



MINUTES of the ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING
THURSDAY, July 23, 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), Donna Collins, Charles Basler, Dave Haraske, John Rogers,

Absent: Kendra Amaral

Also in attendance: Community Development Coordinator Becky Frey, Carolyn Murray KP Law

Call to Order

Chair Sharon McDermot called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Roll Call/Attendance

Chair Sharon McDermot took roll call. Kendra Amaral was absent.

Minutes – 6-15-26

Charles Basler motioned to approve the minutes from the 6-15-26 ZBA Meeting as presented. Seconded by Dave Haraske. The motion passed by 4-0-1 vote. Donna Collins abstained because she was not at the meeting.

New Public Hearings:

1. 136 Haverhill Road

Chair Sharon McDermot read the legal notice into the record.

Christina Debitetto and Liam Leary were the applicants. Christina Debitetto commented this was a family lot and they were looking to split it into two lots. Lot 2 will go all the way to the back and the proposed single-family dwelling will be positioned toward the front. The variance request is for the frontage and front setback. Liam Leary commented that the lot has 245 feet of frontage. The existing

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lot will have 108 feet of frontage, and the new lot will have 137 feet of frontage. They are looking for a variance for the front setback as well. The house is positioned toward the front of the lot due to the grade and shape of the land. Christina Debitetto commented this also would also reduce environmental impact. Liam Leary showed photos of the steepness of the hill to the Board members. Christina Debitetto commented that the proposed dwelling would be a 2 bed 2.5 bath 2,000 sf single family home with a 2-car garage. They have looked at homes currently on Haverhill Road and think this will fit in well with the current community.

Charles Basler questioned if the other lot owners were their parents. Pam Debitteto confirmed she was Christina's mom and they were aware of and supported the project. Christina Debitteto commented they had a wetland surveyor go out and included the boundaries in the plans. The structure would not interfere with the wetlands.

Charles Basler commented he was not quite sure about the wetland impact. Becky Frey commented that the Board could include a condition to send this to the Conservation Agent for comment. Charles Basler agreed that was a good idea.

John Rogers questioned if lot 2 was in the rear. Liam Leary responded it had frontage along Haverhill Road but continued into the rear.

Chair Sharon McDermot questioned if the stand of trees house would be removed in the back. Christina Debitetto responded the proposed house would be going in the mostly cleared area. They are trying to use as much of the current flat grassy area as possible.

Chair Sharon McDermot opened the public comment. No one spoke.

Donna Collins motioned to close the public hearing for 136 Haverhill Road. Seconded by Dave Haraske. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Sharon McDermot commented the applicants were seeking to build single family home and split the lot. The Board should add the stipulations that a variance approval of the two lots is only valid with an approved Definitive Subdivision application from the Planning Board. This application should be sent to the Conservation Agent to review if permitting with the Conservation Commission was required.

Chair Sharon McDermot reviewed the findings. The substantial hardship was the setbacks and frontage due to the shape of the lot and topography. The features do not generally affect the district. The proposal would not be a substantial detriment to the public good. The petition does not derogate from the intent of the bylaw.



Given the findings, Donna Collins motioned approve the variance application for 136 Haverhill Road with the two stipulations outlined above. Seconded by Dave Haraske. The motion passed unanimously by a 5-0 vote.

2. 10 Portsmouth Road

Chair Sharon McDermot read the legal notice into the record.

Architect Bill Nolan and homeowner Jonathan Stickley were present to speak to the application. Bill Nolan commented the lot was in the R8 district and was about 11,400 sf of area and 80 feet of frontage. The existing home is a two-story gambrel style home with three bedrooms. It is generally conforming although the existing deck is encroaching on the left side setback. The required setback is 15 feet, and the encroachment is 9.6 feet. The applicant is proposing a series of small modest size additions. One of them will replace the existing deck where the encroachment is. They did reach out to the neighbors and were in receipt of two letters of support from the direct abutters.

Dave Haraske questioned how high the deck was on the left side. Bill Nolan responded it was 30 inches. Dave Haraske responded that doesn't make it non-conforming because it's a legal deck. Bill Nolan commented that when he was reading the definition of structures, deck was one of them. Dave Haraske responded that in the Ordinance Section 6F paragraph b shows that it is conforming. Bill Nolan responded he did not see that section of the Ordinance.

