



Amesbury Technical Review Committee

January 8, 2025

City Hall Auditorium

62 Friend St.

9:30 am

In attendance: Jim Wilson, Nick Cracknell, Chief Nolan, Joe Buckley, Howard Snyder, Amanda Armington, and Becky Frey

Absent: Chief Bailey, Robert Serino, Nipun Jain, Lisa DeMeo, and Lauren Blatchford

Chief Nolan called the meeting to order at 9:43 am.

Administrative:

1. 12-18-24

The draft minutes were not ready for review.

Comment Review:

1. [Rocky Hill Environmental Impact Report](#)

Nick Cracknell commented that the city recently adopted zoning to accommodate this proposed development. The applicants have been issued an ORAD to verify the resource areas on the property. That confirmed they have 28-30 acres to work in between a northern and southern neighborhood with a connector road. There is 20 acres in Salisbury that they are not planning to develop but is part of the same campus. There is one point of access proposed on Elm St. It will be a boulevard street with a median down the middle with 15-foot travel lanes. It will be an arterial road with a roundabout. The applicants did an ENF last year and that resulted in a draft EIR. The public has about 6 weeks to review this. The comment period closes January 10th. The comments go to the state agency EOEA who are reviewing the EIR. That will develop the next scope for a final EIR. OCED has been working with the applicant and they have given them a host of comments prior to this even being posted. All the comments have been informal and about the design. The draft EIR is about land alteration, impacts to wetland resource, water, sewer, drainage, traffic impacts, and historic changes. It focuses on public health, climate resiliency, construction management. The wetland impacts here are minor because the area has been delineated and verified. The development is not within the 25-foot buffer except for 2 existing culverts. OCED felt that everyone, especially fire, would want to see 2 means of access to get to the northern neighborhood. In the EIR and concept plan shows a 20-foot-wide gravel drive. The culvert needs to be replaced and lengthened. It would be 250 sf of permanent and 500 sf of temporary wetland impact. They are probably going to have to have that access to support the development. It would make sense to make it a paved 20-foot access road. They don't show on the second means of access through the animal hospital on the EIR



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draft. There is drainage at the end of the animal hospital driveway. It either needs to be moved or they need to work around it and go on the abutting property. There should be a comment about a second means of egress. OCED also suggested adding a roundabout at the end of the northern neighborhood to add more parking for trail access and better fire access.

Jim Wilson questioned if they were planning to team up with Salisbury on this. Nick Cracknell responded that the EIR notes that the Salisbury location is not planned to be developed at this time. OCED thought that a portion was going to be in conservation, but the draft EIR says not developed at this time. It is important to protect that land as much as possible. OCED is going to make a recommendation that the 20 acres in Salisbury is preserved. They say in the EIR that they've consulted with the past DPW director, and they did not see issues with flow or capacity for sewer. They did not identify any significant improvements that need to be made. Joe Buckley commented that they had water and sewer staff review this. They do not take issue the theory of capacity, but they did have an issue with how it was framed in the report.

Nick Cracknell commented that they should flag the noise from 495. It may require abatement.

Joe Buckley commented that he was concerned on the density and proposed plantings. DPW will prepare their own comment letter. DPW has also reached out to MASS DOT to look at this development area holistically.

Nick Cracknell commented that public access was the last item on OCED's list. A big part of their justification to not have to do significant traffic improvement is pointing to the multi modal access via the trail system. The trail system access is not necessarily developed enough to make that case. Creating a bike/pedestrian connection through that site to the riverwalk would be awesome, but it would also include a wetland crossing. The draft EIR notes that there are no known substantial improvements required to support this development on Elm St. or Route 110. It also says that further study is needed. They talk about phasing the lights to optimize signals. There is a concept plan in the draft with a large roundabout at the 95 interchange. That shows there is a way the state can fix a 50-year defect. Right now, they are proposing a stop condition at the end of the road out to Elm St.

Joe Buckley commented that if they were to add a stop light, then they would need storage for cars to stack up. DOT needs to look at this and consider the holistic development. Roundabouts work well because it keeps things moving. A stop condition



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may not work, but a traffic light may not work either. Nick Cracknell agreed a stop condition may not work here. They should be flagging concerns on the level of service on Elm St. and comment that the traffic at this development needs to be adequately mitigated.

