



Amesbury Technical Review Committee

October 1, 2025

City Hall Auditorium

62 Friend St.

9:30 am

In Attendance:, Nipun Jain, Howard Snyder, Amanda Armington, Howard Snyder, Jim Wilson, Joe Neipp, Lauren Blatchford, Lisa DeMeo, and Becky Frey, Dave Mather

Absent: Chief Bailey, Nick Cracknell, Joe Buckley, Chief Serino

Nipun Jain called the meeting to order at 9:32 am.

Application Review:

1. [102 Kimball Rd.](#)

Joe White, Engineer of the project, commented that this property is in the Watershed Protection District and is over 8 acres. They are proposing a cluster residential development with a single townhouse style building in addition to the existing single-family home. A portion of the land will be conveyed to the city for open space. There are wetlands on the parcel at the back of the property. The proposed improvements are over 300 feet away from those wetlands. The proposed development is toward the front of the site and the cluster residential allows for that. The property has two gravel driveways that go to the back of the property. The property has mostly grass areas and some trees. There are abutters on either side. They have worked extensively with planning staff on a layout that works best. They are proposing a driveway that will go back to the single family house and the proposed two family structure out back.

Lisa DeMeo questioned why the proposed driveway was a separate parcel. Joe White responded that the common access driveway is a separate parcel instead of deeding it to one property over the other. Nipun Jain added that it also provides frontage for the other structure. It's the only mechanism to create the lot. That driveway will remain private and in control of the two lot owners.

Lisa DeMeo requested clarification on the gravel path on the side that was a public access driveway. Joe White responded that it was an access driveway to the open space parcel out back. Lisa DeMeo responded that she didn't realize the city was going to own the open space in the back, and she would need to think about that a little more. Joe White noted that part of the cluster residential zoning is that they need to give back open space that can be used by the public for passive recreation. They needed to provide access to that parcel.

Joe White commented that the single-family home will have minor grading. They tried to flatten out the access driveway on the left side. It will still be steep but less so. There is a small retaining wall along the existing garage. Then it slopes down close to the existing



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grades there. The common access driveway will have pervious pavement as well as in front of the garage area. They will include infiltration for the roof runoff.

Lisa DeMeo questioned if there would be parking on the public access driveway. Joe White responded that they have not planned for parking there. They would need to coordinate on that.

Joe White commented that the utilities will be public water and sewer coming off Kimball Road. The new building is lower than the street level so they will need to pump it up. They have not coordinated with DPW on this yet. Lisa DeMeo responded that those two properties will perpetually own those pumps. Joe White confirmed that was correct.

Joe White commented that they will coordinate with National Grid for gas and electric. They are showing underground electric.

Lauren Blatchford commented that the plans reference a walking path and there is no parking on Kimball Road. There is no shoulder there, so they need to consider that. If there is a walking path, then they should provide somewhere for people to park.

Nipun Jain provided clarification on the proposed open space. The project site is located in the WRPD, which is the large watershed area. This is one of the largest parcels left around privately owned parcels. When the applicant came to the city with a proposal, a lot of work went into looking at how to limit development on the parcel given the resources. They looked at various options and amended the zoning earlier this year to allow limited development. One of the key requirements was at least 90% of the parcel is protected open space. This is mostly for drinking water protection. The access mostly exists and is being shown and improved to allow for maintenance. The point is well noted about parking, and they need to work that out. The primary objective is to create a public open space to be part of the protected watershed area. They are removing part of the existing driveway. They are using pervious pavers and gravel for the driveway. They will need easements for maintenance and accessibility. Those will be provided in due time.

Amanda Armington commented that the open space was essentially for water protection and had the possibility for recreation. Amanda Armington questioned if they planned on putting in any trails. Joe White responded that the plan was to provide access out back and leave the parcel as is. Amanda Armington commented that they should consider signage on the edge of the 25-foot no disturb buffer from the wetland to mark it as a no disturb area.



