



Amesbury Technical Review Committee

February 20, 2024

In attendance: Jim Wilson, Nick Cracknell, Chief Bailey, Lauren Blatchford, Chief Nolan, Nipun Jain, Vinny Tirone, Joe Buckley, Lisa DeMeo and Becky Frey
Absent: Robert Serino

Chief Bailey called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

Administrative –

1. 1-16-2024 Minutes

Nick Cracknell motioned to approve the minutes from the 1-16-2024 TRC meeting. Seconded Chief Nolan. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Meeting Reschedule – Fire Department

Chief Nolan noted that Deputy Serino cannot attend the second meeting of the month and requested they look at rescheduling it. Becky Frey confirmed she would send options.

Application Review -

1. Preapplication Review – 2 Merrimac St.

Mike Sanchez, TJ Melvin and Sam Columbo were present to speak to the application. Mike Sanchez presented the revised plans. The initial submission was for a 180-seat restaurant, 100 seat function hall and marina facility. This current plan has been reduced to a 1.5 story 85 seat restaurant, 2 story marina facility, and 100 parking spaces between 2 and 13 Merrimac St. The site and buildings will be fully accessible and landscaped. The current site conditions do not meet code or storm water requirements. The proposed plans will have a 6-foot public access walkway from the corner of Merrimac St. to the water. Right now, the site has approximately 40 parking spaces. The existing marina facility and large blue building will be removed. The smaller existing storage building will remain and be refurbished.

Chief Nolan questioned if the smaller storage building was originally going to be removed. Mike Sanchez confirmed that was correct the last submission had a 2-car garage at 13 Merrimac St., however, that would not provide enough space for the marina to operate. That is the primary focus for the facility. The small blue building will continue as a garage space with a small office building. The plan will be to renovate it and put marina staff in there this summer for the duration of construction.

Sam Columbo commented that there is no drainage on the site today and everything runs from the northern corner to the Merrimac River. Most of the site is in the floodplain so they are trying to match existing grades as much as possible. The storm water treatment plan includes catch



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basins and rain gardens to treat 80-85% of the site. They will be adding approximately 2,500 sf of green space. 13 Merrimac St. will be used for overflow parking to that site. They will be introducing additional gravel around the perimeter of that lot.

Lisa DeMeo questioned if they would be using valet parking for that lot. Mike Sanchez responded that the 13 Merrimac St. lot would be for marina patrons and staff. They would not be using valet. The plan includes a raised crosswalk to help with traffic calming.

Nick Cracknell questioned if they had an edge condition to hold the gravel in on the edges of the 13 Merrimac St. lot. Sam Columbo responded that they did not have an edge condition. The lot is mostly gravel today.

Lisa DeMeo questioned if that lot would be plowed. Mike Sanchez responded that logically there would not be any need to use that lot in the winter.

Nick Cracknell questioned where the floats would go. Mike Sanchez responded that they would go on the back of the 2 Merrimac St. site. They would take up approximately 20 parking spaces.

Joe Buckley questioned if they would store boats on the 13 Merrimac St. lot. Mike Sanchez responded that they would not. Joe Buckley questioned if they had thought about snow storage. Mike Sanchez confirmed it would be included in a future plan.

Nipun Jain commented that some of the spaces in the parking lot need to be rearranged because of the 25 foot no disturbance zone. Mike Sanchez confirmed they were working on that. They are continuing to incorporate feedback from the Planning Board Meeting and will be going to the Design Review Committee on 2-27-24. There have been some suggestions for narrowing the entrance to 13 Merrimac St. There's an existing white PVC fence on the abutter's property and they are proposing to match that fence and add plantings to further screen the lot. The side abutting the sewer plant side has an intermittent stream, so they are working through that as well.

Nick Cracknell questioned if there were existing parking spaces on 13 Merrimac St. Mike Sanchez responded that it is an undeveloped flat surface. Nick Cracknell commented that they should narrow the entrance to 18 feet and put in a raised sidewalk between the abutter and this driveway. This would help avoid a giant opening. They can provide 22 feet for fire response if needed.

Joe Buckley clarified that there would not be any equipment in the 13 Merrimac St. lot. It would just be cars. Nipun Jain noted that the lot needed to be defined. Mike Sanchez responded that it would be employee parking only. Nick Cracknell noted that employee parking is different than overflow parking. Mike Sanchez responded that it would be employee parking. In the current condition 70% of the time, they have more than enough parking at 2 Merrimac St. In the future they will push employees to park at 13 Merrimac St. Nipun Jain commented that if it is for employee parking then they will need to clarify if employees park there year-round and address if it would be plowed or not. If the 13 Merrimac St. lot is closed in the winter, then they will need to show the parking impacts at 2 Merrimac St. Mike Sanchez confirmed they would think about it.



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They need .9 spaces per boat and 1 space for every 4 seats in the restaurant. They need 80 spaces for the marina because they have 91 slips.

Chief Bailey commented that he was under the impression that the 13 Merrimac St. lot was for overflow parking. Mike Sanchez commented that the way the zoning was written was that employees and marina patrons can park in the 13 Merrimac St. Lot. Restaurant attendees cannot. When they were presenting the 180-seat restaurant, they were asking for relief for 30 spaces. Now they are asking for relief for 6-10 spaces.

Nick Cracknell questioned if the 85-seat restaurant included seasonal outdoor seating. Mike Sanchez confirmed that it included the deck space.