Charles Basler questioned if it was the railing height or the floor height right. Dave Haraske responded he thought it was the floor height. This is a legal structure, and they want to take something that's legal and create a non-conformity.

Charles Basler commented this was built in 1978 and the zoning was established in 1971. Charles Basler commented they need to consider 10-year rule without objection. John Stickley commented he has lived there for 8 years and before that the deck has been there for 10 years plus. Dave Haraske commented that the deck was built in 1985.

Dave Haraske questioned if they had a denial letter from the inspection's Department. Bill Nolan confirmed they did, and it was submitted in their application packet.

Charles Basler commented that the Board needs to understand if deck is conforming or non-conforming.

Donna Collins commented that the addition is proposing a 9.5 foot setback, which is not complying.

Nick Cracknell commented that he has not reviewed this application, but he understood that what's being proposed is an addition in replacement of an existing deck. As pointed out by Dave Haraske, the deck has an exception, but not the addition. This is a non-conforming addition. Perhaps the Building

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Inspector interpreted it at the railing height not the floor height. That may be why the denial letter was issued.

Chair Sharon McDermot read the letters of support from the direct abutters into the record.

Chair Sharon McDermot opened public comment. No one spoke.

Donna Collins motioned to close the public hearing for 10 Portsmouth Road. Seconded by Charles Basler. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Sharon McDermot reviewed the findings. This does not predate zoning but has existed for more than 10 years without enforcement. It is non-conforming with the frontage and left side setback. It will not be more or less detrimental to the neighborhood. It does not create a new non-conformity because of the deck height interpretation.

Given the findings, Charles Basler motioned to approve the finding application for 10 Portsmouth Road as presented. Seconded by John Rogers. The motion passed unanimously by a 5-0 vote.

Continued Public Hearings:

3. 253 Main Street – Special Permit and Variance

Tony Sorrentino, homeowner and applicant, commented they were here for a preexisting non-conforming house for 253 Main Street. They are looking to convert this from a single-family home to a two family.

John Rogers requested clarification that parking will not be an issue. Tony Sorrentino confirmed it would not. The existing conditions can accommodate what they need. John Rogers requested the applicant confirm there were no exterior changes. Tony Sorrentino confirmed there were no exterior changes.

Chair Sharon McDermot opened public comment. No one spoke.

Donna Collins motioned to close the public hearing for 253 Main St. Seconded by John Rogers. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Sharon McDermot commented that this was a special permit application for a conversion from a single family to a two family. There is also a variance request because this is an existing non-conforming lot and structure and the conversion requires conforming dimensions. The variance is to grant that relief from those requirements.

Chair Sharon McDermot reviewed the special permit findings. This currently exists in the Table of Uses. It is desirable to the public. It will not create undue traffic or impeded pedestrian safety. It will not

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overload public systems. The special conditions have been satisfied. It will not impair the character of the district. It will not create excess use in the neighborhood.

Donna Collins read the requirements for Section XI.K1 Residential Conversions from the Amesbury Zoning Ordinance into the record.

Chair Sharon McDermot commented those conditions have been satisfied in tandem with the variance. Chair Sharon McDermot reviewed the variance findings. The substantial hardship is the lot shape and placement of the existing structure. The features do not generally affect the district. There would not be a substantial detriment to the public good. The petition does not derogate from the intent of the bylaw.

Given the findings, Dave Haraske motioned to approve the special permit and variance application for 253 Main Street as presented. Seconded by Charles Basler. The motion passed unanimously by a 5-0 vote.

4. 27 Kimball Road – Comprehensive Permit

Amy Allen from BSC, professional engineer and professional traffic engineer, was hired by the ZBA to do a traffic study. The peer review specifically focused on the Transportation Impact Assessment Study. The study area looked at two nearby unsignalized intersections and the site driveway. Kimball Road is a two-lane roadway with a speed limit of 25 mph. The traffic volume data was collected along Kimball Road in December and adjusted upward by 11%. That is MassDOT standard procedure to reflect average as well as future growth rate. They looked at the crash data for the last five years. The Haverhill Road/Kimball Road intersection has had three collisions at the mouth of the intersection and one along the segment. There has been nine crashes total along the study area. They were all single-vehicle crashes. These statistics were all below the MassDOT average. There are no high-crash locations in the study area. The applicant followed the standard ITE methodology and used the land-use code for multifamily, and distributed trips to Kimball Road. They project 45 trips in the morning peak hour and 48 in the peak evening hour. The intersection capacity analysis evaluated the existing and non-build/build conditions in the future. They found less than five seconds of additional delay added to intersections from this project. It was nearly impossible to actually measure the sight distance. The excessive vegetation will need to be cleared, and the applicant should show the clearing. The applicant has provided that information to BSC and they will review it. BSC had some additional comments. The applicant should consider providing a sidewalk along the site driveway. PROWAG does allow a sidewalk slope if the roadway slope is steeper. There was a figure provided that showed potential improvements at the Haverhill and Kimball Road

