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Approved 8/7/2025

Amesbury Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: May 1st, 2025

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

Commissioners Present: Joe Finn - Chair, Chris Akelian, Dick Joltes, Steve Klomps, Malcolm Rutter, Christopher Lane, Jay Williamson (partial attendee)

Meeting called to order at 7:06 PM

1. Review of past meeting minutes:
 - a. Minutes for the April 3rd 2025 meeting were submitted by Chris for review. No edits or further reviews were called out. Motion to adopt the minutes as submitted was motioned by Chris, seconded by Steve. Passed 6-0
2. No other correspondence to cover, per Joe.
3. 20 Pearl Street – Partial demolition application submitted by Walter Casey (resident.)
 - a. Demolition to facilitate addition to original house, scope includes removal of vinyl siding and replacement of non-original windows to recreate original historical style.
 - b. No listing in Macris to note historical significance.
 - c. Walter noted a complete renovation occurred in 1989-1990, contains no original materials, notably siding and windows
 - d. Chris Lane motions to find structure not historically significant, seconded by Malcolm. Passes 6-0
4. 201 Elm Street Update – Bill Nolan representing River's Edge Development
 - a. No fundamental changes from the April meeting.
 - b. New drawings included additional notes offering clarity on scope updates.
 - c. Revised scope includes removal of plaster ceiling to expose original timber mainframe, infilling between timber with new plaster.
 - d. Replace dilapidated siding with new cedar clapboards with 3" exposure and corner boards to match existing materials.
 - e. Restore existing entry to original condition, or if not possible, rebuilt in kind.
 - f. All windows in the original house to be replaced using Green Mountain windows, specs provided by Bill upon Nick Cracknell's previous recommendation.
 - g. The asphalt Shingle roof will also be replaced in kind.

- h. Proposing detached 2 car garage with storage above, exterior to match existing house. Includes 2 doors to face driveway.
 - i. A previous meeting with the DRC and planning board asked for different revisions. The original submission had an attached garage facing Monroe Street. The owner and developer proposed moving to Elm Street with the agreement of DRC, both for safety/traffic flow concerns as well as preserving the overall historic aesthetic of the property.
 - 1- Town engineer recommended “no left turn” sign on driveway to minimize risks of incident at intersection. The driveway also provides ample turning space for forward exit onto Elm Street.
 - i. Bill also confirmed that non-historical “lean-to” section off back of original house will be removed. Original chimney (non-functional) will be repaired/repointed. Cedar clapboards will be painted/stained to match existing.
 - j. Landscape/screening will be provided along Elm Street to minimize exposure to any “non-historic material. Jay remarked that a shorter traditional fence and gate would be preferable for the overall aesthetic – while minimizing visibility of any non-historic elements in the proposal (i.e. concrete footer for garage.)
 - k. Jay proposed an addition to scope regarding the front storm door, to be recreated in the original style. AHC requested an updated application draft to include plans for the door repair or replacement in kind as necessary.
 - l. Nick Cracknell noted that the 2 additional proposed buildings on Monroe Street, while not included in the preservation restoration application, should be mirroring the style of the original house (201 Elm Street.) Chris Lane also mentioned garage door specifications to be included in this revision.
 - m. Motion was amended to include endorsement upon scope revision/review of garage door specifications, as well as inclusion of requirement that 2 additional buildings utilize complimentary materials to suit the historical effect of the original house, even if constructed in a more modern style.
 - n. Motion to conditionally endorse draft application as submitted, pending revisions to scope update to include details on property barrier/fence and historic storm door. Was initially submitted by Malcolm and seconded by Dick. Following the amendments discussed, the motion passed 7-0.
5. Review of Draft Preservation Restriction for 201 Elm Street.
- a. Steve remarked that the scope of the drafted preservation restriction application needs to be revised to match the template completed by other applicants (ex: Paul Gagliardi of 6 Center Street).
 - b. Joe agreed and remarked that the submission date of the draft on Tuesday 4/29 was not enough time for a thorough review and to reconcile the major changes on the application.
 - c. Steve motioned that AHC will accept and endorse draft for preservation restriction once the draft is revised to include the correct description of the property’s location and conform to the previously established template. Malcolm seconded, motion passed 7-0.

