



Amesbury Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: December 4th, 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, Jennifer Welter

Meeting called to order at 7:08 PM

1. Minutes for the November 6th 2025 meeting were submitted by Steve for review. No edits or further reviews were called out. Chris L motioned to adopt the minutes as submitted, seconded by Dick. Passed 7-0
2. No other additional correspondence to cover.
3. Chris L had no items from Design and Review Committee (DRC) to discuss, due to the regular meeting rescheduling to 12/16.
4. 61 Whitehall Road – Demolition application submitted by Tim Morse, property owner.
 - a. Demolition to facilitate 2nd floor expansion, adding dormers to allow for additional habitable space upstairs.
 - b. Inclusion of single double hung windows to match original style.
 - c. Removal of front door and chimney (inactive) due to non-use.
 - d. Not listed in Macris database, best estimate of original construction ca. 1880. Not included in historical maps from 1856, 1872, 1884.
 - e. Steve motioned to find the property not historically significant, due to no available Macris data and common construction type.
 - i. Seconded by Dick. Passed 7-1.
 - ii. Jay dissented due to age of property compared to neighboring properties. There is also some noted hesitation regarding entire removal of front door with respect to Amesbury's architectural heritage and property value.
5. 9 Oakland Street – developers inviting AHC for a site visit. Multiple committee members expressed interest in a Friday visit later in December, to be confirmed by Megan Fahey after coordination with the developer team.

6. Review of Demolition Bylaw
 - a. Megan and Nick Cracknell continue to work to clarify language of the Demolition Bylaw to specify properties as historically significant vs. “preferably preserved.”
 - b. Steve mentioned section 40.2.3 what qualifies a property as historically significant. Of the 4 criteria, primary consideration is whether a property is included in Macris but that is not always the sole determinant. It is preferred for the bylaw language to reflect that a Macris listing is not the sole/default condition for determining a property to be historically significant.
 - i. Other factors to consider include architectural relevance, cultural importance, historical significance of surrounding properties, and the association of famous people.
 - ii. Goal of language clarification is twofold: A. Increase value in review of properties selected for AHC approval to preserve historically relevant properties. B. Ease the onerous application and approval process for homeowners to allow for quicker completion of projects.
 - c. A default AHC review for applications for properties 75+ years old also under consideration, potentially adjusting that to 100+ years, or with a combination of other conditions requiring additional discussion.
 - d. Malcolm motioned to continue review of demolition bylaw at the January AHC meeting, seconded by Jay. Passed 7-0
7. 27 Kimball Road – developer proposing construction of 92 new residential units under MA 40B designation.
 - a. Zoning board to meet with developer and discuss on 12/17, no further AHC action required at present.
8. Steve discussed resurrection of historic house marker project, originally in conjunction with AHC and Bartlett Museum. Currently on hold while new signage vendor is sourced, as well as reviewing favored materials for cost effectiveness and durability (wood vs. plastic/acrylic.) AHC to review potential templates and sample materials (Chris L to source) in future meetings.
9. Dick mentioned a recent walk-by of 16 Newton Road where significant exterior work is underway. Potentially significant property according to unpublished records found by Steve. Property could be as old as late 1700s but not flagged for AHC review in the application process, no Macris data available.
10. Jennifer had a question regarding status of Community Preservation Committee formation. Jay clarified that each committee interacting with the CPC would meet in time to gather information and establish a framework for collaboration.
11. Steve motioned to adjourn, seconded by Chris L. Passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM.

Respectively submitted,
Malcolm Rutter