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intersection. They should continue to work with the city on that. They should also work with the city to include traffic calming along Kimball Road. The applicant responded to the BSC memo and committed to working with the city on traffic-calming measures. BSC recommended using existing high-visibility intersections within the site more consistently. BSC has seen the issue brought up regarding one access point and will defer to city fire and police on that issue. BSC did review the turning movements and agreed that emergency vehicles can access and circulate the site.

John Rogers questioned, in Ms. Allen's professional opinion, when looking at this project, did she see increased safety risk in that area. Amy Allen responded that the crashes along that roadway are all single-vehicle crashes. They are not due to the volume of traffic. It is more of an existing condition.

John Rogers commented that cars are pulling out of the driveway at a dangerous curve area. He had trouble getting out the night he went to the site visit. Amy Allen agreed the sightlines were an issue today, which is why BSC asked for clarity on vegetation clearing.

John Rogers commented that when the number of vehicles funneling into that road is increased, the probability of an accident happening could increase. If it does increase the risk to the neighborhood, then would the vegetation clearing reduce the existing risk. Amy Allen confirmed clearing the vegetation would address the existing condition.

John Rogers questioned if the increased volume would increase the risk, then would their plan mitigate it. Amy Allen responded that for each individual car on the road, the risk would be the same as it is today. Amy Allen agreed the traffic-calming measures doesn't seem to mitigate additional risk; it's a betterment to what is there today.

Chair Sharon McDermot questioned why was December chosen for traffic counting. Amy Allen responded that was a question for the applicant, but BSC verified that it was adjusted appropriately to reflect the average volume.

Chair Sharon McDermot questioned if the Increase for 1% for the amount of cars accurate. Amy Allen confirmed it was. It was based on the historic growth in the area and rounded up to account for future development.

Chair Sharon McDermot commented that there is a proposal coming for 47 single-family homes further down Kimball Road. Amy Allen responded that the applicant did increase that growth



rate, it would account for projects like that. The 1% is compounded per year over the next seven years.

John Rogers commented that the crash rate was below MassDOT's urban local roadways and questioned why the road was classified that way. Amy Allen responded it was based on the population density of the area. It is a broad term in the way MassDOT defines it.

Charles Basler questioned if there was anything addressing pedestrians. Amy Allen responded that there are no pedestrian accommodation on Kimball Road currently. BSC did suggest it could be explored. The main comment is a sidewalk out to Kimball Road for a bus stop. That way in the future if there is a sidewalk from Kimball Rd. to Route 110, then it could connect there.

John Rogers commented that the amount of cars entering and exiting, were only 40-something in the report. Amy Allen clarified that was for the AM peak hour. It was the amount of cars distributed over the one single peak hour.

Donna Collins commented on the site walk day she walked to the site and in 19 minutes, 51 cars passed her on the road. Amy Allen commented that the evening peak hour in the existing conditions, showed 200 vehicles on the road, so that roughly works out.

Robert Michaud from MDM Transpiration commented that what they hear from Amy Allen from BSC is a general-level concurrence in what they used to draft the TIAS as far as study area, data volumes, crash data, and trip generation and distribution was concerned. The data was collected in December because that is when they began the study process. It is customary and normal when making counts to make adjustments. There are many count collections in the area; MassDOT has to make sure they are representative. One board member counted cars, and the results were consistent with our counts. They believe what they published is a conservative study. There are a few locations that need to be addressed in more detail. The sightline is important. People need to see a vehicle approaching and they need to safely see vehicles trying to exit. That was documented in the response. The growth rate assumptions used are conservative. The growth rate is 0.5% a year; we have used 1%. The potential Meadowbrook project will add to traffic but will not exceed the growth rate they have used. They spent a lot of time looking at traffic operations in the area. The intersections operate with average delay returns of less than 20 seconds. It is not susceptible to long delays or queues. The increases in delay will be about 2 seconds or less.



