



Amesbury Technical Review Committee

April 2, 2024

In attendance: Jim Wilson, Nick Cracknell, Chief Bailey, Robert Serino, Chief Nolan, Vinny Tirone, Joe Buckley, and Becky Frey

Absent: Lauren Blatchford, Nipun Jain, Lisa DeMeo

Chief Bailey called the meeting to order at 9:06 am

Administrative –

1. 3-19-2024 Minutes

Vinny Tirone motioned to approve the 3-19-24 TRC Minutes. Seconded by Jim Wilson. Joe Buckley abstained because he was not at the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items -

1. Outdoor Dining Process

Nick Cracknell commented that they had updated the application. Becky Frey added that they added more detailed requirements to include in the plan submission and an example plan to let applicants know what kind of plan they are looking for. This application is only for those who wish to use municipal property for outdoor dining. The application has communication and approval coming from the Mayor's office because Ryan Connelly is the Liquor License Commission Liaison. Nick Cracknell added that the Technical Review Committee also may not have authority to grant permission through the Charter.

Rob Serino noted that propane storage requires approval from the Fire Department no matter what the volume, so that should be updated.

Nick Cracknell commented that Lisa DeMeo brought design guidelines from Newton, MA to the last meeting. There was a lot of good material on how to review the applications and provide a defensible process on how to determine the Committee's recommendations. The thought is that the TRC would give a non-binding recommendation on every application from a technical perspective and coordinate the logistics around jersey barriers.

Becky Frey commented that they needed to determine when outdoor dining will begin and when it will end this year.



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Mayor Gove commented that previously legislation has typically passed a week or two after the April 1st deadline. Last year outdoor dining started in late April and ended after Thanksgiving to accommodate the holiday crowd. It would depend on the DPW's capacity and weather.

Chief Bailey questioned if Memorial Day to Labor Day would be too short. Mayor Gove responded that it should go later than Columbus Day to maximize the fall. Nick Cracknell commented that it could go to Thanksgiving or to Veteran's Day with the option to extend. Chief Bailey commented that they should set hard dates, and not leave it open to extensions. Nick Cracknell commented that it should be May 1st to the Monday after Thanksgiving.

Mayor Gove questioned if fire department connections should be added to the list of items identified on the plan. Robert Serino confirmed it should be.

Joe Buckley questioned if there would be an appeal process. Nick Cracknell responded there would not be, but the applicants will be invited to the meeting to be part of the review and discussion.

Chief Bailey commented that his department has total control over traffic impact. It may not make sense to have approval come from a different department. Hoppy's is on a bad corner, and it would be hard to approve something in that location. Robert Serino agreed and noted that the fire department also had authority over this. Chief Bailey noted that the approval should come from the Technical Review Committee, not the Mayor's Office. It should be a unanimous vote from the TRC.

Nick Cracknell commented that it depended on who has authority under the Charter to issue permits like this outside of Covid. A unanimous vote is not realistic, not every department on the Committee has outside authority over traffic.

Mayor Gove commented that this year is just a continuation of what was allowed under Covid. The Technical Review Committee granted approval then, so they should this year as well. The minutes from the meeting could be the approval. Amesbury is essentially offering another 1-year provision. The legislation that is in process will allow that. This year the City can focus on codifying outdoor dining and defining what that will look like.

Robert Serino commented that they should address the public and private outdoor dining because there are some areas that it would not be acceptable.

Nick Cracknell commented that outdoor dining on private land is not under the Technical Review Committee's jurisdiction. It would be under the Planning Board and subject to any regular inspections that would come from individual departments. When this is codified, there can be specific language about private outdoor dining, but for this year



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the TRC has no authority over it. Also, if the Technical Review Committee is issuing approval, then they will send a letter confirming that approval. The minutes from a meeting would be a weak approval.

Vinny Tirone confirmed that his department inspected both private and public outdoor dining spaces as part of their regular inspections.

Chief Nolan questioned how the Liquor License Commission granted permits to private vs. public outdoor dining spaces.

Mayor Gove commented that the Covid provisions granted the local Liquor License Commission the ability to grant licensing to businesses to serve alcohol in non-contiguous spaces. Essentially so they could cross a sidewalk and serve outside. Right now, there is legislation in the process of being reviewed and approved to make that permission authority permanent. Businesses have to renew their liquor license annually.

Becky Frey commented that she would update the application to reflect that applicants will need two approvals. One will be from the Technical Review Committee for the layout/design of the outdoor dining plan. The second will be from the Liquor License Commission to get approval to serve alcohol in that space. If the applicant only receives approval from the TRC, then they can still have outdoor dining without alcohol service in that area.

Sheila Beach from the Chamber of Commerce questioned if there would be a fee structure with this application. Becky Frey responded that when this application is sent out there would not be a fee attached to it. The City Council has not reviewed or approved a fee for this permit approval.

Nick Cracknell questioned if there was an opportunity for Outrider to expand into the amphitheater area. Carl McGowen from Outrider responded that he was coordinating with the other breweries to better utilize the amphitheater area collectively, so he would be hesitant to request private dining space there.

Robert Serino commented that he would be more amenable to outdoor dining in the amphitheater area over a parking space.

Chief Nolan commented that he was concerned about taking away parking in the downtown for restaurant use, especially when they aren't always open during the day.

Mayor Gove commented that the downtown has ample parking, and in the past, they did not receive those complaints.



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Nick Cracknell commented that they should include the hours of operation in the application. Robert Serino commented that this was a walkable downtown and they needed to get people out and walking.

Chief Nolan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 am. Seconded by Jim Wilson. The motion passed unanimously.