

1. Amesbury Planning Board Meeting Minutes

2. In Person Meeting – August 11, 2025, at 7:0 PM

3. Chairman Pascal Rettig called the August 11, 2025, Planning Board meeting to order at 7:0 PM.
4. *To submit a public comment ahead of time email Becky Frey at freyr@amesburyma.gov. To speak live at the meeting fill out a public comment form and turn it into Becky Frey. 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. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call –
7. Keith Ratner – ABSENT
8. Joel Nice – YES
9. Michael Jewell – YES
10. Tracey Chalifour – YES
11. Tom Salemi - YES
12. David Frick – YES
13. Pascal Rettig – YES
14. Also: Nipun Jain (Planning Director)

15. Minutes – 5-12-25

16. Tracey Chalifour motioned to approve the minutes from the 5-12-25 Planning Board Meeting. Seconded by Tom Salemi.
17. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
18. Keith Ratner – ABSENT
19. Joel Nice – YES
20. Michael Jewell – YES
21. Tracey Chalifour – YES
22. Tom Salemi - YES
23. David Frick – YES
24. Pascal Rettig – YES
25. Motion passed by 6-0 vote.

26. Minutes – 6-9-25

27. Pascal Rettig commented this was tabled to the next meeting.

28. Signs – 37 Clarks Road

29. Nipun Jain commented that this was reviewed by the Design Review Committee, and they recommended 2 revisions. The applicant removed the letters from the canopy and made the minor changes to the directional signs. The applicant can confirm those changes have been made and the DRC recommended approval based on the revised submittal.
30. Shawn McGlone commented that they made changes on the canopy on the south elevation to remove the word Starbucks. There is a small, suspended blade sign under the canopy. The rest of the building has the logo and the word "drive through." They have updated the directional sign with a clearer arrow to direct cars to the drive through.
31. Joel Nice commented that the north elevation sign for Starbucks is a 5 foot circle and questioned if there was any lighting. Sean McGlone responded it would be lit from within. Nipun Jain responded that the sign ordinance allows for the sign to be 5% of the primary face of the building. They could do a bigger sign based on the building. The DRC has allowed multiple signs if they fall within the 5% formula.
32. Pascal Rettig clarified there was no monument sign being proposed. Sean McGlone responded there is one by the drive through entrance. There are no other free standing signs proposed.
33. Tracey Chalifour motioned to approve the sign application for 37 Clarks Road as amended. Seconded by Tom Salemi.
34. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
35. Keith Ratner – ABSENT
36. Joel Nice – YES
37. Michael Jewell – YES
38. Tracey Chalifour – YES
39. Tom Salemi - YES
40. David Frick – YES
41. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 42. Motion passed by a 6-0 vote.**

43. Signs – 26 Market St.

44. Nipun Jain commented that the sign was reviewed by the DRC. There was one comment about the sign package. The sign itself was acceptable as submitted. The bracket was very modern and the DRC recommended a more traditional bracket. The applicant has proposed a more historic bracket and the sign has slightly smaller dimensions as a result.
45. Tom Salemi motioned to approve the sign application for 26 Market St. as amended with the updated bracket. Seconded by Joel Nice.
46. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
47. Keith Ratner – ABSENT
48. Joel Nice – YES
49. Michael Jewell – YES
50. Tracey Chalifour – YES
51. Tom Salemi - YES
52. David Frick – YES
53. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 54. Motion passed by a 6-0 vote.**

55. Continued Public Hearings– 38-40 Prospect St.

- 56. Nipun Jain commented that the applicant was still waiting for a final approval of a historic preservation restriction from the Historical Commission. They will bring a draft decision to that meeting.
- 57. Joel Nice motioned to continue the application to the September 8, 2025, Planning Board Meeting. Seconded by Michael Jewell.
- 58. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
- 59. Keith Ratner – ABSENT
- 60. Joel Nice – YES
- 61. Michael Jewell – YES
- 62. Tracey Chalifour – YES
- 63. Tom Salemi - YES
- 64. David Frick – YES
- 65. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 66. Motion passed 6-0.

