**RECEIVED**
**By City Clerk at 4:15 pm, Jul 11, 2024**

1. Amesbury Planning Board Meeting Minutes

2. Virtual Meeting – April 29, 2024, at 7:00 PM

3. Chairman Pascal Rettig called the April 29, 2024, Planning Board meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He read: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020, Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20, and the extension of the Governor's order until March 31, 2025, Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this Meeting of the Planning Board on April 29, 2024, is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort is being made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order.
4. *To submit a public comment, or dial in please email Becky Frey at freyr@amesburyma.gov. There will be a public comment portion of each public hearing discussed tonight.*

5. *The Chairman notes that tonight's Planning Board meeting is being recorded by Amesbury Public Access Television; this legal step has been taken but does not act as the official record. The written meeting minutes by the Recording Secretary is the official record.*

6. *If you would like to dial in to speak you can email Nipun at Nipun@amesburyma.gov*

7. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call –
8. Keith Ratner – YES
9. Joel Nice – YES
10. Lorri Krebs- YES
11. Michael Jewell – YES
12. Tracey Chalifour - YES
13. David Frick – YES
14. Pascal Rettig - YES
15. Also: Nipun Jain (Planning Director) and Becky Frey (Community Development Coordinator)

16. **Presentation – IAMesbury Master Plan**
17. Pascal Rettig commented that the Master Plan was the only item on the agenda for tonight. It is the culmination of a lot of work from the task force. The previous Master Plan was created in 2004. The task force will be providing a presentation and then there will be time for comments from the Board and the public.
18. Mayor Gove introduced Mary Chatigny and Brittany Steingesser as the task force co-chairs. This is the result of many years of hard work. The timeline is on the web site. People were appointed to the task force in January 2020. This effort went through had some obstacles with Covid. This is not your average Master Plan. The task force employed a lot of ways for people to participate. It's taken a lot of effort from a lot of folks to put this together.

19. Mary Chatigny commented that they set a vision for the Master Plan and then set priorities based on feedback from the community. They encourage collaboration and growing Amesbury in an intentional way. They looked at what a well-rounded Amesbury would look like. The task force held Amesbury Listens sessions to get community feedback. They reviewed the last 2004 Master Plan to see what was still relevant. They also looked at other plans in other communities as examples. The visions and goals in this Master Plan form a strategic plan. They are hopeful that the implementation will be directed toward city personnel to put items into action. The Master Plan should be paired with their yearly budget and goal settings. The task force looked at a lot of other existing plans within Amesbury as well to work in tandem with them. They looked at a lot of different ways to get the community involved, and wanted to make sure as they were looking at elements they were as inclusive as possible. They looked at information through the lens of equity, health, resilience, and sustainability. They tried to produce a more inviting and readable Master Plan that was relatable and easy to understand. The intention is to make sure this plan is engaged with and utilized. Th implementation has already begun. There has been work done at Lake Gardner, the ADU ordinance has been implemented, a sidewalk grant has been acquired, and the Community Preservation Act has passed.
20. Pascal Rettig opened public comment.
21. Tracey Chalifour commented that it was good to hear there was analysis and carry over from the 2004 plan. It would be helpful to get a grasp on the survey response rate for the elements and how they informed work. There are some formatting issues that made the plan harder to read. Some of the graphs and maps don't have dates on them and some page numbers are cut off.
22. Mary Chatigny commented that William Donohue may have some of that information. They did not do a survey for every element. There was a summit for cultural and economic development. They did surveys on the listening sessions for some of the other elements. They looked at the previous plan and made their goals broad enough it ensured some of the previous goals were carried over from the last plan.
23. Sally Nutt of 335 Main St. is the co-chair of Arts and Culture Council. This plan is exciting, and it will be good to see a lot of things mentioned come to fruition. Some things are already in play.
24. Pascal Rettig commented that the plan was put together well and easy to read. The 2004 plan is a dense beast. It would have been good to have appendices with source material. Website links are good, but links tend to die or people lose access. It would be good to have it permanently recorded. The implementation plan has a lot at varied levels. Some are general and others are very specific. It would be helpful to understand the priority and scale of all the tasks that need to be done. It would help the City stay more accountable with a feedback loop. It would be good to have a plan for who is responsible for implementation.
25. Mayor Gove commented that there was a municipal element that includes staff engagement and a goal chart. They started by putting them in a spread sheet and have a leadership meeting to go through all the goals and determine which department is the primary and who is the secondary for different tasks. They are using a stop light method to

assess the readiness level and evaluate what is missing. That is how they will track the tasks and hold them accountable. They will make that spreadsheet public.

