

1. Amesbury Planning Board Meeting Minutes
2. Virtual Meeting –February 12, 2024, at 7:00 PM
3. Chairman Pascal Rettig called the February 12, 2024, Planning Board meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He read: Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020, Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20, and the extension of the Governor’s order until March 31, 2025, Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this Meeting of the Planning Board on February 12, 2024, is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort is being made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order.
4. *To submit a public comment, or dial in please email Becky Frey at freyr@amesburyma.gov. 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. *If you would like to dial in to speak you can email Nipun at Nipun@amesburyma.gov*
7. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call –
8. Keith Ratner – YES
9. Joel Nice – YES
10. Lorri Krebs- YES
11. David Frick – YES
12. Michael Jewell - YES
13. Pascal Rettig - YES
14. Also: Nipun Jain (Planning Director) and Becky Frey (Community Development Coordinator)
- 15. Minutes 1-22-24**
16. Keith Ratner motioned to accept the Planning Board Minutes from 1-22-24 as presented.
Seconded by Michael Jewell.
17. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call –
18. Keith Ratner – YES
19. Joel Nice – YES
20. Lorri Krebs – YES
21. David Frick – YES
22. Michael Jewell - YES
23. Pascal Rettig – YES

24. Motion passed 6-0

25. Preapplication – 12 S Hunt Rd.

26. Pascal Rettig commented that they received a request to continue this application to the February 26, 2024, Planning Board meeting and because this is a preapplication they do not need a formal vote.

27. Pascal Rettig also noted that the three public hearings have all requested to continue to the March 11, 2024, Planning Board meeting.

28. David Frick motioned to take the public hearings for 87 S Hampton Rd., 2 Merrimac St., and 13 Merrimac St. out of order. Seconded by Michael Jewell.

29. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call –

30. Keith Ratner – YES

31. Joel Nice – YES

32. Lorri Krebs – YES

33. David Frick – YES

34. Michael Jewell - YES

35. Pascal Rettig – YES

36. Motion passed 6-0

37. David Frick motioned to continue the public hearing for 87 S Hampton Rd., to the March 11, 2024, Planning Board meeting. Seconded by Keith Ratner.

38. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call –

39. Keith Ratner – YES

40. Joel Nice – YES

41. Lorri Krebs – YES

42. David Frick – YES

43. Michael Jewell - YES

44. Pascal Rettig – YES

45. Motion passed 6-0

46. Michael Jewell motioned to continue the public hearings for 2 Merrimac St. and 13 Merrimac St., to the March 11, 2024, Planning Board meeting. Seconded by Lorri Krebs.

47. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call –

48. Keith Ratner – YES

49. Joel Nice – YES

50. Lorri Krebs – YES

51. David Frick – YES

52. Michael Jewell - YES

53. Pascal Rettig – YES

54. Motion passed 6-0

55. Preapplication – 2 Merrimac St.

56. Paul Gagliardi, Mike Sanchez, Peter Suorsa and Dan Ricciarelli were present to speak to the application.
57. Pascal Rettig commented that the intention was to withdraw the previously filed applications and subsequent to this application hearing the applicants will file a new application for this project due to the revised plans and change in Planning Board membership.
58. Nipun Jain commented that they only had the initial hearing for 2 and 13 Merrimac St. so far. There has not been a lot of deliberation to date. This will allow the full board to vote on the application. The new filing will reflect the changes they are presenting tonight.
59. Pascal Rettig questioned if the applicants could confirm they were withdrawing those applications. Mike Sanchez responded that they were coordinating with the Planning Department on that and will plan to withdraw the application when they filed the new application. Pascal Rettig commented that if the Board discusses this application tonight, then there should not be discussion on the existing public hearings. Mike Sanchez confirmed that was correct.
60. Peter Suorsa introduced the project and provided an overview of the project evolution. The large-scale project has been scaled down to a marina facility and restaurant. The restaurant was reduced to an 85-seat restaurant due to parking constraints. There will be a marina operation building and a storage facility on site.
61. Mike Sanchez commented that they took a pause after their initial submission to evaluate the site and additional options. First and foremost, this is an operational marina. The primary focus will continue to be that. The marina operations building, and restaurant are one continuous building connected by a breezeway. Only the marina operations portion is in Chapter 91 jurisdiction. One of the existing boat barns will remain. There will be 100 parking spaces. The ordinance will require 108 spaces. They will be seeking a waiver for that parking relief. The site will be fully accessible and landscaped. This project will improve the site and make it a public asset to the City. It will provide public pathways to the river as well.
62. Dan Ricciarelli from Seger Architects presented the plans. The larger storage building will be removed, and the smaller square storage building will remain. The existing building along the river will be demolished and the marina operations and restaurant building will go there.
63. TJ Melvin with Millenium Engineering commented that they reduced the footprint of the proposed building. The access to the site will be similar to how it is now with double stack parking and two-way lanes. They are proposing 21 parking spaces at 13 Merrimac St. That parking will be restricted to marina members and employees. There is no storm water management on the site currently. This plan will incorporate that. They will be reconstructing the sidewalk on Merrimac St. to help pedestrians get from 13 Merrimac to 2 Merrimac St. There will be 21 parking spaces at 13 Merrimac and 79 spaces at 2 Merrimac St. to get to 100 parking spaces total. They are creating more pervious area on the site and incorporating landscaping.

