Amesbury Technical Review Committee
August 20, 2026

Cultural Center
39 Millyard
9:30 am

In Attendance:, Chief Bailey, Lauren Blatchford, Nick Cracknell, Joe Buckley, , Howard Snyder, Amanda Armington, Joe Neipp, Chief Serino, and Becky Frey, Nipun Jain
Absent: Jim Wilson, Patrick MacDonald

Craige Bailey called the meeting to order at 9:32 am.

Project Update:

1. **18 Merrimac Street – Washington Landing Maritime Facility**

Craig Bailey commented that this is a joint effort with OCED, the Police Department, and GZA. The boat ramp is in dire need of assistance. This project stems from a Seacoast grant.

David Smith and Isabelle Gleckner from GZA provided an update on the project plans. The project has been under contract for about a year. GZA has been assisted by Millennium Engineering with civil site design, stormwater management, and electrical engineering. The existing site is on the Merrimack River, on the west side of the marina at Amesbury Point. It has been well developed since the 1950s, with a paved lot near the water's edge. The existing ramp is 30 feet wide and 52 feet long and is fairly deteriorated at the bottom. It is difficult to use the ramp unless there is sufficient water. Improvements are needed. The parking lot encompasses most of the lot. It is an open parking area with a major utility pole on an island. There is no designated entrance or exit. The lot is higher along Merrimac Street and lower toward the water. A lighting pole is located on the utility pole. The shoreline along the side of the property is eroded. There is a natural drainage swale and an outlet. The primary focus of the proposed project is to repair and improve the boat ramp. The plan is to replace the ramp in kind, making it 34 feet wide and 124 feet long. The final 36 feet will consist of precast planks. The ramp will extend out to at least four feet of water at low tide. Seasonal floats will be added and anchored with piles. These will allow boaters to remove their boats from trailers and temporarily dock them while parking. A platform will be installed, with an 80-foot aluminum gangway extending out to the floats. There will be a landing float with three finger floats. The floats will be used for transient vessels. The new electric ferry for Merrimac will also have accommodation at the facility. The parking lot currently has no defined entrance or exit. The island with the utility pole will remain. A path into the site will be constructed with a bullnose. There will be seven angled parking spaces, including one ADA-accessible van space. The entrance path will be on the eastern side, allowing vehicles to exit on the western side. There will be four designated truck-and-trailer parking spaces and another space reserved for Harbor Master staff. The lot will be paved

with bituminous pavement. New trees will be planted along the property line, and a vegetated landscape rain garden will be installed to capture stormwater. A trench drain will be added to prevent water from flowing down the ramp. A row of trees and vegetation will be planted along the western property line, although space will be limited. It is a tight site. The third component is the Harbor Master building, which will measure 18 by 22 feet. The building is located in a flood zone and will be elevated on pile supports, 5.5 feet above grade. Stairs or a ramp system will be needed for access. There will also be a deck at an elevated level, extending out to the gangway. A timber walkway will ramp down along the eastern part of the property to a timber plaza area. Railings and lighting will be installed, and an opening in the fence will connect to the marina walkway. A granite block wall is proposed along the shoreline. The City has a surplus of granite stones left over from the Whittier Bridge project. The deck will be higher than the wall and will extend to the edge. Native salt-marsh plantings are also proposed. Extensive environmental permitting will be required, and the team hopes to begin the process at the end of the month. The goal is to secure all permits by the end of next year and then put the project out to bid around this time next year.

Nick Cracknell commented the plan looked good but noted that the crosswalk on Merrimac Street had not yet been resolved internally. The crosswalk is not part of this project but is included as a placeholder.

Chief Bailey asked whether there were any utility questions to address immediately or offline. David Smith noted that there is an abandoned sewer line on the eastern part of the property and that its exact location is unknown. There are two active utilities, one of which is a drain catch basin. A recent report identified the location of a diffuser, which was overlaid with the existing location and original design plans; however, there is a 200-foot discrepancy. The team needs to understand the locations of the drain line and sewer line. Since the area will be pile-supported, confirming the locations is important. The only way to confirm them may be to conduct additional backhoe and elevation investigations. Joe Buckley said there are no records available despite extensive searches. The team needs to determine where the main line is located. Chief Bailey agreed that its location needs to be confirmed.