26. Pascal Rettig commented that they should also consider engaged citizens and groups to help with the implementation as well. Groups like the Open Space Committee and Lake Gardner Association could help carry some of the weight.
27. Joel Nice commented that it was nice that the document was organized with icons. Joel Nice questioned if they could expand on the housing update and inclusionary zoning.
28. Mayor Gove commented that right now inclusionary zoning has a threshold based on how many affordable units must be included. Often a developer can't make the numbers work and offers a payment in lieu. There is inconsistency on the end result of that equation. There has been a lot of talk about how to calculate the payment in lieu. They anticipate hiring a consultant to work through that.
29. Tracey Chalifour questioned what the next steps should be, and how comments will be evaluated and incorporated.
30. Pascal Rettig commented that there were two categories of comments. The first are typos and small suggestions/corrections. The second are more substantive pieces where there may be disagreement with a goal or action item. That is something that should be discussed not sent in comments. The process won't work if people send in substantive changes without discussion.
31. Michael Jewell questioned how the City will pay for everything.
32. Mayor Gove commented that was a good question. They were conscious when writing the plan that not everything requires funding. Some items will have grant funding, the CPA is a possibility, some goals have suggested funding avenues. The plan is a framework to focus energy and guide work.
33. Nipun Jain commented that he was fortunate enough to be part of the 2004 plan which was a heavy lift. These documents provide city officials and residents with a purpose for how to focus their work. It provides direction by making it easy to see what the priority is and how to guide decisions. The Master Plan shows next steps for the City and is determined by where we want to go and how to achieve it.
34. Mayor Gove commented that the plan is out there. They advanced the PR on the plan once it became a public document. Once the plan is approved, they can take snapshots from the plan and turn them into social media and newsletters etc. They can target audiences in different ways.
35. Nipun Jain commented that the plan can be interpreted and determined how to use as a community and as other stakeholders. As they build upon this, they have the opportunity to take what is relevant to the issues at hand and customize it on what the City hopes to achieve. Each section doesn't stand alone. There are a lot of links between elements. Once the plan is formally adopted, they can look at how to use each element for the issue they want to address or act on.
36. Keith Ratner commented that it would be helpful to see the implementation spreadsheet the Mayor mentioned for more information. Implementation is a key piece.
37. Lorri Krebs echoed previous sentiments from other Board members. A lot of hard work has gone into this, and it is appreciated. Lorri Krebs questioned what the next steps were to get it approved.

38. Nipun Jain commented that the Master Plans are under the Planning Board's purview. There is a clear public participation process, and it is the responsibility of the Board to take a vote and adopt it as a plan. The vote won't get rid of the previous Master Plan, but this plan tells the City where they are and where they should go. Pascal Rettig laid out two action items. One is feedback on typos and the second is comments on the provisions of the plan itself. The Board should pass on typo edits to the task force. The other comments should be discussed now in the meeting.
39. Pascal Rettig commented that in the 2004 Master Plan one of the primary elements was to promote growth in the downtown. That is not a goal in the economic development element in this plan. In one of the surveys the number one response to the important issues in Amesbury was to develop the downtown. There are a lot of goals and points around the downtown and business community. It would be good to know where that is called out and covered in the Master Plan.
40. Mayor Gove commented that the economic development element has a section that is specific to the Lower Millyard. That is the next piece of focus for the downtown. The focus will be on that area for business growth and further development of the downtown. It is addressed in a broader way as well. They will prioritize places of interest for mobility for example in the downtown, schools, and library.
41. Pascal Rettig commented that the Lower Millyard is in the old plan as well as a target.
42. Mayor Gove commented that they had some buildings transition and hopefully more will soon. The garage needs to be done.
43. Nipun Jain commented that the Upper Millyard development took 25-30 years to happen even though it was identified in the previous Master Plans. It happened through capital investments and human effort. Some things may seem like a broken record, but it takes that much effort. It's positive that it's still a priority because the community wants to focus their energy there. The Master Plan focuses attention and determines next steps.
44. Mayor Gove commented that they have been reviewing the parking ordinances and wayfinding signs to update and make a positive impact to the downtown business district. Part of economic development and supporting the downtown is establishing and maintaining relationships with the businesses.
45. Pascal Rettig questioned if there were any specific goals or actions the Board would like to discuss tonight.
46. Tracey Chalifour commented that she had quite a few comments but wanted to give others the opportunity to speak. This should not be the only meeting the Board has to discuss the Master Plan.
47. Pascal Rettig commented that they did not intend to have a series of meetings to address this. The Board scheduled a special meeting with the task force to have the time for a any substantive comments and discussion. That was the intention of this meeting.
48. David Frick commented that the Master Plan shows data for the number of jobs by industry, and many of them show they are declining. Nipun Jain noted that was drawn from the census data. It is based on information prior to 2020.
49. Mayor Gove noted that they can pull some trends, but most data is fluctuating. Nipun Jain commented that it was important to look at where the workforce is in Amesbury and what

