



**Amesbury Technical Review Committee
November 5, 2025**

**City Hall Auditorium
62 Friend St.
9:30 am**

In Attendance: Chief Serino, Nipun Jain, Lauren Blatchford, Jim Wilson, Nick Cracknell, Howard Snyder, Lisa DeMeo, Amanda Armington, Joe Neipp, and Becky Frey

Absent: Joseph Buckley, Chief Bailey

Nick Cracknell called the meeting to order at 9:36 am.

Application Review:

1. 9 and 9 #RR Oakland St.

Nick Cracknell provided an overview of the purpose of the TRC. This Committee reviews the horizontal construction for a proposed project.

Attorney Jeff Roelofs represented the applicants and noted that owners Kurt and Ken Sweet, Architect Stefano Basso, and Engineer Steve Sawyer were there to present the project. They have submitted an application for a historic preservation special permit and site plan review. They know there will most likely be a follow up TRC meeting. The public hearing opens next week, and they are expecting the Planning Board to engage a peer review.

Stefano Basso commented that the proposed project is on the corner of Oakland St. and Chestnut St. There is an existing building there today with a steep grade drop off. The tower in the back shows 6 stories and this project will have 6 stories. Overall, the structure is not in bad shape, but it will need repair. There used to be more mill buildings in this district. There is a lot of good history with the neighborhood. They have been looking at the city's Master Plan and reading through the priorities and goals when designing the project. There are similar buildings in the neighborhood. The proposed project will have four stories on Oakland St. and then will be 6 stories as it goes down Chestnut St. toward Water Street. The proposed design will have a total of 124 units. There are 7 live work artist studios and 3 commercial tenant spaces. Those make up all of the frontage on the streets and parking lot. The commercial spaces are focused on the most prominent corners of the development. The design focused heavily on one-bedroom units to help mitigate parking needs. There will be some 2-bedroom units and studios as well. The project will have 154 parking spaces, which is just under 1.25 parking spaces per unit. It will include infrastructure and sidewalk improvements. They will work with the city to come up with a design that improves safety and access. The lowest level floor plan will have access to the parking garage. There will be three levels of the garage and 2 elevators at the middle points of the horseshoe of the building. The live work artist units will go up along Chestnut St. There will be a ramp down from Oakland Street to the parking garage. They are maintaining the footprint of the building



**Amesbury Technical Review Committee
November 5, 2025**

**City Hall Auditorium
62 Friend St.
9:30 am**

at the Oakland Street level. They will clean up the surface parking court there. They have located one curb cut that allows for best visibility and traffic flow.

Lisa DeMeo commented that it's not clear if there are 24 or 23 parking spaces in the parking court. Stefan Basso responded that they would clarify it on the plans.

Stefano Basso commented that they will include plantings and a small seating area. The street level entrance will have the resident lobby, some apartments, and common space. There will be a trash room with a compacter and trash chutes in the building. It will be wheeled out for pick up and they will include the circulation for the trash truck in that area. The upper floors will be a mix of one bedroom, two bedroom, and studio apartments. There are 3 fire stairs included in the design.

Lisa DeMeo questioned if they would be able to use the back courtyard space near the parking garage. Stefano Basso responded that the courtyard would just have access for maintenance clean up. It's a sliver of space and will not be programmed.

Stefano Basso commented that the top floor will have a 5-foot setback in most areas. The roof will have a small roof deck with an elevator and stair access. It will also have mounted HVAC and heat pumps. There is open space for future solar arrays. They plan to maintain the existing openings where possible. The commercial spaces will be signified with awnings and lighting. Stefano Basso showed exterior renderings. The doors for the live work units will go along Chestnut St. The addition is shown at the bottom of the hill. They are working to keep the mill building architectural style. One of the commercial spaces will be near the boiler room on Chestnut St. and will have an outdoor seating area. They may use some of the historic archive images for large format plaques in lieu of windows on that side of the building.

Steve Sawyyer commented that there was not a lot of open area on the site. The water utilities will connect on Oakland Street. There will be a 4-inch service for the water and 6-inch service for fire service. The sewer will connect on Chestnut Street.

