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By City Clerk at 11:38 am, Jul 27, 2026

**MINUTES of the ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING
MONDAY, June 15, 2026**

(Posted in accordance with the provisions of MGL Ch. 39, Sec. 23A, as amended)

City Hall – 7:00 p.m.

62 Friend St.

Amesbury, MA 01913

Attendance: Sharon McDermot (Chair), Charles Basler, Dave Haraske, John Rogers, Kendra Amaral

Absent: Donna Collins

Also in attendance: Community Development Coordinator Becky Frey

Call to Order

Chair Sharon McDermot called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call/Attendance

Chair Sharon McDermot took roll call. Donna Collins was absent.

Minutes – 5-18-26

Dave Haraske motioned to approve the minutes from the 5-18-26 ZBA Meeting as presented. Seconded by Charles Basler. The motion passed unanimously.

Continued Public Hearings:

1. 253 Main Street – Special Permit and Variance

Chair Sharon McDermot read the legal notice into the record.

Chair Sharon McDermot commented that this application did not include plans showing lot lines and setbacks with the submission. The submission has drawings of 2 floors, but the application states they are looking for an ADU. That should not be included in this application. The

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applicant should revise their submission to include the missing plan and update the applications and the Board should continue this item to the July meeting.

Anthony Sorrentino commented that he revised the application to remove the ADU from the set of plans. The outside of the home is remaining the same. If the Board is requiring more plans, then he can provide them. Chair Sharon McDermot noted that the applicant should review the requirements in Section XI.K1. Anthony Sorrentino commented that he had talked to Jim Wilson quite about continuing the project.

Becky Frey commented that the current lot and house does not meet the dimensional requirements for XI.K1. That is why there is a need for a variance. The change of use triggers that. Even though there are no changes to the exterior, the Board would like to see a plan that clearly shows the setbacks so they can understand the existing conditions. That will help them understand the impact of granting a variance.

Dave Haraske motioned to continue the application for 253 Main Street to the July 23, 2026 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. Seconded by Charles Basler. The motion passed unanimously.

2. 27 Kimball Road – Comprehensive Permit

Chair Sharon McDermot requested that City Counsel Carolyn Murray provide an explanation about when the Board can request a pro forma peer review.

Carolyn Murray from KP Law commented on the pro forma review process. There has been some public comment and requests to review the pro forma which involves looking at the financial projections for what it will cost to develop the project, the land acquisition, and reasonable rate on investment. Carolyn Murray read the state regulations. 1. Other consultant review has been completed. The Board is not at a point yet where they can look at financials. The Board has yet to receive a single consultant review. They will hopefully have peer review results in July, but right now they don't meet first criteria. 2. The applicant has had the opportunity to modify its proposal to address issues raised. If the peer review came back with concerns that point to public health or safety, then the applicant has to decide whether or not to modify and address any items. Before the Board tonight are revised plans, and the applicant will revise again based on peer review if needed. 3. The Board has had the opportunity to propose conditions to mitigate the project's impact and to consider requested waivers. The Board is not at a point where they are ready to propose mitigation. There will also be an opportunity for the Board to look at the requested waivers. 4. The applicant has had the

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opportunity to go back and modify to mitigate the concern or eliminate the need for a waiver. Or the applicant says they are done making revisions. The applicant needs to assert that a condition or revision would render the project uneconomic. That is the point when the Board can request to review the financials. Some of the concerns raised have been about density or size. The Board is not allowed to look at financials because they think it would be viable with fewer units. They don't quite get to health and safety or environmental concerns until they get memos back from peer reviewers. It is premature in the process to request a pro forma peer review.

Chair Sharon McDermot commented that the Board did not receive an electronic copy of the revised architecture and landscaping plans from the applicant until today, but they will allow a presentation.

Becky Frey commented that OCED had drafted comments to those plans that were submitted today. Becky Frey handed out hard copies of those plans with comments to the Board.