Joe Buckley commented that the main concern is the piles. Striking the sewer line during pile installation would be a serious problem. The team knows where the line exits the treatment plant. A permit is required to investigate the outlet and conduct an inspection. Divers previously had difficulty locating the diffuser at the end of the pipe.

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Chief Bailey asked when the next inspection was due. Joe Buckley said the permits require inspections every five years but noted that he would need to confirm the schedule.

Joe Buckley said he had engaged an engineer to work on the intersections, from the stop sign to the back edge of the property.

Howard Snyder emphasized the importance of getting the design right now, noting that if certain elements cannot be incorporated at this stage, they may not be possible to add later. He highlighted the MEVA ferry terminal component and explained that funding was still being pursued for some elements. As the project moves through the permitting process, the City is helping to coordinate the permitting efforts on a parallel track with MEVA. He stressed the importance of getting the design right the first time. David Smith said he would include chases in the parking lot to accommodate future needs.

Subdivision Plan

1. **Rocky Hill Development**

Steve Sawyer, Bob Dale Jr., and John Smolak were there to present the subdivision and do a site plan review as well.

Steve Sawyer commented that the site plan appears to have a light at the end of the tunnel. As part of the site plan review, there will be a subdivision of land along the boulevard roadway. The roadway ends at the roundabout. Lot 4 would be the north neighborhood, and Lots 5 and 6 would be the south neighborhood. There are two small lots in the front that they are looking to maintain. They are in the process of a historic preservation project involving a small existing way that they would use. The development team is hoping to provide public parking for the trail network. They are looking to have this section of the road accepted as a public roadway and are petitioning for that. They understand that if it is not accepted, then it will be privately maintained, and they will account for that. As part of the site plan review, they have reviewed the access and vetted it out. The follow-up is to memorialize how the land is subdivided.

Nick Cracknell commented that he noticed that on the revised plan, Lots 1 and 2 were not labeled as they were on the historic lots. They should correct that in the waiver list in Exhibit A. The project is being built to city standards, with some exceptions to city standards. Steve Sawyer confirmed there was one waiver is for roadway width.
Nick Cracknell commented they were probably asking for about eight waivers. It is important to get an answer on whether the depth and cover are acceptable as proposed.

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The 750-foot waiver is intended to prevent long dead ends, but this is a boulevard. Steve Sawyer responded that the diameter of the roundabout would be 80–100 feet. It would only impact the right-of-way.

Nick Cracknell commented that the offsets for the streets are less than 400 feet. The pavement width should not be an issue with that. There are 22 on-street parking spaces. They should not be assigned and would be publicly available for anyone to use. They can add these to the eight parking spaces dedicated for public use. DPW should speak to the drainage and sewer waivers.

Chief Serino had no further questions.

Joe Buckely questioned how wide is the right-of-way at the Elm location? The road has a variable width, and they are asking for it to be accepted. There is a waiver to provide a 40–50-foot right-of-way. Steve Sawyer responded It is 48 feet. We did that to maintain the historic homes.

Joe Buckley commented that forty-eight feet is fine. Drainage would be turned over to the city as well? Steve Sawyer responded that was their intent. There are deep-sunk catch basins, a corrugated dual-wall pipe, and a minimum of 24 inches of cover due to high groundwater. They are staying out of the groundwater. The drainage outfall gets picked up, and then everything ends up in the infiltration pond, where a pipe discharges it out. This project has good soils and is undeveloped. All water will be retained for the 25-year storm event.

Joe Buckley commented that they need an easement or an alternative outfall for discharging to a private outfall. The HOA could be responsible for the entire drainage system. Nick Cracknell agreed with Joe Buckley. The drainage should be the HOA's responsibility.

Nick Cracknell questioned in your professional experience, where have you seen a street accepted by the city while drainage is given to a third party? How does that work? Steve Sawyer responded that the Newburyport golf course project had a similar process. We are trying to get that accepted now. I don't have an example of it in action.

Joe Buckley confirmed that the sewer and water in the right-of-way would be turned over to the city. Steve Sawyer confirmed that was correct. It is a standard gravity sewer with a new ductile iron pipe.