64. Dan Ricciarelli commented that there would be a drop off area in front of the building. The back of the parking area will be the dock storage in the winter. There are some corridors from the building to the river itself. There will be rain gardens, landscaping along the river and invasive plant cleanup effort. There will be a walkway to the rivers' edge and a boardwalk that will guide the public around the site. There will be low level path lighting instead of pole lighting. The marina operations and restaurant will be connected by a breezeway. All of the south and west facing windows will be operable walls to the river. The upper level will be office space. There will be some focal elements to the building for the street and river sides. The building is elevated by 3-4 feet above the flood plain. The existing storage building will be refurbished with new doors and windows to tie the buildings together better.
65. Michael Sanchez commented that they have taken in a lot of feedback from the neighborhood and the City. This plan addresses a lot of the concerns around traffic calming by introducing the raised crosswalk. The Chapter 91 walkway will be incorporated. The building footprint has been reduced and meets setback requirements.
66. Dan Ricciarelli commented that they reduced the parking by 8 spaces to provide more green space.
67. Nipun Jain suggested that it may be helpful to break up the discussion into major categories like site layout, building design and amenities, and lastly landscaping.
68. David Frick commented that the bank between the street and storage building has a lot of weeds and questioned what the plan was for that. TJ Melvin responded that they would need to put in a retaining wall there. The area would be reseeded, and the slope would be stabilized. David Frick commented that they should put in something better than what's in there today.
69. Keith Ratner questioned where they were storing the docks. Mike Sanchez responded that it would be in the northwest corner of the parking lot. Keith Ratner questioned why the parking requirement was reduced when the docks came out. Michael Sanchez responded they would not need to provide parking for the operating marina in the winter, just the restaurant. Keith Ratner commented that it would be good to understand how many docks there are and ensure they aren't blocking the view corridor when stacked for storage.
70. Keith Ratner questioned if there would be any outdoor activities on the site that would be in addition to the restaurant and marina. Michael Sanchez responded that their vision is that it would be a marina first and restaurant second. It's unclear if there would be outdoor activities. The docks would only be stacked 2-3 high because of weight.
71. Joel Nice questioned if there would be any wayfinding signage showing access to the waterfront. Michael Sanchez responded that there is currently a sign that takes the public down to the river. The Chapter 91 license requires that with a bench and two transient slips. They will propose to add some wayfinding signage to guide the public around the site.
72. Dan Ricciarelli commented that there will be a sundeck and boulders for the public to sit on. Michael Sanchez noted that the sunset patio may have pervious material there because that is where they take the docks in and out of the water. Whatever goes there needs to be moveable to allow for that activity.
73. Joel Nice questioned if there would be a private area for members only. Michael Sanchez responded that they were envisioning cutting off the boardwalk area at a point to make it

private for the marina members. Peter Suorsa commented that it could be seasonally private.