Andrew Mackin presented the revised plans for 27 Kimball Road. The public hearing was opened in March. They held a community meeting in April. They received many letters and feedback from staff and abutters about the project as well. They had an ORAD issued in April from the Conservation Commission. On May 18th the Board selected peer review. On June 1st they uploaded the revised design of civil and traffic. On June 8th the peer review contracts were signed and funded. That review is underway. There was a site visit with the peer review consultants on June 10th. Today they submitted the Code Red report and architectural and landscape materials. They will review that at a high level and expect questions from the Board. The density has been reduced from 95 units to 86 units. The buildings went from 51 buildings to 45 buildings. They have reduced the bedrooms from a total of 154 to 141. The parking spaces have been reduced from 174 spaces to 146 spaces. That totals 1.7 per unit. The open space went from 49% to 56%. The building setbacks in relationship with this development to the neighborhood have been increased. They are working with the design team to provide a natural buffer. In addition to removing units and pulling back, they have added an enhanced landscape buffer. They have added 55 new trees. The proposed development now has over 200 trees. The front entrance has been redesigned. There is now a formal two-lane boulevard with a median. They removed the units at the front. There are now 5 new parks so each member of their own nested community will have their own open space park. The architecture has evolved. They rotated some units and enhanced the relationship with the pedestrians as they are walking through the community. The retaining wall height has been reduced from 17 feet to 6 feet. They have eliminated and/or reduced the other retaining walls. They added a small sign at the entrance. There is a 5-foot median on the boulevard. The 6 units in the front have all been removed and replaced with a pocket park. There is a natural walking trail around the basin.

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The community center common is oriented left to right instead of north to south. The 8 units in the middle have been rotated 90 degrees which changes the relationship to allow for some paths to be wider. The fence style has been reduced in height to 3 feet instead of 6 feet for some units to help open it up. There is parallel parking around the core to make it more pedestrian friendly. The intent is to keep the parking appropriately close to the units. They think it creates a better street experience. On the northeast area of the plan, they eliminated some units which were set back 25 feet from the property line. They are now 35 feet back from the property line. There was a staff comment about that area being tight with the units. They rotated the larger ranch product buildings. It is a less dense solution but a wider footprint, so the setback is closer. On the south part of the plan, they moved units. There were two units at this location. They were 50 feet from the wetland but now they are 25 feet from the corner of the building to the wetland. This is a plan they are excited about. They have heard the comments and recognize this probably is still not enough for many. There may always be a differing of opinion. They are still listening, and the conversation is not over. The limit of work was up to the property line with the initial submission, but that has been pulled back. Five units in the north of the plan have been removed to increase the setback between this development and abutters. They have worked hard to pull in the limit of work and enhance the landscape buffer. The common area has more room to breathe. The rear buffer has been increased. They have worked to orient the units differently. Pedestrians are now greeted by all front porches along the pathway. Lastly, they shifted two units on plan south. They have included an additional 42 shrubs and native species to mitigate the wetland impact. They expect they will also be discussing the project informally with the Conservation Commission to discuss the layout trade-offs with them. They are trying their best to avoid over-grading, so they added a rip rap slope. They may be able to achieve the same effect with some grading and a seeding mix. They will update the drawings to show that seeding. They are 36 feet from the Kimball Road side abutters. The rear property does not have an abutting structure right there. The pinch point on the back side is 24 feet from the property line. They are proposing a combination of evergreens that will be 8-10 feet tall at installation and deciduous trees. The architecture in the yellow locations were identified as most visible areas for pedestrians walking through the site. The relationship from the sidewalk to the front door is improved. They are proposing a 3-foot perimeter fence for those units. They will just have a 6-foot fence separating the units. The 3-foot fence is more welcoming. They worked on the architecture and added a small roof on the door. The Board just received the architecture drawings today. The rendering of the paseos showed them with wider space and the small front yards with the 3-foot fence. They have shown the grading in the rendering.

Chair Sharon McDermot reiterated this was the first time they have seen the revisions of the architecture and landscaping.

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Dave Haraske commented that he appreciated what they have done and that they were working with the city to make it more palatable. Have you worked on the snow removal yet? Andrew Mackin responded that it was shown on the last page of the revised civil plan. Dave Haraske questioned if they considered having a bus stop at the site. Andrew Mackin responded that they have not been in a discussion about a bus stop but were happy to engage in this discussion. They are happy to do a turning study on a bus. They have done a turning study on the largest fire truck and that does work on the site. Travel lanes are set at 24 feet wide inside the site and the entrance and exits are 14 feet wide lanes. Dave Haraske clarified he was asking about a MEVA bus. Andrew Mackin responded that they have not evaluated a commuter bus. They anticipate most residents will have a vehicle.