Chair Sharon McDermot requested clarification on the delay. Robert Michaud responded it doesn't mean every car experiences that, but that is the measured performance. The increase in delay with this proposed growth would be 2–3 seconds. This project will produce fewer than 50 trips. In the morning, there would be a 1-second average delay increase and about a 3-second delay for the evening. If a vehicle is traveling on Haverhill Road, and they are trying to make a left-turn movement, then there would be a delay. They are trying to achieve the operating standard of D or better. It is less than a 50 second delay on average. There is no capacity delay. However, the apparent geometry of the intersection is poor. It is hard for pedestrians to cross. There is a telephone pole in the middle of it. There are many things that can be done to improve that. This applicant has identified a conceptual improvement plan with raised islands. It shortens the crossing length for pedestrians and enhances the curb radii and definition of turns onto Haverhill Road. It separates the right-turn lane. This would be a substantial enhancement that should occur separate from the project; this proponent is committed to enhancing that. In relation to the sightline issues, safety is of course paramount. The crash rates are well below standard. They took the time to look at Kimball Road from Haverhill Road to Lionsmouth Road. There have been nine crashes. They obtained records from the police. Between Lionsmouth Road and Haverhill Road in the past four years, there has been four single car crashes. Weather was involved in two crashes; one was a man who was using his phone, and another hit a deer. The crash data for that section of Kimball Road is less than half the average for similar roads. Between the site location and Haverhill Road, there have not been any crashes. The crashes have tended to happen north of where this is located and they are single-car crashes with specific cause factors. The applicant is committed to implementing traffic calming. They can put speed feedback signs on the road and those have been shown to reduce the 85th-percentile speeds by 4 mph. The driveway will be designed to the highest speed measured, but speed feedback works to reduce speed. As related to fire/police access, they are comfortable with the boulevard-style design. NFPA 1 specifically allows for those style designs that allow for dual access on each lane. The central median has a break in it, so they can switch to other boulevard if needed. This has been reviewed by their third-party compliance peer reviewer.

John Rogers questioned if they had that report. Becky Frey responded that they submitted the Code Red report in June.

Charles Basler questioned if the study or plan addressed pedestrian safety in the project and on the main roadway. Robert Michaud responded that the site plan comments are being addressed. They will provide higher-reflective crosswalks. They are aware of the comment to provide a sidewalk to Kimball Road. They don't currently show that connection. They are also

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looking at a path connection. It will be figured out in the site plan process. It is possible to provide that connection. On Kimball Road, there are very few pedestrians/bikers on it. People do use it, but it is not a high-volume corridor. There are no plans they are aware of to include sidewalks. There is no evidence of crash data to suggest pedestrian safety issues. This is considered a low-volume local roadway. They don't believe it's incumbent on any single entity to provide master planning on a road. They don't see pedestrian and bike activity to be a high-risk issue on Kimball Road. On the property itself, there will be pedestrian crossings, sidewalks, and a path within the property itself. There is a potential to accommodate a connection to Kimball Road and that is being considered.

Charles Basler questioned if they felt the current striping on Kimball Road was appropriate. Robert Michaud responded he did a similar study before. One of the things that could happen is high-visibility edge lines, particularly in inclement weather and at night, very clearly identify the edge of the road. Typically, on roads like this, people drift toward the center. If the edge lines clearly show the edge, then that would give people more comfort.

Dave Haraske questioned how much space people had to walk on the roadway edges. Robert Michaud responded that in the context of Kimball Road and lack of destination points, pedestrian activity like this development would generate will tend to be internal to the property itself. In Massachusetts, there is a legal obligation to share the road with bikers. There are signs that say "Share the Road." People have the legal right to do so whether you as an individual feel comfortable doing that is another story. The city has not taken a master plan to introduce that as a project. They were not saying bikers and pedestrians are not in consideration but given the number of units and lack of destination there is not a high demand. They are not precluding the city of Amesbury from including sidewalks.