74. Joel Nice questioned if there will be a barrier between the deck and water. Michael Sanchez responded that there will be some barrier, but that is not finalized. There will be a deeper buffer with this new proposal.
75. Joel Nice requested they speak to the screening they are providing around the parking at 13 Merrimac St. Michael Sanchez responded that they are proposing a 6-foot white PVC fencing to the edge of the wetlands there will also be more landscaping. There will be ground level or motion lighting. This parking area will be used for peak parking loads with the marina in operation.
76. Pascal Rettig questioned if the number of slips would be changing and how many parking spaces are on site now. Mike Sanchez responded that the slip numbers will remain the same. The current parking is not defined. Pascal Rettig commented that knowing how many spots there are currently will help the Board understand if the reduction is reasonable. Peter Suorsa responded that currently at peak times the parking lot is 60% full. There are 94 slips, but we do not have traffic problems in the lot today.
77. Nipun Jain commented that the Chair was trying to say that it appears that the current parking is sufficient for the marina slips today and since the slips aren't changing there should be enough parking in the future as well. Understanding how many spaces are in the lot today will help the Board understand if the proposed parking will work.
78. Michael Sanchez commented that that currently there is no developed parking lot at 13 Merrimac St. The site at 2 Merrimac St. has more than enough parking spaces today.
79. Peter Suorsa commented that they can estimate the current number of spaces and how many spaces are used today.
80. Pascal Rettig questioned if there would be public parking spaces for people to have public use. Michael Sanchez commented that they could discuss that.
81. David Frick questioned if there would be access to the restaurant by boaters. Peter Suorsa responded that they are required to put in 40 linear feet for transient boaters and that provides limited spaces.
82. Michael Jewell questioned if this would go to the Conservation Commission. Mike Sanchez confirmed they would be filing with the Conservation Commission.
83. Nipun Jain suggested including an overlay to show existing conditions vs. proposed conditions.
84. Pascal Rettig commented that there were some crosswalks laid out, but they aren't at the main access. Dan Ricciarelli responded that there should be a delineated walkway.
85. Paul Gagliardi commented that they had done a traffic study previously for the larger restaurant and questioned if they needed to submit a revised one or if that would be adequate. Nipun Jain responded that they should add an addendum that speaks to the previous study and confirms this is less of an impact from the traffic consultant.
86. Pascal Rettig commented that they should address the building design next.
87. Nipun Jain requested they talk about the main level and what's happening on and under the deck. Dan Ricciarelli commented that there was a lot of open space under the building, some will be used for trash storage. Some can be used for activities or small boat storage.

It's currently undefined. There will be pea stone and gravel under there. Nipun Jain questioned what the clearance height was. Dan Ricciarelli responded it was at 9 feet.

88. Joel Nice questioned if lighting was planned underneath. Dan Ricciarelli confirmed that was correct. Nipun Jain commented that they could put tables under there. Michael Sanchez commented that it would be an 85-seat restaurant, but they could be on the deck or under if it was bad weather. Nipun Jain commented that they should have a plan on how that would be managed because it's a lot of area and it could raise the seating by a lot. Just be able to explain how it will all work. Peter Suorsa responded that the restaurant has deck space and that will be used for that. They will make sure the seating and dining areas are clear. Under the deck could be events like an Oktoberfest or artisan fair. Nipun Jain commented that this needed to be clear and they should think through the permitting and occupancy load for that.
89. Dan Ricciarelli commented that the main level will have a main stair and an elevator option. The main lobby will provide access to either the marina facility or restaurant. The restaurant scheme will be finalized when the restaurateur is committed but the scheme here is what it could be. There's a large overhang over the deck. The goal is to make it all feel as open as possible.
90. Michael Sanchez commented that they are changing their vernacular to marina operations building. There is no membership here, it's a slip that people rent annually.
91. Dan Ricciarelli commented that the utilities would be stored under the deck. Nipun Jain responded that in the past there was a planter in that area and if there is an opportunity to add in a planter, screening then they should. Dan Ricciarelli agreed that was a good point.
92. Dan Ricciarelli commented that the deck will be transparent as much as possible to let people have a view of the river.
93. David Frick questioned if operable windows meant they opened completely. Dan Ricciarelli confirmed they would. The lobby connector will provide another focal point for views.
94. Pascal Rettig commented that it would be good to see a more symmetrical massing and call attention to the center entry way. Two masses left and right would give it a cleaner look.
95. Dan Ricciarelli commented that the shingle style is asymmetrical, and the shingles tie the building together. There are two different programs, and they don't want ambiguity on where people need to go when entering the building. They are leaning toward a more traditional feel. The other challenge is elevating the building and how that looks.
96. Mike Sanchez commented that the previous submission was more contemporary, and they brought it back to more traditional elements based on feedback from the City.
97. Joel Nice commented that the double hip roof does seem a little odd. It would be good to see more contemporary detail and make the entryway more prominent.
98. Mike Sanchez responded that the front entry is the last design element, and they are still working on it.
99. Nipun Jain commented that they have nailed down the building footprint which helps. This has been an iterative process. The entrance does need to stand out and have its own statement. They can build off the traditional cues and build off the left and right. A good way to get feedback is to show a couple different options and people can provide feedback on that. This is the side of the building that the majority of people will see every day. This should be attractive.