Charles Basler commented that they could check the bus and routes to see if it would be convenient to incorporate in the plans. Dave Haraske commented that there was no way a bus service would stop on Kimball Road. It may be awkward for a bus to enter the site. Chair Sharon McDermot expressed concern about people walking down Kimball Road out to Route 110 to get a bus. Kendra Amaral commented that she was not sure if a public bus can pick up on a private road. Charles Basler questioned if they would consider a sidewalk out to Route 110. Andrew Mackin responded they would be happy to look into the bus options. The prospect of building a sidewalk from this site to Route 110 is outside the scope of the project.

Chair Sharon McDermot questioned what type of lighting was proposed. She was concerned about evening light impacting abutters and wildlife. Andrew Mackin responded they have 10-foot light fixtures proposed in this design. They know the public comment has mentioned dark sky compliant lighting. They are open to that condition. This is an open action with the design team. It is an appropriate condition.

Charles Basler commented that the snow plan does not show a lot of storage area. Andrew Mackin responded that the snow plan needs to be coordinated with the landscape plan. It will continue to evolve, and they will evaluate snow storage locations. If there is a winter like last winter, then the snow will be managed by the property management team. The snowbanks will need to be managed. There can be an condition about ongoing snow management.

Chair Sharon McDermot opened public comment.

Becky Frey read a letter from Paul Richard which is attached to the end of the minutes.

Joyce Watkins commented that she lives on Kimball Road would like to know if this development is an HOA.

Andrew Mackin responded this is not an HOA. This first building as you enter the site is a property management office. They will have a full-time property management company and
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24/7 on call property management for the site. They will proactively address resident issues and be responsible for landscaping, trash management, and snow removal.

Kendra Amaral clarified this was a rental property. Charles Basler added that the property management company would be responsible for maintaining the property. Andrew Mackin confirmed that was correct.

Gloria Seger from Acadia Condominiums commented that she had a unique perspective that some single family homes may not have. Ms. Seger had a huge concern about snow removal and what that means for Kimball Road. They have 21 units at Acadia. All of their parking is in one area and guests can parallel park. When the plows come in it pushes all the snow behind the resident's cars to the end. The pile very quickly becomes massive. When the storm is over the residents back up and the plow removes all the snow where the cars were. Will these 100 plus cars be told they need to leave the area to remove the snow, or will people have to dig themselves out? Will they throw the snow somewhere? Another thing to think about is what happens when they have cars that exceed the 1.7 cars per units? Will they be told they can't park there? Acadia had to expand their parking lot because they ran out of spaces. How will parking management be determined?

John Rogers questioned how guest parking would be managed.

Andrew Mackin commented that snow management is a valid question. This winter was tough. We will hope for better winters but will plan for worse winters. The means and methods can be a condition that snow is managed properly. Parking is 1.7 spaces per unit but they have 1.1 per bed. That allows a buffer for visitor spaces. If a tenant is renting a two bedroom, then they get two parking spaces. They can identify a parking bank on the plan that could be built at a later date if needed. There have been numerous discussions with the traffic engineer, architect, and builder. They are comfortable with this number. They want to make sure have they have an appropriate amount of parking for residents and visitors.

Chair Sharon McDermot questioned how many visitor parking spots do they currently have. Andrew Mackin responded they had 5 full time visitor spots. Chair Sharon McDermot questioned where they were located. Andrew Mackin responded that all parking will be first come first serve. There is a dedicated property management spot.

Paul Richard of 8 Ashley Drive commented that he appreciated the comment about the light pollution concerns. Also, at the last meeting there was a concern about noise. Where will the wastewater holding tank be located now that there's been revised plans?

Andrew Mackin responded that the holding tank is 35,000 gallons. They still have the holding tank there are no changes in the plan. It will be in the same location. The peer review will flesh that out. This will

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be a professionally managed property. If there is a noise issue with an individual, then it will be addressed. There will be rules and regulations around quiet hours etc.

Chair Sharon McDermot questioned if 2 people for the property management team was enough. Andrew Mackin responded that they will have a third person while they are actively leasing. For the day-to-day management, then they think one person can manage it.