Chair Sharon McDermot noted that the Town Forest and MVRTA bus stop are destinations that people may walk to. Robert Michaud responded that he has been out there on a number of occasions; he has not seen any level of pedestrian activity for that bus stop. There is a bus route on Haverhill Road, but he did not believe it was a well-used location. They are not seeing that as an amenity that is being heavily used.

Chair Sharon McDermot opened public comment.

Becky Frey read public comment from the Kimball Road Safety Preservation Group that is attached to the end of these minutes.



Dallas Haines, of 16 Newton Road, commented that his focus was on safety. He has driven Kimball Road about four trips a day for the better part of 15 years. He routinely drives 34–36 mph on that road and has other cars close behind him. He was shocked to learn about the development at this location. There is an uphill from Route 110, and then a downhill. Then the road banks left, and that's where 300 feet begins. A School bus is 41 feet long. When a school bus is stopped, more vehicles stop behind it. Page 8 of the report says it needs 220 feet for safe stopping distance on a wet, level road. They need more than that because it's not level. This could cause accidents, or go into roadside features, or hit kids. The Board should consider this. Cars backing up where the driveway is, will create the same situation with the stopping distance. He was troubled, it's not in the report or addressed. There is a lack of transparency in the report. Just in the last three weeks, he has stopped four times to reassemble the orange plastic sign because it was completely off the road. Another issue that concerned him was that the report talks about the 85th percentile at 35 mph. It also notes the 95th percentile, but never shares the other 5%. One fatality is one too many; one injury is one too many. Just focus on the stopping distance that's required. In today's world, signage means basically nothing.

Rick Brunelle, of 6 Kimball Road, commented that this morning, he took the time with group members to submit a letter relative to the secondary access. He hoped the Board would read it with great intention. Everyone keeps talking about the boulevard-style design. As soon as you get past the median, it shrinks back down. This has been compared to the Clark's Road development. Respectfully, we suggest what is going on at Kimball Road is similar to Amesbury Heights. That was not approved until a secondary access is given to the city. Do not compare this to Clark's Road. Imagine a mass casualty event on Kimball Road on a snow day. They would have very few people getting into that to provide emergency services.

Joyce Watkins, of 111 Kimball Road, commented that she was concerned mostly about traffic and safety based on the traffic study. The data collection was done out of season and was not accurate. There are two cars per house up to 27 Kimball Road. That is 57 cars already. They want to add 86 units. That will add 172 cars. Meadowbrook's development will add 94 cars. That is an additional 266 cars. They are only expecting a 1% increase by adding those amount of cars based on the cars there now. This is a very curvy road. There is nowhere to walk or ride a bike. But because it's generally one-person car accidents, they decided it's because of speed. Not the curvy roads. If there are no destinations, how is this road considered urban? This is not urban. Duke's Store is the only destination. Right there, the study is skewed. Ms. Watkins was very concerned about school bus. The study seems very convenient to them and not at all comforting to me. We have kids who can't walk in the road or their dogs. The traffic study needs to be redone to be accurate.

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Jessica Redfern, of 107 Kimball Road, District 5 City Councilor commented that she wanted to speak on the record. She strongly opposed the project. She understood the need for more housing and affordable housing and was all for finding a solution. 27 Kimball Road is not that location. Ms. Redfern noted the City Council provided comments on this proposal. Particularly given, in City Council comments, Ms. Redfern urged the ZBA to put in requirements that the developer has to carry these utility equipment costs and future costs. The ZBA is asking good questions and have clearly been to the site. They need to keep going and asking questions. Ms. Redfern was appreciative of the citizens and urged the ZBA to take their comments into account. Ask City Department Heads to really look at this; there are grave concerns.

Ashley Jones, of 39R Kimball Road, commented she was an abutter to this property, and an avid distance walker on this road. When walking on the road, you walk against traffic. When there is an oncoming vehicle, you do need to step into the dirt. Sometimes it does get dicey because there's not always room. The traffic calming sign that is already there is off the road and in the bushes. Someone hit it at a high rate of speed. It is usually down every other day. Also, to the comment that the volume of cars on the road is low: 200 cars in an hour does not seem low. As someone who commutes, and experiences the volume in the morning and evening, the traffic on Route 110 itself is incredibly high. Increasing traffic that at that time will be an insane increase. Accidents have occurred. Ms. Jones moved here in 2015 and lives at the base of the hill. The majority of accidents happen there. The rate of speed is not low on that road.