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Amanda Armington questioned what kind of maintenance they expected. Joe White responded that it was natural now and will leave it like that in the future. Maintenance would be up to the city. Lisa DeMeo noted they would not be removing trees in a forested area.

Jim Wilson commented that he did not have any questions, he had walked the site before. There is a steep bank, and it looks like the plans will make that safer. Jim Wilson noted he would have more comments when the plans for the building were submitted. Joe White confirmed that was correct.

Dave Mather commented that the fire department did have a couple concerns. The fire hydrant is 500 feet away. They would require a flow test of the hydrant to determine if there was enough capacity or if any upgrades were needed. If the hydrant doesn't meet the requirements, then they would highly encourage the building is sprinkled. The proposed common accessway is not wide enough. Joe White questioned if the access width was the same for a privately owned access driveway. Dave Mather confirmed that it was under the new code guidelines.

Lisa DeMeo questioned if it would be cheaper to put in a hydrant on Kimball Road or put in a sprinkler system. Joe White responded that they would look at it and figure out what makes sense. Dave Mather commented that the hydrants on Kimball Road are generally 1,500 feet apart. They need to confirm the flow. The fire department will review the flow test and go from there.

Jim Wilson commented that if the driveway is over 50 feet, then it requires a sprinkler. They may have to sprinkle the houses. In the new code it is required for ADUs.

Howard Snyder commented that the open space area will be a valuable asset to the community. There will probably be traffic coming and going on the access drive. There is a 7-foot drop on the edge. They should create a pull out on the top or bottom to let people pass.

Howard Snyder questioned why there was a swing gate at the end. Joe White responded that was a direction they received from Planning. Howard Snyder questioned why they planned for the driveway to remain. Joe White responded that the property owner wanted to keep it for his use. Nipun Jain responded that if they wanted to keep that portion of the driveway, then they would need an easement from the city. Howard Snyder commented that they should delineate the public and private space. They should consider landscape buffer.



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Joe White questioned if they were required to put in fencing and landscaping. The owner didn't want to fence the entire property if they didn't have to. They could do signage. Nipun Jain responded that there should be a physical barrier. It could be landscaping or a split rail fence. There should be something to demarcate the private residential lot. Putting a fence between the two house lots is up to the owner.

2. 0 and 14 Mill St.

Joshua Lee Smith commented that he was outside counsel for National Grid and spoke to the application. This is the second substation project in the city. The main driver for this is reliability. The retaining wall has been degraded and that puts the substation at risk. A T2 transformer was relocated off the main part to avoid an issue. There is still some soil sliding. This property is located entirely in the IC district. The proposal is for a temporary mobile substation. It will serve and act as a substation. They will install security fencing and there will be three points of access to the substation. One is preexisting on the right side. The second access point is being provided in the middle. The other access point is on the gate. This will have the look and feel of an unmanned substation. The proposed fencing will meet the National Grid standard, which is 8 feet plus 1 foot of barbed wire. As noted in the Zoning Board of Appeals application setback requirements do not comply with the rear setback.

Nipun Jain requested that they explain what is happening with the existing permanent structures on the site. Joshua Lee Smith responded that at some point the existing substation will be decommissioned. There is an interplay with respect to this project and the Alenclair Drive project. Once that is up and running, then the temporary substation can be decommissioned. The permanent substation can start to be decommissioned once the temporary one is in place. Nipun Jain questioned if the retired substation would be gone by the time the Alenclair substation was up and running. Joshua Lee Smith responded that it was his understanding that once hillside was completely energized the Mill St permanent and temporary substations could be decommissioned.

Howard Snyder questioned why the temporary substation could not be incorporated into the permanent area more. The proposed location is closer to the residential structures and there is a proposed development coming to that area.

Carly Gavin responded they cannot fit the temporary substation in that area and maintain safe operation. The goal is also to begin the removal of the existing station as quickly as possible. The retaining wall is degrading and a sink hole in 2021 caused the transformer



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to be moved. They will be able to maintain temporary access and allow for decommissioning. It is a tiered yard, so it is unsafe to bring in large pieces of equipment. The lower yard has 3 large pieces of equipment. They need to maintain access to be able to remove it.