6. 38-40 Prospect Street - presented by property owner Geno Rinaldi.
 - a. Original building permit submitted to make use of 3rd floor (convert to living space given high roof line and install dormers.)
 - b. Also considered applying for ADU (accessory dwelling unit) under the new MA law, was contacted by Nick Cracknell of planning board to slow plans and apply for a special historical preservation permit instead.
 - c. Nick C. (assisting in presentation) clarified definition and requirements for ADU and provided additional description of the uniqueness of these 2 adjoining properties.
 - i. MA defines ADU as 900 sq feet maximum.
 - d. 2 family asymmetrical window / door openings Buildings include all original windows, porches in poor condition.
 - i. Proposing to rebuild entirety of exterior porch structure supported with round columns rather than square as currently constructed.
 - ii. Windows will be appropriate for buildings covered by special historic preservation permit.
 - iii. Resurfacing driveways to pavers or brick to further enhance historic aesthetic and provide additional parking for prospective residents.
 - e. Choice between low-cost renovation (ADU) vs high-cost renovation (historic preservation permit.) Nick emphasized that historic preservation permit is the preferred outcome to preserve the uniqueness of the buildings and neighborhood.
 - f. Geno first needs to file and go before the planning board before making further decisions regarding project planning and materials/labor investment.
 - g. Steve questioning whether the current external columns are original to the property, unknown based on current surveys / historical resources.
 - h. Chris Lane asked about intention for 3rd floor dormers / egress windows – not required now that 3rd floor would be ancillary to 2nd floor.
 - i. Steve asked about the current window style and intention to replace it in kind or as appropriate based on the original period of the buildings.
 - j. The commission supports the project as proposed under the historic preservation special permit, pending further review from the planning board.
7. CPC Update – Jay Williamson
 - a. Summary of CPC agenda on 4/10/2025, including introduction of committee members, scope of review, and funding from the city.
 - b. Noted that CPC funding needs to be reviewed by the city council for approval.
 - i. Budget pulls from the same pool (1% of collected taxes) to be used for historic preservation, affordable housing, and open space.
 - ii. Funding becomes available in spring of 2026.
 - c. The Historical Commission will be able to review and approve items that come before the committee in conjunction with projects reviewed by CPC
 - i. Approved projects Must be used for public use.
 - ii. No maintenance, improvements only.
 - iii. At least 10% of CPC funds are dedicated to historic preservation, more available depending on the effort/level of detail behind applications.
(Cross functional opportunities between the 3 buckets.)

8. 276 Main Street – zoning board seeking to open form 40B to override local zoning (1 stop permit to override all other permitting bodies,) seeking AHC opinion/consultation on scope of work and preferable outcomes.
 - a. Proposed addition of 8 efficiency units (4 duplexes) in the heart of the Ferry district, one of Amesbury's oldest neighborhoods.
 - b. Proposed alterations to the front of Home for Aged Women (Bartlett House) to be recreated in historical style (no special preservation permit exists but is listed within Macris – for amenities to current building, no new dwellings units.)
 - c. New maintenance building/office at the back of the property, as well as an addition to the existing veteran housing (new building following fire in early 2000s – not historically significant.)
 - d. According to the fire department, no issues or risks to water pressure/infrastructure with the addition of 8 units (not within AHC scope but heavily discussed.)
 - e. The project itself is protected by the 40B status, but aspects can be approved upon AHC with contingencies like other projects.
 - i. Nick emphasized the importance of the AHC's participation in providing feedback to projects like this that are not necessarily included within the approval scope of a special historical preservation permit.
 - ii. Ask is for AHC members to review project plans and provide commentary/input from a perspective of maintaining historical preservation and aesthetic throughout the project.

9. A motion to adjourn was made by Malcolm and seconded by Steve. Passed 6-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 PM.

Respectively submitted,
Malcolm Rutter