Joe Buckley commented that they would want that. The drainage will be the tricky part. We will need to look through our permit. Steve Sawyer commented that the system will fully infiltrate the 10-year storm event. Joe Buckley commented that they should make sure everything is properly bounded in the plans. Whether the city wants to accept it or not, make sure it is included in the deed with the right-of-way.

Howard Snyder questioned if there was an expectation or agreement regarding the curb-to-red-line area? What are the expectations? **Steve Sawyer responded** the curb, trees, and green area are included. The area from the curb to the building would be the HOA's responsibility. We would have to look at the center island in terms of maintenance.

Lauren Blathcford questioned if there would be raised curbs. Steve Sawyer responded there would be Six-inch vertical granite curbing.

Nipun Jain commented when we have a definitive subdivision, we typically have a stormwater review and review the road layout. All of that has been presented to the city through the site plan review. There are still outstanding questions. I urge everyone to read the documents and provide comments to the Planning Board as soon as possible. The emergency access was shown for Monday's meeting, so be prepared to answer questions about how that will work. Steve Sawyer responded that he understood.

Nick Cracknell noted they needed to follow up on the drainage and landscaping.

CMMP Review:

1. **2-4 Elmwood Street**

Magdiel Mathias commented that this project was the renovation of an existing two-family home and new construction of a single-family home. They will construct a new two-car garage for the multifamily property and a one-car garage for the new single-family home. All projects are part of the Planning Board and site plan approval granted in April. There were no Conservation Commission or ZBA action required. Scheduling may be pushed back. They are committed to city hours. There will be an on-site dumpster and storage. They will keep everything on the property and park on the property as much as possible. They do not anticipate using the roadway. They will be submitting a construction schedule.

Chief Serino commented that he did not have any questions. Everything has to follow the Massachusetts Fire Code. Make sure the dumpster is in the appropriate location, outside the 25-foot range.

Joe Buckley commented the new house will require water and sewer. Magdiel Mathias confirmed that was correct. Joe Buckely commented they cannot open the street too late into the fall. They can talk after the CMMP is approved.

Chief Bailey commented that they should work to keep the street as clear as possible. On-street parking is illegal in some places. They need to manage parking as best as possible.

Nick Cracknell commented that Joe Neipp will be the point of contact, with Nipun as the secondary contact. Preconstruction will be a week later than scheduled due to the appeal period. The dates will be adjusted. The preconstruction meeting is important, and the general contractor (GC) must be present. It is important to have the relevant people there. The approved plans must be followed religiously. The design must conform to the Scott Brown design. The Chief discussed parking and the wide street, noting that hopefully part of the street can be used when possible. Plans will need to be amended as indicated here.

Amanda Armington noted there was no permitting required through the Conservation Commission for this project.

Nipun Jain commented that the existing structure and new house are under construction. Some work remains on Lot 1. Once that work is complete and the units are presumably sold, there will be a more limited area for access to the new construction. The plan should show the dumpster's location. DPW approval is required. Talk to Joe Buckley and his office about the sidewalk, as it will be rebuilt along the side of the house. Make sure those details are accurately documented in the DPW permits. As Nick mentioned, the building design was discussed, including the changes that will be required. The builder must be present to confirm what is shown on the plans. Communicate any changes. The lot is tight for both the garage and the house.

Nick Cracknell motioned to approve the CMMP for 2-4 Elmwood St. as revised. Seconded by Chief Serino. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **102 Kimball Road**

Jay Wessell commented that they did a minor modification to rotate and change the design for the house.

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Chief Bailey commented that the purpose of the TRC and the CMMP review is to give them the opportunity to talk to all relevant city departments at once and address any comments they may have.

Chief Serino questioned how long the driveway was. Jay Wessell commented it was 140 feet. Chief Serino noted he did not have any more questions.

Joe Buckely commented he was all set.

Howard Snyder and Lauren Blatchford did not have any comments.

