



Amesbury Technical Review Committee

March 19, 2024

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

Nick Cracknell called the meeting to order at 9:07 am.

Administrative -

1. 2-20-2024 Minutes

Jim Wilson motioned to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2024, Technical Review Committee Meeting. Seconded by Chief Nolan. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items -

1. Outdoor Dining -

Vinny Tirone questioned if there were any issues or safety concerns based on the outdoor dining in the past years. Chief Nolan responded they did not have outdoor dining in the street on Friend St. or Market Square last year. In 2020 they took a few spaces out downtown and put dining there. They didn't do it again after that. Chief Nolan questioned why they would put dining back in the street.

Mayor Gove responded that they granted approvals to restaurants that applied last year. No one applied for dining in the parking spots other than Silvaticus. The outdoor dining locations are driven by what businesses ask for.

Nick Cracknell commented that Outrider will most likely be looking for outdoor dining this year. There are other businesses downtown that may as well like Hoppy's or the new Mexican restaurant. Mayor Gove responded that Hoppy's has applied before and were denied because it was not safe. Nick Cracknell commented that the TRC should assess any other locations that could be dangerous.

Lisa DeMeo commented that they should have a standard set of criteria to base approvals and denials on. They should evaluate the sidewalk dimensions and travel lanes etc.

Lisa DeMeo questioned if restaurants could serve alcohol across the sidewalk. Mayor Gove responded that the Covid legislation allowed for those services. That is set to expire April 1, 2024. There is currently legislation in process that would make it permanent. It was approved at the House and is currently before the Senate. It is expected to pass.

Nipun Jain commented that the TRC should determine where on the street they could not put outdoor dining in parking spots because of safety. Nick Cracknell commented



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that they should have criteria around it because if it is a legal parking space, then theoretically you could put dining in there.

Lisa DeMeo responded that just because it is safe to park in a space does not mean it is safe to sit in the spot and eat. A parked car is material damage vs. people sitting and dining.

Chief Nolan expressed concern about taking away parking spots in front of other businesses to support restaurants. It would be an inconvenience to people using other businesses downtown.

Mayor Gove responded that they recently did a downtown parking study and that has determined they have ample supply. They are working with the Chamber to better coordinate with business owners and employees and have them park in the lower Water St. parking lot. That would provide more downtown parking to visitors.

Lauren Blatchford commented that they should have better parking signage downtown to make it easier for visitors and enforcement.

Mayor Gove commented that improving the signage was an action item from that study. They will need to form a task force to review the study results and implement recommendations.

Nipun Jain commented that a lot of the downtown residents use the downtown parking as well.

Lisa DeMeo requested clarification on the abutting business signature line. Nick Cracknell responded that restaurants that are proposing to put outdoor dining in front of another abutting business, then they would have that business owner sign it. It could be non-binding. It is just to ensure there has been communication to the abutting businesses. It would not preclude the City from approving it. We can add a sentence to the application to make sure it's non-binding and add the address of the business.

Lisa should add that we will be checking the dimensions. Mayor - everything is subject to review and inspection.

Mayor Gove questioned if they should include private dining in these applications as well. Nipun Jain responded that the private dining should be managed through the Liquor License Commission and signed off by the Inspectional Services Department.

Nick Cracknell questioned if there was any feedback on closing the entrance near the Barking Dog. Mayor Gove responded that she would like to get away from using the barricades. Nick Cracknell responded that if they do use barriers, then they should make them more uniform.



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Chief Nolan commented that safety was paramount and putting outdoor dining in parking spots near Hoppy's and Molise would not be safe. If we didn't have tractor trailer trucks driving downtown or if it was a walking mall, then it would be different.

Nipun Jain questioned if they had considered independent food truck operations. Mayor Gove responded that they do not have a system for that. Chief Nolan commented that a food truck must go through an approval process with inspections and fire.

Chief Nolan commented that if they are putting up outdoor lighting then there are regulations on how to run the cords safely. They would need to be approved by the electrical inspector and they must put down specific mats. There are also regulations on outdoor heaters.

Mayor Gove commented that fees need to be approved by the City Council. It may be possible to put fees in place for the peak season June - September. Nipun Jain commented that the City may need more time to work out a fee structure.

Mayor Gove commented that they should have enough jersey barriers for outdoor dining and asked for an inventory of the available barriers for the next meeting.

Nipun Jain motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:13 am. Seconded by Jim Wilson. The motion passed unanimously.