

RECEIVED

By City Clerk at 4:20 pm, Apr 21, 2026



Community Preservation Committee

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

City Hall Auditorium

62 Friend Street
Amesbury, MA 01913

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Jay Williamson called the meeting to Order at 6:02

Roll call

Present: Suzanne Egan (SE), Joe Fahey, Michelle Faucher (MF), Wayne Griffith (WG), Andrew LeFleur (AL), Joe Nice (JN), Jay Williamson (JW) (Present but presentating as a member of the Historic Comission)

Absent: Bob Manseau (BM), Mel Webster (MW)

Historic Comission: Joe Finn (JF), Megan Fahey (MF)

City Staff: Howard Snyder (HS)

1. Administrative

Minutes of July 16, 2025

JW calls for a motion to approve the CPC meeting minutes of July 16, 2025.

MOTION by Wayne Griffith to approve minutes of July 16, 2025

Second: Joe Fahey

No discussion

Vote: 7-0. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Community Preservation Plan

JW notes second meeting of the CPC for purpose of developing the Community Preservation Plan. First meeting was with the Open Space Committee.

JW, as the Historic Comission (HC) representative to the CPC, begins HC's presentation.

JW speaks of early 1920's efforts of New York City artists and Hobbit Society. Speaks in terms of aesthetic and venacular that may place a piece of work into a limiting catagory and a house, structure, streescape or block may fall into the same. Reference is made to John Mead Howell and the publication titled Architectural Heritage of the Merrimack, and Stephen Thornstrom and the publication Poverty in Progress.

JW tells three stories regarding Ipswich, Newburyport and Amesbury. Ipswich having large inventory,

and reasons for, First Period homes. Newburyport has inventory of Federal period homes. Amesbury with inventory of Victorian and Queen Anne style homes.

JW speaks to importance of historic preservation and access to the past, tangible link to history, fosters a community identity, educates future generations and serve as a living classroom. Cites examples of Rocky Hill Meeting House and Lowell's Boat Shop.

Historic Commission chairperson for 16 years JF, is introduced for the next portion of the presentation.

JF provides background of the Amesbury Historical Commission; 3-7 members with alternates, established through MGL Section 8L and local 1956 Article 56. Notes MF as staff liaison. Speaks to roles and responsibilities of the Historic Commission. Describes primary roles of / with

- Building Demolition bylaw: 18 months stay on demolition to find if way to protect structure.
- Historic Preservation Special Permit (HPSP) bylaw: purview with planning board, project wants to save structure, incentives and waivers to support effort – Elm Street and Monroe, 20 Maple Street, 15 Sparhawk project examples, potential with old mill buildings on Oakland Street.
- Advisory on historic preservation projects.
- Liaison member with / on Design Review Committee (DRC).

JF discusses Planning Tools. Preservation Plan (1999) – need to hire consultant to update document, especially goals and priorities. MACRIS (State) system as a foundational tool for demolition and HPSP bylaws – needs of details on structure to updated and added.

JF outlines goals – public access to property research, historic commission documents, outreach initiatives to increase awareness of historically significant structures and site, expand training for commission members. Limited funding and resources to implement. Discusses what is at stake and past success (Horace Mann) and failure (Mills Village School).

SE asks if for questions from Community Preservation members. Advises JF on CPC's ability per State on provision of funds to support NC activities.

DL asks about how, with the HC without a budget, the HC gets funding?

JF cites the site of the former Amesbury Animal Hospital and need for an outside qualified consultant. Resident funded the effort, otherwise we have to go begging (fundraising).

DL follows-up with the question would having funds available prevented the Mills Village School failure?

JF states funds might have been used to survey structure or relocate all or elements of the structure.

MF inquires about trees – Kendrick's Court and largest butternut in Massachusetts. Does the HC get involved with trees?

MF answered the HC could have a bigger purview than it currently has in terms of providing an experience of a historical landscape such as a streetscape and a vista at Bacheleder Park.

Joe Fahey asks about other tools the commission might investigate such as facade easement?

JF discusses use of preservation restrictions and confinement to a narrow band as they don't have the resources. Mentions that the CPA has opened up areas for us to explore and they would like to further educate the public on the use of historic preservation restrictions to help home owners preserve their historic homes after they sell.

Joe Fahey discusses the need for money as witnessed in his efforts to bring the facade renovation program to the downtown area.

SE states for her, the priority of the HC seems to be updating the Preservation plan.

JF responds it is for him personally.

JN asks if you did have the funding, would you do in terms of outreach to get the word out about the Historic Preservation Special Permit?

JF discusses a project on Prospect Street and how Nick Cracknell got involved with the contractor to have them understand the benefits of the historic permit, and had the contractor apply to gain the additional unit on the corner. We haven't discussed how we would get the word out.

WG mentions the house on Elm Street and what is happening there. Discusses how younger generation doesn't look at history the same way. Thinking about how money could be used to update the plan.

HS mentions coordination of impending development with MF and applicability of the project for Historic Preservation Special Permit.

JF mentions the opportunity to approach City Council and ask for an update to the bylaw and expand the role of the HC.

3. Next Meeting Date

HS notes the third Wednesday of October is the 25th and the Amesbury Housing Authority is tentatively scheduled to meet with the CPC.

CPC members discuss their availability for that date. Housing Authority representative to the CPC Wayne Griffith confirms their intentions to attend and present.

Next meeting of the CPC will be scheduled for October 25th at 6:00p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium.

4. Adjournment

SE calls for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION by Joel Nice to adjourn.

Second: Michelle Faucher.

No discussion

Vote: 7-0. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.