100. Nipun Jain commented that they should include material details when they go to DRC to help them see the whole picture.
101. Nipun Jain commented that the retaining wall in the parking lot should have more details as well. It would be good for it to have the same feel as the rest of the site.
102. Pascal Rettig questioned if the islands in the parking lot should have green space. Nipun Jain confirmed there was enough space on the islands to include grass strips.
103. Pascal Rettig questioned what existing plants on the hill would remain. Mike Sanchez responded that they are working with Mary Rimmer on the conservation application. She recommended keeping the 5 existing trees that are along the Powwow Riverbank. There will be more details on that in the official submittal. In a high tide situation 98% of that area is underwater. It is not a cut and dry landscaping opportunity. Nipun Jain responded that they need to look at each area on the site and think about the intended use and objectives. Once that is defined it will help determine the landscaping plan.
104. Nipun Jain commented that this was not a public hearing, so the Board did not need to make a motion to continue.
105. Pascal Rettig questioned if any members of the public wanted to speak.
106. Sally Nutt of 335 Main St. commented that she was concerned about the parking lot at 13 Merrimac St. It is close to her property. The applicant should think about screening the parking lot for those looking out at the site.
107. Tracey Chalifour of 24 Clarks Rd. questioned if the traffic study would be provided, because it's not on the preapplication. Nipun Jain commented that the traffic study was part of the original application. They will do an addendum to the existing study. It should be on the OpenGov portal for the existing hearing. Tracey Chalifour questioned when that traffic study was done. Paul Gagliardi responded that it was done in the August/September timeframe. Tracey Chalifour questioned if the 85 seats included the bar seats. Peter Suorsa confirmed it did.
108. Mike Sanchez commented that they recently updated their web stie which includes many of these images and plans from this presentation. It is a good way to get more information.
- 109. Continued Public Hearing – 87 S Hampton Rd.**
110. This was addressed earlier in the meaning.
- 111. Continued Public Hearing – 2 Merrimac St.**
112. This was addressed earlier in the meaning.
- 113. Continued Public Hearing – 2 Merrimac St.**
114. This was addressed earlier in the meaning.
- 115. Administrative – 47.5-57 Kimball Rd.**
116. Nipun Jain commented that they received a request from the developer to release lot 4 from the covenant. Lot 4 is 1 Brielle Way.
117. David Frick motioned to release lot 4 from the covenant. Seconded by Keith Ratner.
118. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call –

- 119. Keith Ratner – YES
- 120. Joel Nice – YES
- 121. Lorri Krebs – YES
- 122. David Frick – YES
- 123. Michael Jewell - YES
- 124. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 125. Motion passed 6-0

126. Administrative – 14 S Hunt Rd.

- 127. Nipun Jain commented that there was nothing they needed to discuss on this item.

128. Administrative – Contracts, Bills and Invoices

- 129. Nipun commented that staff recommended paying the following invoices as submitted and reviewed. They know the work has been performed as submitted.

- 1. A Stantec Bill for Moncrief St. in the amount of \$558.75
- 2. A Stantec Bill for 77 Elm St. in the amount of \$220.00
- 3. A Stantec Bill for 47.5-57 Kimball Rd. in the amount of \$615.15
- 4. A Stantec Bill for 99 Lake Attitash Rd. in the amount of \$340.00
- 5. A Stantec Bill for 14 S Hunt Rd. in the amount of \$1,388.53
- 6. A Stantec Bill for Bailey's Pond in the amount of \$583.53
- 7. A Stantec Bill for Bailey's Pond in the amount of \$583.53

- 130. David Frick questioned why the available funds are different for Bailey's Pond. Nipun Jain responded that there were 2 different entities paying for the project.

- 131. David Frick motioned to approve payment of the Stantec Invoices listed above.
Seconded by Lorri Krebs.

- 132. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call –

- 133. Keith Ratner – YES
- 134. Joel Nice – YES
- 135. Lorri Krebs – YES
- 136. David Frick – YES
- 137. Michael Jewell - YES
- 138. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 139. Motion passed 6-0

140. Adjournment

- 141. David Frick motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 pm. Seconded by Lorri Krebs.
- 142. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
- 143. Keith Ratner – YES
- 144. Joel Nice – YES
- 145. Lorri Krebs- YES
- 146. David Frick – YES
- 147. Michael Jewell - YES

- 148. Pascal Rettig - YES
- 149. Motion passed 6-0