES
112. Motion passed by 7-0 vote.

113.

114. Administrative – Master Plan Update

115. Nipun Jain commented that they were working with MVPC on map updates. They are hoping to wrap up the land use section in the next couple of weeks.

116. Pascal Rettig commented that they were still waiting on the action plan and noted he would reach out to ask about the status of that.

117. Administrative – 201 Elm St. Erosion Control Bond

118. Nipun Jain commented that the project will start soon and one perquisite is to set up a erosion control bond. They have calculated the amount based on the square footage of the limit of work. It is $7,125.
119. David Frick motioned to establish the erosion control bond for 201 Elm St. Seconded by Michael Jewell.
120. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
121. Keith Ratner – YES
122. Joel Nice – YES
123. Michael Jewell – YES
124. Tracey Chalifour – YES
125. Tom Salemi - ABSENT
126. David Frick – YES
127. Pascal Rettig – YES
128. Motion passed 7-0

129. Adjournment
130. Michael Jewell motioned to adjourn at 8:09 pm. Seconded by Tom Salemi.
131. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
132. Keith Ratner – YES
133. Joel Nice – YES
134. Michael Jewell – YES
135. Tracey Chalifour – YES
136. Tom Salemi - YES
137. David Frick – YES
138. Pascal Rettig – YES
139. Motion passed 7-0