Rebecca DeMonico, 39 Kimball Road confirmed what Ms. Jones said about the accidents. The road has been freshly paved. They witnessed a decrease in accidents; as it degraded, but now that it is freshly repaved, they are increasing again. Ms. DeMonico raised concern about the runoff as well, but acknowledged that wasn't the topic tonight. Ms. DeMonico commented she was a cyclist and crossing Route 110 from the base of Kimball Road is sketchy. It would be good to see some width there. It is shortsighted of the developer to not pursue a sidewalk to Kimball Road. Let's use logic here and hopefully come through.

Armand Bisson, of 14 Kimball Road commented they have heard about the data and studies being done, and it looks like everything is great. Mr. Bisson is a safety consultant and has looked at data that showed everything is fantastic, but when looking at the site, it is not the same site at all. Sometimes you can't marry the two up. That is why tonight they are hearing so many things from the neighborhood. The data doesn't paint the picture at all. This is the single most important thing for Kimball Road safety. This will not be a safe thing. What will happen to this during construction? Do they know how many 18-wheelers would be going up and down the



road? Will there be a lot of safety issues to get this into fruition? The ZBA should carefully and respectfully look at this.

Paul Richards, of 8 Ashley Drive commented that he was an engineer as well, so he appreciated the work by engineers tonight. Studies have been done, mathematical models, but it is still behind a desk. In the letter they not they are looking for a roadway safety audit. Maybe they can ask BSC for their opinion on that.

Amy Allen commented that a Road Safety Audit is a very specific thing. They get a group of interdisciplinary people on it. By MassDOT standards, it is generally only conducted at high-crash locations. Generally, for a development, it would only be required if there is a specific high-crash area in the study area. That is not the case here and it was not done. It would be unconventional to request that of the applicant.

Dave Haraske requested clarification on the sidewalk and ADA Compliance Exemption. Amy Allen responded that generally, a sidewalk is required to be a maximum slope, but if the roadway itself exceeds the slope, then the roadway itself is exempt. In this case, the road exceeds the slope. The response BSC received from the applicant was the sidewalk would not be ADA compliant. BSC's response to that was it does not have to be ADA compliant.

Charles Basler questioned outside of the road safety audit, were there any additional calculations or studies that they would do. Amy Allen responded that traffic-calming studies are frequently requested in situations like that. The Board could request the study be submitted and could look at the exact traffic-calming measures being proposed.

Charles Basler questioned if additional calculations were done in an RSA that would take it beyond looking at each individual crash report. Amy Allen responded that an RSA would look into the details of each crash and map them out, as well as the physical audit of the road and hearing testimony.

Chair Sharon McDermot questioned if changes are implemented based on Road safety Audits. Amy Allen responded that the goal is to come up with changes in a plan. In a situation like this, it is likely that they would recommend a lot of traffic calming measures that have already been recommended.

John Rogers commented that on paper, this doesn't qualify for an RSA. Have you done RSAs in low-crash areas? Have they been requested and funded through municipalities? What drove



the municipality to do that? Amy Allen responded those were usually motivated by resident complaints.

Carolyn Murray commented that the question of cost came up. If the Board wanted to undertake an RSA, then the cost would need to be borne by the city. Regulations specifically state that the applicant can pay for the ZBA to hire a consultant to review a report they have prepared. If the Board wants a further study to be done, then they can make the request of the applicant. If the applicant is not willing, then the city would need to pay for it.

Charles Basler commented that he would like to meaningfully explore the opportunity for an RSA. The initial consideration is how it would be funded. They are also still waiting to hear from DPW if Kimball Road is an accepted roadway.

Charles Basler motioned for OCED to research the feasibility, cost, and timeline of an RSA in regards to the project. Seconded by Donna Collins. The motion passed unanimously by a 5-0 vote.

Becky Frey commented that Nick Cracknell with present to speak on a unit location question.