Nick Cracknell noted that OCED made informal comments to the development team that they amend their road cross sections. They started the conversation at 8-foot parking lanes and 11-foot travel lanes. They've agreed to do that. OCED suggested adding more parking in their alleyways. There will be 91 units in the southern neighborhood and 284 units in northern neighborhood. The southern piece will be a more traditional neighborhood with parking in the rear.

Chief Nolan questioned if there would be enough space in the back. Nick Cracknell responded that there would be a 20-foot-wide space behind there. Joe Buckley questioned who would own that. Nick Cracknell responded that he was not sure. The main arterial roadway is wide enough with two 6-foot sidewalks, two 8-foot turf belts, two 8-foot parking lanes, two 14-foot travel lanes, and a 8-foot median. They may or may not ask to be a public street.

Chief Nolan questioned if they were all attached buildings. Nick Cracknell responded that the northern neighborhoods would more likely have rental units and be mostly flats. The southern neighborhood would have more units for sale in ownership and would be 2–5-unit townhouses. There would be garages on the end units. The middle units would not have garages. Everyone would have off street parking. There will be a series of pocket parks.

Chief Nolan questioned if it would have an Elm St. address. Nick Cracknell responded that would be determined during the permitting process.

Nick Cracknell commented that OCED suggested all crosswalks should be at least textured. They suggested expanding the parking for the civic space and pool. They are not taking it off the table that the public would be able to use some of the facilities. There will be pickle ball courts, tennis, basketball, playgrounds, and trails that they can determine how much public access is possible.

Chief Nolan questioned how the water was down on Elm St. Joe Buckley responded there was a 12-inch main.



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Tracey Chalifour questioned if snow storage and sightlines had been looked at. Nick Cracknell responded that at this point there is a lot of storage capacity.

Joe Buckley questioned if there was adequate off-street parking for the development. Nick Cracknell responded that they are utilizing some on street parking in the northern neighborhood. It is not designated but will support the people that live here. They will not meet the city's parking requirements for that density if they do not utilize the street parking.

Howard Snyder commented that they will need designated areas for moving vans and delivery vehicles.

Tracey Chalifour questioned if there would be a homeowners association. Nick Cracknell confirmed they would need that.

Nick Cracknell commented that they have talked about the need for a fire department out in that area. There could be space along Elm St. for that. It will be helpful if fire can express concern about emergency access, traffic signalization, and response time in their comments. It would be important to see some kind of accommodation for at least space for an auxiliary fire station.

Project Update:

1. Meadowbrook

Nick Cracknell commented that a set of plans have been filed for the Meadowbrook solar facility. It is a proposed 50-acre solar facility in the upper northwest corner of Amesbury. They are proposing 13,332 panels on 606 racks and would need to clear cut 50 acres of the 100-acre parcel. They would have access off Birchmeadow Rd. through the Nihan parcel. They are proposing to construct a 20-foot-wide utility driveway and limit disturbance by doing minimal grading.

Howard Snyder added that they are proposing battery storage as well.

Nick Cracknell commented that they filed in December with Jim Wilson. He sent them a determination to file with the Planning Board for a site plan and special permit application. This type of application has a lot of protections because it is protected under the Dover Amendment MGL Chapter 48 Section 3. The Statewide map of suitable solar parcels is not good. They have obtained an interconnection permit for this site which



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shows it has been deemed viable from National Grid to connect. That review process all largely done in private. Syncarpha obtained the interconnection permit for 1.3 million. They are not going away. Staff has been working with them to let us amend the zoning and put in better performance standards. Syncarpha has agreed to apply for a water resource protection special permit. The zoning amendment bill is hung up at City Council because most people do not want this project to happen. They have talked to fire about creating a 16-foot-wide access road with cleared shoulders instead of a 20-foot-wide road. They have reviewed the application with the city attorney to make sure he agrees that they should be filing the site plan and special permit application. On Monday the Planning Board will do a completeness check. The public hearing will open in February. There will be peer review for storm water, environmental, and battery storage.

General Communications:

Nick Cracknell commented that they are working on a Shared streets grant for the outdoor dining design. This would allow them to cover jersey barriers to make them look nicer and to look at ADA accessible platforms.

Chief Nolan motioned to adjourn at 11:17 am. Seconded by Jim Wilson. The motion passed unanimously.