Steve Sawyer commented that they submitted a storm water report. The open parking lot on Oakland St. sheet flows from the garage entry out through the entry on Oakland Street. They will capture that run off through a water quality unit then into 4 infiltration chambers. The upper right will have 6 large chambers for the roof. They will hold the runoff until it is infiltrated. There will not be any increase in rate to the city drainage system for all storm events. They will replace the sidewalk on Oakland St. and Chestnut St. with 5-foot-wide concrete sidewalk. They will have a typical drive apron for the



**Amesbury Technical Review Committee
November 5, 2025**

**City Hall Auditorium
62 Friend St.
9:30 am**

sidewalk. Typically, you don't see stairs in the sidewalk, but this may be a case where it's warranted. The Chestnut Street sidewalk is in poor shape. It cannot be ADA compliant because of the street grade. There will be the same apron entrance as Oakland St. as Chestnut as well. The garage is a 10% ramp. They provided a landscape detail plan in the set.

Lisa DeMeo commented that technically it is not Chestnut St. it's County Road. Chief Serino commented that he wholeheartedly disagreed with that. From an emergency standpoint it's all Chestnut Street. Nick Cracknell commented that we can all agree it is all commonly known as Chestnut St.

Lisa DeMeo noted that it was a parcel not a street, so that will need to be a longer conversation. The sidewalk shown on the Oakland St. side is steep. There should be some sort of gate at the bottom of the hill to prevent someone from trailing into the street. The sidewalk going down to Chestnut Street does not work how it is shown now. Steve Sawyer confirmed they were still working on that layout. Lisa DeMeo commented that they may need to look at easements for the entrances. The sidewalk may need to be wider to make it work. Steve Sawyer responded they were not opposed to widening the sidewalk. They will coordinate with Fire and DPW on that. It may be possible to drop the threshold to the doors to help with that.

Nick Cracknell commented that what they are trying to do at the Oakland St. corner is an unsafe condition. They need to keep the stairs. There are other conditions in Amesbury like that. It will be safer to have the stairs. Nick Cracknell agreed with Lisa DeMeo. The recessed entries and widening the sidewalk could be a good solution. Lisa DeMeo commented that if they were doing the stairs on Oakland St., then they should try to make it more gradual steps. Nick Cracknell commented that they had discussed at the last TRC meeting about potentially narrowing Oakland St. a little to accommodate the front of the project. There appears to be enough space to do that.

Lisa DeMeo questioned if one sewer service connection would be enough for the development. Steve Sawyer confirmed a 6-inch service should be fine. The whole site slopes down and everything should flow to that corner. One the south side between this site and Sincere Metalworks there is an existing cast iron sewer that runs between the two buildings. It angles to tie into a 4-way manhole to Chestnut St. They will need to continue running that along the property line then tie it back into that manhole. They will reroute it around the garage.



**Amesbury Technical Review Committee
November 5, 2025**

**City Hall Auditorium
62 Friend St.
9:30 am**

Chief Serino commented that he would like to have a conversation offline to address some concerns. The general overall concern is access to the large development. They are doing a lot with the space. They can work through the landscape design in the front for access. Chief Serino was concerned with building above a garage that could house electric vehicles on the back side where they don't have access to the underground parking. This whole building will be sprinkled. The general concern is not the project but access for Fire to get in and mitigate emergencies. They can work it out. Chief Serino liked the concept. The building is old and needs help.

Lauren Blatchford echoed the admiration of the project and noted the police had concerns with parking and the name of the development. Amesbury has developments called Carriage Hill Estates and Carriage Lofts already. Calling this development Carriage Hill Lofts will make it confusing for emergency response. It will become an issue. Chief Serino agreed with that naming concern. Stefano Basso confirmed they would look at that. Lauren Blatchford commented that they are providing 1.25 spaces, but the code says 1.5. They will be short of the ordinance. Parking will become an issue, and they will need to regulate parking on Oakland St. People will not park at Water Street and walk all the way over there. Police are worried this will become an enforcement issue.

Lisa DeMeo questioned how many bike rack spaces they planned for. Jeff Roelofs responded that they will need to clarify the bike spaces and they would look at the parking.