67. New Public Hearings– 28 Back River Rd.

- 68. Nipun Jain read the legal notice into the record.
- 69. Nipun Jain commented that he would provide a brief overview of the application in the absence of the applicant.
- 70. Tracey Chalifour questioned if they were expecting the applicant or not. Nipun Jain responded he did not know. The applicant did not communicate with staff.
- 71. Nipun Jain showed images of the existing detached shed on the property. The exterior is not changing. The floor plan shows the entrance will be at an existing door. The living room would be on the first-floor level and then upstairs would have a bedroom with a bathroom and closet. The building footprint remains unchanged. There will be some minor utility work needed to bring water and sewer to the structure. The existing detached structure is being converted into a detached ADU.
- 72. Joel Nice questioned if there was any additional parking required. Nipun Jain responded that it is required in the ordinance, but there is a long driveway and enough room to satisfy the requirement.
- 73. Pascal Rettig commented that they were still doing public hearings for the ADU but at some point they will have to switch over to the by right. Nipun Jain responded that the city will incorporate the by right, however, it does not mean the city cannot require a site plan review. That is why this is here. It cannot be a discretionary permit like a special permit. However, if they go above what is allowed by right, like going over 900 sf, then the city can incorporate a discretionary special permit.
- 74. Tracey Chalifour commented that the application notes 700 sf and questioned if they building or the ADU was 700 sf. Nipun Jain responded that the 700 sf accounts for the first and second floor of the proposed ADU.
- 75. Pascal Rettig opened public comment.

76. Tom Pendegast of 23 Back River Road spoke in support of the project. It will be for a parent for housing.
77. Nipun Jain commented the building does need some TLC, so he is presuming they will have to meet the current building code for insulation and egresses etc. There may be a need for a step or something like that. The building will not change in footprint and openings.
78. Pascal Rettig commented that it sounded like this was being used for one of the prime reasons for this ordinance.
79. Tom Salemi clarified that the water and sewer would be going directly to the house. Nipun Jain responded that the sewer and water would be coming right to the ADU. They will finalize those details during the building permit process. Internally the city needs to clarify how these buildings will be treated as far as addresses and utilities go. The State has not made it very clear. They need to figure out how ADUs will be catalogued in the city's records to be clear it is an ADU.
80. Joel Nice commented that if it was on the same lot, then it should be secondary to the main house. Giving them their own address makes it tricky. Nipun Jain commented that was what happened on Pleasant Valley Road; they made it 35 1/2. That makes it confusing. Those are challenges they have to figure out to make a clear methodology for public safety.
81. Joel Nice questioned if a second egress would be required for this. Nipun Jain responded that he was not sure. It would be addressed in the building permit phase. The Board can stipulate that if there is a staircase, it cannot be enclosed because that would be a change to the footprint. They would need to come back to the Board.
82. Tracey Chalifour commented that she was struggling with the fact that the applicant was not here to answer questions. It may make sense to continue it.
83. Nipun Jain commented that he could bring a draft decision to the next meeting, and they can provide answers to the second egress questions.
84. Pascal Rettig commented that it would have been helpful if the applicant was here, however, the only main question the Board has is about the egress. That is for the building department to address. They can add a stipulation that if there's a change to the façade, then the applicant needs to come back.
85. Tom Salemi supported that approach.
86. David Frick agreed they should vote on this application tonight.
87. Michael Jewell motioned to approve the site plan for 28 Back River Road with the stipulation that if there are any changes to the building face or expansion of the building footprint to meet code, then the applicant shall come back to the Planning Board.
Seconded by Tom Salemi.
88. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
89. Keith Ratner – ABSENT
90. Joel Nice – YES
91. Michael Jewell – YES
92. Tracey Chalifour – YES
93. Tom Salemi – YES
94. David Frick – YES
95. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 96. Motion passed 6-0.**

97. Tracey Chalifour motioned to close the public hearing for the site plan application for 28 Back River Road. Seconded by Tom Salemi.

98. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –

99. Keith Ratner – ABSENT

100. Joel Nice – YES

101. Michael Jewell – YES

102. Tracey Chalifour – YES

103. Tom Salemi - YES

104. David Frick – YES

105. Pascal Rettig – YES

106. Motion passed by 6-0 vote

107. Administrative

108. Maste Plan Update

109. Pascal Rettig commented that he heard back from the Mayor and she confirmed they have made the requested updates and have an action plan. The new draft was not sent to him. The Mayor also advised they check in with OCED to see if MVPC has made updates to the maps.

110. Nipun Jain commented that he did not have an update on the status of the maps.

111. Tracey Chalifour questioned what the next steps should be. Pascal Rettig responded that he would reach out to ask for the draft to provide the Board for review.

112. Tom Salemi questioned if this was something the Planning Board reviewed. Pascal Rettig confirmed the Planning Board approval vote was the last step in the Master Plan process.

113. David Frick questioned if they needed to provide more edits to the Planning Board Rules and Regulations. Nipun Jain responded that the Board approved a draft. They had discussed members could send OCED requested edits, and they would put it the administrative portion of the agenda every three months with a list of edits. David Frick requested that OCED send out the approved draft so members can review for edits.

114. Adjournment

115. Tracey Chalifour motioned to adjourn at 7:47 pm. Seconded by Tom Salemi.

116. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –

117. Keith Ratner – ABSENT

118. Joel Nice – YES

119. Michael Jewell – YES

120. Tracey Chalifour – YES

121. Tom Salemi - YES

122. David Frick – YES

123. Pascal Rettig – YES

124. Motion passed 6-0