

*Approved 3/6/2025*

Amesbury Historical Commission  
Town Hall • Friend Street  
Amesbury, MA 01913

### Amesbury Historical Commission (AHC) Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Feb. 13, 2025

Location: Amesbury Council on Aging Senior Center, 68 Elm Street, Amesbury, MA

Commissioners & Staff Present: Joe Finn, Chair, Chris Akelian, Dick Joltes, Steve Klomps, Malcolm Rutter, Jay Williamson (arrived at 7:10), Christopher Lane (new member, nonvoting), and Meghan Fahey (liaison)

Also in attendance: Mike Sanchez, Paul Gagliardi

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM.

Joe introduced Christopher Lane who was nominated to AHC by the Mayor, has been approved by the City Council, but has not yet been sworn in.

Joe Finn introduced Meghan Fahey, the new City liaison to the Historical Commission. Meghan mentioned that with the departure of the previous liaison it was decided to move the position to the Community and Economic Development office to support the Commission and to coordinate activities with the City's Preservation Plan. Joe stated the liaison position will be more involved and will evolve over time.

The minutes for the Oct. 3, 2024 meeting were submitted by Dick for review. Malcolm motioned to accept the minutes as submitted, seconded by Chris. Passed 5 to 0.

The minutes for the Sept. 5, 2024 meeting were submitted by Chris for review. Joe noted that the minutes were long (this was the public hearing for 230 Main Street) so he deferred them for consideration later in the meeting.

#### New Business:

- FY 2026-27 Budget – Steve motioned to defer consideration of this item to later in the meeting, seconded by Malcolm. Passed 5 to 0.
- Demolition Application (Partial) 13 Merrimac Street – Mike Sanchez, Construction Operations Group and Paul Gagliardi representing the client were in attendance. Mike made a brief statement regarding plans for the property – the building will remain a two-family property with a 2 ½ story addition added to the back (north side) that will have a garage on the ground floor. Improvements will be made to the structure including altering the existing

gambrel roof and adding dormers. Mike had previously conducted an on-site review with Meghan and commission members Chris, Steve and Malcolm.

Joe stated that AHC needs to determine if the property is historically significant. Steve reported that the property was not included in the Inventory of Historic Resources for Amesbury. The building is shown in the 1854, 1872 and 1884 Maps of Amesbury identified as a store. On the 1918 Sanborn Map it is identified as a barber. By the 1930 Census the property had been converted to a multi-family residence. The site review showed that six feet had been added to the foundation the full length of the south side sometime in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, likely when it was converted to residential use. This foundation change resulted in the south and both end walls being rebuilt, and significant changes have been made to the north wall and the roof over time. There is no longer any structural integrity remaining of the earlier store building.

Steve motioned that 13 Merrimac Street be determined not historically significant. The motion was seconded by Chris. Malcolm agreed with the previous observations, and Jay stated this concurred with his review of the exterior. The motion was passed 6 to 0.

- Demolition Application (Partial) 95 Elm Street – A partial demolition request has been submitted to remove part of the roof and add dormers. Joe asked for a motion. Steve motioned that 95 Elm Street be determined not historically significant. The motion was seconded by Malcolm. Discussion ensued: Steve reported that this property is included in the Inventory of Historic Resources in Amesbury (Form AME.287) in which it is identified as the Rufus Davis House, c.1854 and is identified as “a typical sidehall-plan Greek Revival-style house.” Steve noted that the deed record shows the land was sold to Rufus Davis as a house lot in 1836, and that the later c.1854 date was likely derived from its presence in the map of that year. The style looks more like a c.1865 Victorian, which suggested the original Greek Revival house might have been taken down and replaced at that later date. However, the building form and positioning on the lot, with the gable end to the street, suggests an alternative that the original Greek Revival house was altered during the Victorian period, removing the Greek Revival stylistic elements of enclosed pediment, broad frieze, wide pilaster cornerboards and original six over six windows, leaving only the Greek Revival entrance. As a result, this house is not a good example of Greek Revival architecture.

The motion to determine 95 Elm Street as not historically significant was passed 6 to 0.

- Demolition Application (Full) 15 Lake Street Shed – A full demolition request has been submitted for a small outbuilding/shed on the property. Steve noted that this property is not included in the Inventory of Historic Resources in Amesbury. The property is in a neighborhood that was developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century - it is not shown in the 1884 Map. The small outbuilding is in poor condition and is not large enough to have served as a carriage house or garage. It was likely a small storage shed and is of no architectural value.

Dick motioned that the small outbuilding at 15 Lake Street be determined not historically significant. The motion was seconded by Malcolm. There was no further discussion, and the motion was passed 6 to 0.

- FY 2026-27 Budget – Meghan reviewed a proposed FY2026 Budget for the Historical Commission. It was noted that the Historical Commission has not had a budget in previous years. The Proposed Budget includes four line items with a total request of \$23,135, detailed as follows:
  - A. Preservation - \$20,000 for Resource Inventory. Meghan discussed the Amesbury Preservation Plan prepared in 1998 and the need to expand and update the Survey (of historic resources) that was conducted in the late 1980's. There have been significant changes in the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) process since that time. The budget amount is to provide matching funds for additional survey work, which could include survey work for new areas in Amesbury, including structures and/or landscapes/sites, that were not covered in the original work, or to update existing survey forms for selected properties deemed of significance. Joe and Meghan clarified that the amount is not contingent on MHC matching grant funds, but that it is better if it can be combined with such funding. Jay asked if new Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds and the budget could be related, i.e. how CPA funds could be allocated. Meghan responded that it would be preferable for AHC to have its own budget from the City separate from CPA.
  - B. Consulting - \$2,500 for architectural and engineering consulting work, such as that recently done for 230 Main Street that was funded from the budget for Community and Economic Development.
  - C. Administrative - \$500 for mailing, office supplies, etc.
  - D. Memberships - \$135 for organizational memberships such as Preservation Mass and the National Alliance of Preservation Commissioners.

Joe asked how to move forward with the request for a budget. Meghan stated AHC would need to make a motion to advance the draft budget. She would then submit the proposed budget to the City Administration for initial review in February, with adjustments in March, and a final budget proposal for consideration and approval by the City Council in April. Meghan will steward the process and advise AHC of developments as appropriate.

Chris motioned to approve the submission of the Historical Commission Budget Proposal FY26. The motion was seconded by Jay. There was no further discussion, and the motion was passed 6 to 0.

Old Business:

- There was no old business discussed.

The meeting minutes for Sept. 5, 2024 were taken up for consideration. After review, Dick motioned to accept the minutes as submitted, seconded by Steve. Passed 5 to 0 (Malcolm abstained as he was not in attendance for that meeting).

Malcolm then motioned to adjourn, seconded by Jay. Passed 6 to 0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectively submitted,  
Steve Klomps