Mike Sanchez commented that the traffic flow is shown on the plan. There will be a pedestrian path down to the water and along the boardwalk. They will be able to walk through the center of the building. There will be a lot of added green space. The invasive plants behind the existing building will be cleaned up. The center island will include a green space as well. They will be incorporating movable planters to separate the parking lot from the sunset terrace. There will be low level ground lighting. The utilities and elevator for the restaurant will be contained under the restaurant. They are building the restaurant for spec because they don't have a restaurateur yet. The marina operations building will have private office space. There's been a lot of conversation about the front entry and the façade. All the doors on the riverside will be operable to open the restaurant space to the river. There will be decks around the restaurant and they will have the same treatment for the marina operations side as well. The existing storage building will be refurbished to add windows and garage doors.

Nick Cracknell questioned what work they will do on the sea wall. Mike Sanchez responded that they plan to reset the cap and reset the corner at the Powwow and Merrimac River. They are allowed to repair the wall in the Chapter 91 license. They will do that piece this spring. Nick Cracknell questioned if they would be repairing the wall in the places where it was needed and questioned if they would be raising the elevation of the wall at all. Mike Sanchez responded that they would be doing spot repair. They do not plan on raising the elevation. Nick Cracknell commented that it would be beneficial if they could raise the sea wall to increase protection from storm events. Joe Buckley commented that would be up to the Army Corps. Mike Sanchez responded that they don't have a problem with raising the wall, but it is licensed for Chapter 91 and that is not a requirement. Chief Bailey questioned if they needed to notify the Army Corps or Conservation Commission about the sea wall activity. Mike Sanchez responded that they were working with Mary Rimmer and GZA on this and would make sure they notified the proper channels.

Nick Cracknell questioned what elevation the utilities will be on the new plan. Mike Sanchez responded that they will be using the existing transformer location and elevation. They will confirm with the electrical engineer that will work. All other utilities will be elevated above the flood plain as required.

Chief Nolan questioned what the size of the elevator was. Mike Sanchez responded that he did not have the dimension details, but it would be a standard size.



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Lisa DeMeo requested more details on the retaining wall along the Powwow River. Sam Columbo responded that it would be 2 to 5 feet tall. Mike Sanchez added that they would be using a standard block wall. Lisa DeMeo noted that the plan should show they are not encroaching on the public right of way.

Mike Sanchez commented that the buildings will be fully sprinkled and have fire alarms. There will be a 4-foot frost wall and a steel metal deck podium with wood over it.

Chief Nolan requested details on trash storage. Mike Sanchez responded that they would have dumpsters under the building with a sprinkler over that. Nipun Jain questioned what the clearing under the deck was. Mike Sanchez responded that it was 9 feet from the structure so it might be slightly under that. The utilities, trash, and planter storage will all be under the deck. There is no proposed use under the building other than for it to act as the pass through from one side of the building to the other. Nick Cracknell questioned what the surface under the deck would be. Mike Sanchez responded that it would be gravel. The walkway will be a hardscape surface. It will be ADA accessible.

Nipun Jain questioned if the floodplain was shown on the site plan. TJ Melvin confirmed it was and noted that the site was mostly in it.

Nick Cracknell commented that the applicant's should figure out how to get pedestrians from Merrimac St. into the restaurant.

Sally Nutt of 335 Main St. commented that her house was on the intersection of Merrimac St. and Main St. Ms. Nutt was concerned about the parking at 13 Merrimac St. The gravel surface will be very noisy. The direct abutters have children in that backyard. So many questions remain about who is running the restaurant. The City should put in some requirements beforehand about the operating hours and truck deliveries.

Nick Cracknell noted that those elements would be in the final decision. If it needed to be amended once they acquire a restaurateur, then it would go through the modification process.

Tracey Chalifour of 24 Clarks Rd. commented that they needed to be conscious of unintended consequences. A traffic study can't factor in everything. It is already a constrained area. They should evaluate the options to mitigate that.

Chief Nolan noted that people visiting this site cannot park in Alliance Park or the church across the way.

12 S Hunt Rd. – Air Supported Dome

Carl Pearson represented Global Properties and provided an update on the air supported structure that will be going over the field at 12 S Hunt Rd. The structure has been ordered and will be installed in July/August 2024. They have coordinated with National Grid on the electric component and the gas component is installed already. The equipment pad is on the back of the field. The foundation sign offs are completed, and they are ready to move forward. The BTU system will come first and will be erected toward the end of July. The structure will be installed in



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early August. It will be a 2.5-week installation. They have accounted for the life safety components. There will be 9 hard metal frame door systems. They will be using a consultant, Chris McCann who will be on site during the entire installation process. They will add two hydrants. One will be at the mechanical pad and the other will be in the front section. There will be an operations and maintenance plan on how to handle winds and heavy snow. Instructional training will be provided for the fire department and their internal employees. They will shut down dome operations during heavy wind and snow events. The dirt piles from the Munter's project will be moved out to allow for staging for the equipment. They plan to submit to the fire department in mid-March.

Jim Wilson requested that inspections also get a copy. Lauren Blatchford requested a copy for the Police Department as well.

Chief Nolan questioned what the overall height of the dome would be. Carl Pearson responded that the top of the peak is 68 feet and when it is not super inflated it will sit at 66 feet. Chief Nolan questioned what height the anemometer and barometer will be at. Carl Pearson responded that they will be on the existing building at 38 feet. They will be using satellite data as well.

Joe Buckley commented that the biggest wind load will hit the center of the wall, so it makes sense to have them at that height and not the height of the top of the dome.

Joe Buckley questioned how many days of the week this would be running. Carl Pearson responded that it will be running 7 days a week. Nick Cracknell questioned what the life expectancy of the dome is. Carl Pearson responded that the life expectancy was 10-15 years. If it stays up all of the time it is closer to 15 years. The fabric will be tested every two years for structural integrity.

Lisa DeMeo motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:14 am. Seconded by Jim Wilson. The motion passed unanimously.