businesses are coming to town. It is important to look at what synergies exist and how to direct locational advantages to businesses in Amesbury.

50. David Frick commented that the biotechnology goal on page 86 was very specific. It would make more sense to generalize it to emerging industries.
51. Lorri Krebs commented that she thought the purpose of the meeting tonight was just to hear a presentation, and that there would be more time to review before voting to approve it.
52. Pascal Rettig commented that they will bring it back again if the Board needs more time. However, the Board should use the time they have tonight to discuss as much as possible.
53. Lorri Krebs commented that a lot of the business data was outdated. The Master Plan should include more around climate resiliency and how it relates to the permitting process.
54. Nipun Jain responded that was outlined in the zoning ordinance bylaw and wetland regulations. Mayor Gove added that when the goals and tasks are evaluated for the Master Plan they could be looked at it through that lens.
55. Tracey Chalifour commented that the math on page 24 was hard to interpret. The legend is not legible and there is no date on the map. Enlarging the map would be beneficial. It is hard to make substantive comments because the map is hard to read.
56. Mayor Gove noted that BSC group produced the map. The prior page has a chart about land use and has similar coding. The map is just a visualization about how much of the land has protections. Pascal Rettig commented that if BSC produced the map, then they should have a full resolution version of it.
57. Pascal Rettig commented that if the Board has comments, then they need to have that discussion in a public forum. The Board can certainly schedule more meetings, but the Board needs to have a productive conversation about comments.
58. Nipun Jain noted that Amesbury's open space has a dedicated plan that has already been accepted and adopted. The Master Plan gives a snapshot of the areas of importance. People can reference other supporting plans if they want more information. Those plans are revised more frequently because the loss of natural resources and housing requirements are a dynamic nature.
59. Michael Jewell commented that he did not review the plan comprehensively because he thought this was just a presentation. He was not prepared to discuss this tonight. The Board should discuss this in a more structured format.
60. Pascal Rettig commented that the goal of this meeting was to get feedback from the Board on the Master Plan. If the Board is not prepared to do that tonight, then they should come up with a plan on how to approach the review.
61. David Frick commented that it may make sense to have Board members compile a list of comments to address at the next meeting.
62. Nipun Jain commented that there was a task force created to look at all the data and public information to compile a plan. This is a plan of the community, not a plan of the Planning Board. The Board needs to ensure there are no significant errors. The Board is not here to rewrite or make substantial changes to the plans. They have heard some good suggestions around the implementation and reworking goals that impress upon what the goal stands for. That will be constructive to the process. Going through the plan line by line will take too long. The task force has spent a long time as a group and with the community to create

a plan that is informative and indicative of where the community wants to be. The Board should keep that in mind while they are reviewing it.