Lisa DeMeo questioned if the outer dashed line was where the site fencing would be. Carly Gavin responded that was the limit of disturbance. The lighter gray is the fence line. Lisa DeMeo responded they will need to know where the fencing will be located during construction.

Lisa DeMeo questioned what the long-term plans were for the retaining wall. Joshua Lee Smith responded that the existing station is over 100 years old and has major issues. In February of 2022 National Grid implemented a temporary solution. They will decommission the substation and remove the wall. They will put the land back to "park like" conditions. They are not proposing to add any new poles. They selected this area for the temporary substation so the work will bring high voltage to the ground in the temporary station.

Dave Mather questioned if the old transformers contained any old coolant. If so, they will need to provide a safety plan to remove that and an environmental soil sample. During any type of decommissioning process, the fire department wants to be prepared if something happens. They need to know what they could potentially be walking into.

Carly Gavin commented that there were contaminants in the existing equipment because of the age of the equipment. Dave Mather responded that they would like a meeting with the decommissioning team to discuss the contaminants. Carly Gavin responded that they reached out to the construction group and asked them to assist with the construction management plan. Nipun Jain commented that the Mill Street section was even more critical because the river is so close to the site. The plan should be reviewed by the fire department so they can evaluate how they are dealing with any impacts and emergencies. Nipun Jain commented that this is an urban site and the urban fill has a phase one brownfield assessment on that. Carly Gavin responded that they had done some preliminary investigations at the time the building was demolished. They have done an investigation on the existing pipes. They are creating the most efficient retirement plan and preparing for the worst-case scenario. They would like to remove the brick and sand and provide an adequate surface for future use.

Nipun Jain commented that he assumed they knew they would need to file at the Planning Board and Conservation Commission for the decommissioning project. Nipun



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Jain questioned if they had a basic timeframe for permitting the decommissioning. Carly Gavin responded that they were anticipating filing within a year or so. They are very close to completing the retirement plan drawings. Hopefully they can bring it in 6 months from now. Nipun Jain responded that the submission should include a good remediation plans and a final plan for the decommissioning site.

Amanda Armington agreed that a remediation and restoration plan should be included. A stabilization plan should be included for the retaining wall that is going to be removed. Carly Gavin responded that piece is up in the air. One proposal is to remove the existing wall and put in a shorter one. Another option is to put in a rip rap slope. Amanda Armington noted her only other comment was the submittal didn't include a construction route plan. The Commission will want to see that. Carly Gavin responded they discussed using the existing gravel dirt turnaround for access point and once new access installed using that.

Nipun Jain commented that they were looking at 2-3 years for the temporary substation timeframe and questioned if it was possible that timeframe could expand. Carly Gavin responded that as long as the Hillside project goes smoothly, they can remove the temporary substation on time. Substation 5 serves all of downtown and is at a lower voltage. They don't have a readily available substation. The Hillside rebuild will take the whole load of Amesbury 5 and upgrade the distribution system to allow for more redundancy. The temporary substation will provide reliable service until Hillside is functional. Nipun Jain questioned what the transition plan was, once the temporary station was removed. Carly Gavin responded that all the equipment will be set on grade. They are removing the topsoil and placing crushed stone in the area. The only inground work is the fence. This design is the least impact possible. Nipun Jain commented that the Conservation Commission will have a lot of questions about the restoration of the site.

National Grid representative George inaudible commented that they were planning to collect topsoil on site and seed the topsoil to reuse it once the site is decommissioned. The final condition is to restore it as it is now. There may be a vegetated area with some bushes. Nipun Jain commented that they should plan to provide a more robust restoration plan. That area is subject to flooding. They were not aware of the plan for stockpiling the soil onsite for 3 years. They will need to show where it is being stored and how it will be stabilized. This areas floods, so they will need to understand the flood storage capacity. They should be able to answer questions about the restoration and screening. There are some future projects going in this area. It would be good to understand the height of the structures.