Nick Cracknell commented on the parking issue. The project is 32 spaces short of what is required in the code. That number is from 1970. Most cities and towns have modified their parking requirements. It's a means tested number. They would technically be short if they applied it against the code, but it is clear here looking at site plan a lot of communities have shifted to a lower number. Nick Cracknell argued that if they looked at the project profile, they would be close to needing 140 spaces and visitor parking. The visitor parking is appropriately located on Chestnut St. The project has enough parking for unit owners based on unit size, but not enough visitor parking. It is not a big gap. There is a lot of space in the first two levels of the parking garage for mopeds, motorcycles, and bikes. That will help diminish the need for additional spaces. Commercial spaces are not attributed to the parking schedule. The two studio units on the ground floor should be considered for commercial space or at least live/workspace, so it's adaptable to commercial. Some of the units are 376 sf. It is reasonable to assume they will only have 1 car. It would be good to include a table that shows the bedroom



**Amesbury Technical Review Committee
November 5, 2025**

**City Hall Auditorium
62 Friend St.
9:30 am**

counts and the sf of those units. That will help demonstrate the project is not under parked. They will need a waiver.

Jim Wilson commented that he didn't see anything about EV parking spots and questioned where they would be located. Stefano Basso responded that they would work with Fire to coordinate where the best spots for them would be. Nick Cracknell questioned how many they would need. Chie Serino responded he was not sure there was a set number in the current code, but they are working to develop a minimum number in future codes.

Lisa DeMeo questioned if they were assigning spaces in the garage. Stefano Basso responded they were not.

Amanda Armington questioned if they could confirm that all work would be outside the 200-foot river front area. Steve Sawyer confirmed they were outside the 200-foot buffer.

Howard Snyder commented that he worked on a similar project in Portland, Maine. The developer pursued a purple roof, and they saved in cost by reducing the underground system. There is a long-term benefit for maintenance as well because the systems are more accessible than underground. They should look at the roof plan to see if they can move the electrical transformer to that location. Steve Sawyer responded they could not move it there because of a property line issue. Howard Snyder commented that some of the tree locations and conditions do not make sense for survival. Reducing the canopy will help activate the area more and will help with fire access. Howard Snyder agreed that the sidewalk on Oakland St. should have a stair condition.

Nick Cracknell highlighted items they could talk about offline or at the DRC. DRC will look at lighting fixtures and naming convention of the development. There are some items on the drawings that could be cleaned up to be consistent. They touched on the parking and are not done that discussion. A parking table would help inform that discussion. They should consider expanding the roof deck if possible or add a second one that would look at the downtown area. The tower elements are awesome. They should consider using some sort of faux slate product. Nick Cracknell questioned if they were considering going for historic tax credits. Jeff Roelofs responded they were not sure yet. Nick Cracknell commented that they will need a preservation restriction and will need to go to the Historical Commission. They will need a good list of waivers including information on the affordable housing if they are trying to do 10% instead of 15%. They review the doors on the site plan and how they correspond to the parking to make sure there aren't any conflicts. They will need a waiver for compact spaces. It



**Amesbury Technical Review Committee
November 5, 2025**

**City Hall Auditorium
62 Friend St.
9:30 am**

would make sense to consider different material for the Chestnut St. garage entrance apron. This used to be a railyard area and they should consider incorporating a band of tracks in the walkway coming out of connector building.

Discussion:

1. Traffic and Transportation Process

Becky Frey commented this could be tabled to the next meeting when Chief Bailey was in attendance. Ann Marie has been working to clarify the traffic request process and one of the possibilities is to send those requests to TRC for comment.

Lauren Blatchford commented that she was on the Traffic Committee. The Chief thought that some items should come here, but it will make the agendas here too long. Lauren Blatchford agreed that there should be an avenue for items to come to TRC if they are complicated, but TRC should not be fielding all requests.

Nick Cracknell agreed there should be an avenue, but TRC should not receive every request.

Lisa DeMeo commented that the majority of those requests only need to go to DPW or Police.

Administrative:

1. Minutes: 9-17-25; 10-1-25; 10-15-25

General Communications:

John Stevenson 439 Main Street had one question on traffic. The Planning Board is reviewing large projects with complicated traffic and those should come to the TRC.

Nick Cracknell responded that the projects that go through the Planning Board like Rocky Hill do have to come to TRC. Anything that requires a site plan review comes to TRC. They do an initial review, and the Planning Board hires a third-party traffic peer reviewer if needed.



**Amesbury Technical Review Committee
November 5, 2025**

**City Hall Auditorium
62 Friend St.
9:30 am**

Becky Frey clarified that the traffic process up for discussion is where citizen requests for a stop sign or a speed bump should be directed. It is not for large projects.

Chief Serino motioned to adjourn at 10:57 am. Seconded by Lisa DeMeo. The motion passed unanimously.