Paul Richard 8 Ashley drive back to noise it would be good to provide locations of things like the generator to the waste water holding tank.

Thom Connors of 18 Claire Road commented that these places do not have basements, and they are pretty tight. Where will people put their stuff? Mr. Connors was just picturing junk outside all over the neighborhood. There is no place to put stuff. This is still an urban project completely compromising the integrity of Amesbury and Kimball Road. They are bringing in this number of units under a 40B law. With 86 units with even just quick numbers with \$2,000 of rent it could total up to 3.1 million dollars in rent to the company. This isn't about trying to do what we can for affordable units. There are vacant affordable units in Amesbury now. Please give thought to stopping a project like this in a rural area. Mr. Connors hoped that everyone would say no when it comes to it. Don't allow this to come in and take a neighborhood away.

Chair Sharon McDermot questioned if the Board had any other questions.

Andrew Mackin commented they were here tonight to present the revised plans. The peer review is underway. They are looking forward to getting the memos. They want to prioritize the timing of the peer review to ensure they have time to respond and perform. They will endeavor to respond to the peer review memos as efficiently as possible. There are 2 hearings left after that July meeting. They will be ready to move fast and respond as quickly as they can.

Chair Sharon McDermot requested a site visit with stakes in the ground before the July 23rd meeting. They can coordinate that date through email.

Dave Haraske motioned to continue the application for 27 Kimball Road to the July 23, 2026, Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting. Seconded by Charles Basler. The motion passed unanimously by a 4-0 vote.

Charles Basler motioned to request a written memo answer from DPW as well as the Mayor's Office about whether or not Kimball Road is an accepted road by the city of Amesbury. Seconded by Dave Haraske. The motion passed unanimously by a 4-0 vote.

Charles Basler motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 pm. Seconded by Dave Haraske. The motion passed unanimously.

June 15, 2026

**Amesbury Zoning Board of Appeals
1 Market Street
Amesbury, MA 01913**

Subject: Comments Regarding the Revised Traffic Study – Proposed 27 Kimball Road Development

Dear Members of the Amesbury Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA),

I am writing on behalf of the Kimball Road Safety Preservation Group regarding the revised Traffic Impact and Access Study (TIAS) dated May 29, 2026, prepared by MDM Transportation Consultants, and the independent transportation peer review currently being conducted by BSC for the proposed 86-unit residential development at 27 Kimball Road.

We appreciate the Board's decision to obtain an independent peer review of the applicant's revised traffic study. We also appreciate the additional information provided in the revised report regarding traffic volumes, crash history, sight distance, and driveway design.

However, as outlined in our letter dated May 22, 2026, we remain concerned that several important roadway safety issues have not yet been fully addressed in the traffic analysis. These include corridor-level safety conditions along Kimball Road, roadway geometry and curvature, run-off-road crash patterns, seasonal operating conditions, and whether Kimball Road, in its existing condition, can safely accommodate the projected increase in traffic associated with the proposed development.

To better understand how these concerns will be evaluated, we respectfully request clarification regarding the scope of the independent peer review being conducted by BSC. Specifically, we ask that the Board provide or confirm:

- The scope of services or engagement letter defining BSC's review;
- Whether the review is limited to traffic calculations and capacity analyses, or whether it also includes roadway safety, roadway design, and corridor-level operational evaluation; and
- Whether BSC has been asked to evaluate the ability of Kimball Road, in its existing condition, to safely accommodate project-generated traffic.

We recognize that the scope of the peer review may already have been established. However, if the roadway safety issues identified above are not included within that scope, we respectfully request that the Board acknowledge that these concerns remain independently unevaluated. In that circumstance, we ask that the Board carefully consider whether additional analysis may be necessary before relying on the peer review as a comprehensive assessment of the project's transportation and roadway safety impacts.

We believe it is important for both the Board and the public to clearly understand which issues are being independently evaluated and which issues, if any, remain unresolved.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We respectfully request that this letter be entered into the public record for this application and that clarification regarding the scope of the peer review be provided as part of the Board's review of this project.

Sincerely,

Kimball Road Safety Preservation Group

By,

Paul Richard

Paul Richard
781-552-9899
8 Ashley Drive