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Joshua Lee Smith commented that this project was time sensitive and they want to be expeditious while addressing comments. Joshua Lee Smith questioned if there were any comments on the proposed screening. Nipun Jain responded that they could work with Howard Snyder to review options. This proposal is going to the ZBA for a variance. They should check if there is a need to file a special permit for flood plain impact. George inaudible commented that this is zone x, which is no elevation for flooding. There is no major flooding. Nipun Jain commented that they should just review the zoning ordinance section under the flood plain and wetlands portion.

3. 9 Alenclair Dr.

Nipun Jain commented that they received a memo from the fire department. This is similar to 14 Mill St. This is more to do with the same concerns on the removal of existing equipment. There were also questions about the offsite plan and how the substation will connect to the upgrade and the trunking.

Joshua Lee Smith commented that the TRC generally knows the scope. They provided an update to the Planning Board as a result of the TRC comments. They have significantly enhanced the landscape proposal. The previous plan had some gaps. They swapped out some species and provided some staggering with respect to the evergreens. They added some additional plantings on the west side and the east. The renderings show the proposed improvements. They focused on incorporating more variety of species to provide better buffering. There are still two access driveways proposed and there will be security fencing. They can provide screening in the gates. The current security fencing requirements are 8 feet tall with 1 foot barbed and 1 inch mesh. They can do two inch mesh on this site, so they can incorporate privacy slats. They also confirmed that they can do black powder coded fencing. They are still reviewing which trees can be preserved. There was specific discussion about the red oak. The existing lines run through the middle of a tree canopy. They have talked to forestry about this and are hopeful they can preserve the red oak. They are looking to preserve as many trees as possible. Some trees are not in good health. They are having a surveyor stake out the site to accommodate the site visit.

Nipun Jain questioned what the timeframe was for a site visit. Joshua Lee Smith responded they were pushing as much as they could. Nipun Jain noted they needed at a 48 hour notice at least. Joshua Lee Smith commented that one of the driveways can be reduced in size to 16 feet.



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Nipun Jain commented that the updated landscaping was certainly an enhancement. They should coordinate with Howard Snyder to confirm the species. Joshua Lee Smith noted that they can put the barbed wire straight up instead of angled. The surveyor will be staking the site tomorrow. They may be able to coordinate a site visit early next week.

Nipun Jain requested an overview of the extent of the transmission work the timeframe for that work and if any additional permitting was needed.

Daniel Combs, Distribution Designer for National Grid, commented that they worked on the underground cables project. The existing station has 2 feeds. The new station will have a new destination to the breakers and 2 additional lines further north of the station. There will be a new duck bank on Hillside that will go all the way to the Highland intersection. Lisa DeMeo questioned if they were all transmission lines and no service connections. Daniel Combs responded that was correct. All the connections come off the overhead lines. Nipun Jain questioned if this would require extensive digging on Alenclair Drive and if they would need a police detail. Daniel Combs confirmed that was correct. Lisa DeMeo noted that detours would need to be set up because it was impacting traffic. Nipun Jain noted that they should have a construction management and mitigation plan that will outline the steps they are taking for the traffic detour schedule. Lisa DeMeo noted that DPW was of the opinion that Hillside and Alenclair were in the DOT jurisdiction. They need to check with DOT before the DPW could give their permission.

Nipun Jain questioned if the survey work overlapped with other utilities. Daniel Combs confirmed it did. Nipun Jain questioned how far up Hillside it would go. Lisa DeMeo responded the entire length of Hillside was recently paved by DOT. Any pavement disturbed will have to be restored to the existing condition. What was agreed upon was they would stay on one side and fully repave from the center line to the curb on one side. Daniel Combs confirmed that was ok with the project team members handling the mitigation.

Administrative:

1. Minutes: 9-17-25

This was tabled to the next meeting.

General Communications:



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Lauren Blatchford motioned to adjourn at 11:08 am. Seconded by Dave Mather. The motion passed unanimously.