63. Keith Ratner commented that there was a difference between approving and adopting. A lot of work has been put into the plan. It is important to adopt the plan and move forward.
64. Tracey Chalifour questioned what the legal requirement was around the Planning Board approving the Master Plan.
65. Pascal Rettig noted that the plan included a segment around the Planning Board's responsibility. The Board needs to vote by majority to approve the plan. This is a living document in the sense that it can be revised. A lot of time and community feedback has gone into these items. The Planning Board should not unilaterally decide substantive changes to the document. It has to be done in discussion while recognizing the work that has gone into it already.
66. David Frick noted that several members have noted they did not come prepared to discuss comments tonight, so they will need more time.
67. David Frick motioned to end the meeting tonight and have another meeting to go through this discussion again. Board members should send comments ahead of the meeting to help structure the discussion.
68. Pascal Rettig commented that they could continue this discussion. It is not a public hearing, so they don't need to continue it to a date certain. It sounds like a lot of feedback. Board members should send comments and feedback to the planning office. That may help accelerate the discussion.
69. Tracey Chalifour commented that typos should be a separate list from comments.
70. Pascal Rettig agreed typos should be a separate list and sent to the planning office. This will likely be another special meeting to go over the other comments in a public meeting.
71. Nipun Jain commented that the planning office can collect the comments and then determine the approach for another meeting.
72. Pascal Rettig commented that members should send their comments to the planning office by the end of this next weekend.
73. Lorri Krebs questioned if they should provide comments that were discussed in this meeting or just new ones.
74. Nipun Jain responded that they should provide all comments, so they are all consolidated. All comments should be submitted no later than Monday May 6th at 9 am.
75. Mayor Gove agreed that it would be helpful to have all the comments consolidated. They will review the comments and process what may need to be updated.
76. Pascal Rettig commented that they did not need to motion to continue this discussion because it was not a public hearing. Nipun Jain commented that it would be good make a motion to be clear on the next steps.
77. David Frick motioned to continue the presentation on the 2030 Master Plan to a time to be determined in consultation with 2030 Task Force. Seconded by Treacy Chalifour.
78. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
79. Keith Ratner – YES
80. Joel Nice – YES
81. Lorri Krebs- YES
82. Michael Jewell – YES

83. Tracey Chalifour - YES
84. David Frick – YES
85. Pascal Rettig – YES
86. Motion passed 7-0

**87. Administrative – In Person Planning Board Meetings.**

88. Pascal Rettig commented that it was possible to do hybrid meetings because ACTV would be broadcasting the meetings. They would need someone to run the Teams meeting. Just because they have a hybrid meeting capability, it doesn't mean the Board needs to support remote public comment. They could choose not to do so. In speaking with the Mayor, her recommendation was that the Board should work out the kinks of running a meeting and allow Planning Board members and applicants to access remotely if needed. The Board should only accept public comments in person or submitted in writing ahead of the meeting. The Board could choose to allow hybrid public comment at a later date if they wanted to.
89. David Frick commented that he would be happy to run the Teams meeting part.
90. Joel Nice commented that the hybrid portion should be a special request of a Board member or applicant. It would be too hard to make it fully hybrid and let people jump in whenever they want.
91. Pascal Rettig agreed that they would not post the meeting as a hybrid meeting. It would be posted as an in-person meeting and the Board would allow applicants and Board Members to join hybrid if needed.
92. Nipun Jain commented that they would need an operations plan because what the Board is talking about is not a hybrid meeting if the online option is just limited to Board members and applicants. They need to be clear about policy rules on how they will hold the meeting and allow participation. They need to be clear about how the minutes will be created.
93. Pascal Rettig commented that the Board member running the Teams computer would also share the presentations to the screen. ACTV has their own camera and can show the meeting room and the presentation.
94. Mayor Gove agreed there was a City computer that could be used and the applicants could say next slide when they are ready to advance.
95. David Frick added that the Board Members would have screens in front of them to see what is being displayed on the main screen.
96. David Frick motioned to conduct the May 13, 2024, Planning Board meeting in person with an attempt at having remote access at that meeting with future intention for remote access for Planning Board members or applicants if requested in advance. Seconded by Keith Ratner.
97. Tracey Chalifour commented that they should qualify what in advance means. Nipun Jain commented that it should be 72 hours, so staff knows before posting the agenda. Pascal Rettig agreed that it should be 72 hours.
98. David Frick amended the motion to include that the Board will need to be notified at least 72 hours in advance for an online option. Seconded by Keith Ratner.
99. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
100. Keith Ratner – YES

101. Joel Nice – YES
102. Lorri Krebs- YES
103. Michael Jewell – YES
104. Tracey Chalifour - YES
105. David Frick – YES
106. Pascal Rettig – YES
107. Motion passed 7-0

108. Keith Ratner motioned to adjourn at 9:32 pm. Seconded by Lorri Krebs.
109. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
110. Keith Ratner – YES
111. Joel Nice – YES
112. Lorri Krebs- YES
113. Michael Jewell – YES
114. Tracey Chalifour - YES
115. David Frick – YES
116. Pascal Rettig – YES
117. Motion passed 7-0