Nick Cracknell commented there were a lot of moving parts in this project when it came to infrastructure, civil, architecture, and amenities. If the density is 86 units, which is for the Board to decide, this roadway is set up with a looping roadway. Staff's suggestion to the Board and the applicant is, if this density is 86 units, the 3 units on the east side of the site are better placed on the western end in the 100-foot wetland buffer. The proposed plan already has units there, there is already a road and parking. The applicants thought it would be better to put them outside the wetland buffer. The vegetation is very thin in the 100-foot buffer. It seems to staff, in considering all the competing objectives here, placing more units on the western side with wetland mitigation is a better plan. They think it would be potentially acceptable to the Conservation Commission with mitigation. The proposed units are not in the wetlands; they are in the buffer. This will be reviewed under an NOI under state WPA regulations. It will not be reviewed by the local regulations by the Commission. The applicant would like guidance from the Board before they go to the Conservation Commission about moving the units. Is anyone here adamantly opposed to moving three units to be in line with other units already in the buffer on the west site? This would result in a positive impact to the direct Kimball Road neighbors on the eastern side. It would create an impervious impact in the buffer.



Charles Basler commented that given the choice of crowding neighbors or legally crowding wetland, he would choose legally crowding the wetland. Nick Cracknell commented he was not an expert on wetlands but they have a conservation group that is. This is something that could make it a better project for abutters. They had a conversation with the BSC environmental peer reviewer who felt like it was a reasonable option and could be acceptable with mitigation.

Donna Collins commented that it was 86 units, then she would support moving the units.

John Rogers agreed if it was 86 units, then he would support moving units to the wetland buffer.

Sharon McDermot agreed. Dave Haraske agreed.

Chair Sharon McDermot motioned to continue the application for 27 Kimball Road to the August 27, 2026 Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting. Seconded by Charles Basler. The motion passed unanimously by a 5-0 vote.

Donna Collins motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 pm. Seconded by John Rogers. The motion passed unanimously.

July 22, 2026

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

Re: Statement Regarding Traffic Review and Roadway Safety

Dear Members of the Board:

The Kimball Road Safety Preservation Group respectfully thanks the Board for the considerable time, diligence, and thoughtful attention it has devoted to the traffic and public safety issues presented by this application.

As the traffic review moves forward, the Group respectfully encourages the Board to continue relying upon the independent expertise of its retained peer reviewer, BSC Group, until BSC has advised the Board that all traffic-related issues identified during the peer review process have been satisfactorily resolved or appropriately conditioned. The applicant's consultants appropriately advocate on behalf of the applicant; BSC was retained by the Board to provide an independent and objective professional evaluation, and the Group respectfully believes that the Board should continue to rely upon that independent judgment throughout the remainder of its traffic review.

The Group further respectfully requests that the Board ask BSC to provide its independent professional opinion as to whether the Traffic Impact and Access Study (TIAS), together with the applicant's responses to the Traffic Peer Review, provides a sufficient basis to fully evaluate the traffic and roadway safety implications of this proposal, or whether BSC recommends that a Road Safety Audit (RSA) be conducted.

The Group is not asking BSC to reach any predetermined conclusion. Rather, based upon the collective experience of residents who have lived on Kimball Road for many, many decades, the Group respectfully believes that the roadway's unique and highly constrained characteristics present sufficiently unusual circumstances that the Board would benefit from BSC's independent professional judgment on that important question.

The Group understands that a TIAS evaluates traffic generation, operations, access, capacity, and related traffic engineering considerations. An RSA, by contrast, is an independent, multidisciplinary safety review that examines whether existing roadway characteristics—including roadway geometry, sight distance, roadside conditions, emergency access, and other physical features—may present safety concerns that are not fully addressed through a TIAS alone. The Group respectfully requests only that BSC advise the Board whether the current scope of the TIAS is sufficient or whether an RSA would provide additional information necessary for the Board's review.

Accordingly, the Group respectfully submits that traffic and roadway safety should not be considered fully resolved until BSC has completed its review, has advised the Board that all traffic-related issues have been satisfactorily resolved or appropriately conditioned, has provided its independent professional opinion regarding whether a Roadway Safety Audit (RSA) is warranted, and Fire Chief Robert Serino and Police Chief Craig Bailey have advised the Board that the emergency access and public safety issues within their respective areas of expertise have been satisfactorily addressed.

Only then, in the Group's respectful opinion, will the Board possess the comprehensive, independently verified, and multidisciplinary record necessary to make one of the most important public safety determinations presented by this application.

The Group respectfully requests that this statement be entered into the official record of these proceedings.

Thank you,

Members, Kimball Road Safety Preservation Group