Nick Cracknell commented that he had some small changes to the construction schedule. There is no appeal period because this was a minor modification. They just need to file the plan and schedule the preconstruction meeting. We will have the meeting on site. It is really important understand what they are doing vs. what the prior owner did. It is important for the common access driveway to have a parking and delivery plan. Jay Wessell commented they should be able to accommodate on the driveway. They have a construction fence set up and the area is large enough to allow access. They will make sure people can still access the abutter house on common driveway. Nick Cracknell commented that any right of way and trenching permits should go through the DPW. There is no demolition involved. They should tell us where the port a potties will be and list the permits that were granted. Joe Neipp will be the point of contact.

Nipun Jain commented this was a definitive subdivision with a common access driveway. All utilities need to be in per approval before the construction of the project. Nipun Jain questioned what the construction phase plan was for the driveway. Jay Wessell confirmed they would install utilities before construction. It will probably take half a day. Nipun Jain commented they will need to post the erosion control bond. The architecture drawings need to incorporate all the DRC comments. We need a restrictive covenant for the house which will need to be signed off by the Board. All of that needs to be addressed as soon as possible. The performance bond can be discussed later depending on how the project it phased.

Joe Buckely commented that he would require curb to curb repaving after opening the street. Andrew Wessell confirmed that was fine.

Nick Cracknell motioned to approve the amended CMMP as discussed. Seconded by Nipun Jain. The motion passed unanimously.

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3. 5 and 13 School Street

Nick Cracknell commented that that applicants submitted a CMMP for this project. The construction schedule is included, but some adjustments need to be made. There is no appeal period. A preconstruction meeting will be held on-site. The goal is to close on this property on 8/27/26. They need to determine if the point of contact will be Jim Wilson or Joe Neipp. The biggest issue is parking. Vehicles should park on School Street, in front of the Ordway, as it is routinely empty. Eight spaces are being added next to the Ordway. That space will be utilized during construction. The building will be torn down and moved over 5–6 feet. There will still only be a single-loaded driveway. The section paved next to the library will remain, with the shed staying with the library. Parking behind the library is shared with the church. The most important issue is where they will park. Brad Kutcher is handling 5 School Street, and Mark Wojicki is handling 9 School St.

Chief Serino commented that they need to be told that parking in the main city lot is not allowed at all. There is already an issue with the shared space. Aimie Westphal, Library Director, agreed with Chief Serino. Also, many residents have permits for overnight parking, and much of the angled parking is designated as permit parking. Those vehicles never leave. The question is whether the angled parking spaces could be removed from the allowable parking areas.

Chief Bailey noted that this would require an ordinance change. There is a new permit plan this year. Let's see how it works out and whether it allows for better enforcement. This will allow us to see how things are going. Chief Bailey clarified that parking is allowed out of Parcel 1, but not on their property.

Chief Bailey asked about parking along the fire department, as those spaces are not designated for anything. Perhaps they could be designated for employee-only parking. Chief Serino said that would help because there are five parking spaces behind the station.

Nick Cracknell stated that parking should be prevented on Parcel 1. On-street parking should be on School Street or in their own lot. Chief Serino agreed to occasional deliveries but said vehicles cannot be parked there all day while work is being done.

Aimie Westphal asked where the dumpsters and portable toilets would go. Nick Cracknell responded he was unsure. This could be addressed at the preconstruction meeting.

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Nick Cracknell motioned to amend the CMMP as discussed and approve it. Seconded by Chief Bailey. The motion passed unanimously.

Nick Cracknell proposed some overall edits to the CMMP template. It seemed reasonable to reduce the notice period on the preconstruction meeting to five days and only notify direct abutters. A parking, staging, and delivery plan should be provided in the future. It would be helpful to understand that plan.

Nick Cracknell made a motion to amend the preconstruction requirements to add an exhibit for parking, delivery, and staging, and to identify the chair as the signatory to the CMMP template. Seconded by Howard Snyder. The motion passed unanimously.

Administrative:

1. **Minutes – 7-9-26; 8-6-26**

Nipun Jain motioned to approve the minutes from the 7-9-26 and 8-6-26 TRC Meetings. Seconded by Amanda Armington. The motion passed unanimously. Joe Buckley abstained.

Adjourn:

Nick Cracknell motioned to adjourn at 10:57am. Seconded by Nipun Jain. The motion passed unanimously.