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By City Clerk at 11:49 am, Jun 11, 2024

1. Amesbury Planning Board Meeting Minutes

2. Virtual Meeting – May 13, 2024, at 7:00 PM

3. Chairman Pascal Rettig called the May 13, 2024, Planning Board meeting to order at 6:30 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 May 13, 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- Absent
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. Minutes – 3-25-24

17. Lorri Krebs joined the meeting at 7:06 pm.
18. Tracey Chalifour motioned to approve the 3-25-24 Planning Board Minutes as presented. Seconded by Michael Jewell.
19. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
20. Keith Ratner – YES
21. Joel Nice – YES
22. Lorri Krebs- YES
23. Michael Jewell – YES
24. Tracey Chalifour - YES

25. David Frick – YES
26. Pascal Rettig – YES
27. Motion passed 7-0

28. **Minutes – 4-11-24**

29. Tracey Chalifour motioned to approve the 4-11-24 Planning Board Minutes as presented. Seconded by Michael Jewell.
30. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
31. Keith Ratner – YES
32. Joel Nice – YES
33. Lorri Krebs- YES
34. Michael Jewell – YES
35. Tracey Chalifour - YES
36. David Frick – YES
37. Pascal Rettig – YES
38. Motion passed 7-0

39. **Sign – 14 Market Square – Looks by Lopez**
40. Hannah Lopez commented that the store's address is 14 Market Square. The application is for a 30" by 20" hanging sign. The sign will have the store's logo on it. There is already a post there, so it will go on the existing bracket.
41. Nipun Jain showed the sign proposal and confirmed the Design Review Committee reviewed the sign and recommended approval of the application as submitted.
42. David Frick motioned to approve the sign application for Looks by Lopez at 14 Market Square as submitted. Seconded by Michael Jewell.
43. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
44. Keith Ratner – YES
45. Joel Nice – YES
46. Lorri Krebs- YES
47. Michael Jewell – YES
48. Tracey Chalifour - YES
49. David Frick – YES
50. Pascal Rettig – YES
51. Motion passed 7-0

52. **Sign – 12 South Hunt Rd. – Maple's Crossing**
53. Pascal commented that the applicant requested for this application to be continued. There is no action needed because it is not a public hearing.
54. Pascal Rettig also noted that the public hearings on this agenda have requested to continue to the June 10, 2024, meeting.

55. **City Council Referral – Bill 2024-058 - 6 Center St. Preservation Restriction**

56. Nipun Jain commented that this project was approved by the Planning Board. It is now built and has a historic structure on the site. The main house was redeveloped and restored into a 4 unit multifamily development. This preservation restriction is required by the special permit, and they have submitted it to City Council. It did not pass last year because it was the end of the legislative session. Council has referred it to the Planning Board for a recommendation. Once this is approved by Council it will go on record and permanently protect the house on the site, which was built in 1904 and owned by George Osgood.
57. David Frick motioned to recommend accepting the preservation restriction for 6 Center St. Second by Lorri Krebs.
58. Tracey Chalifour questioned if there were any pictures of the new construction in the preservation restriction packet. David Frick responded that this was the submittal that was sent to the Historic Commission. Nipun Jain added that it does not have any images of what is built because they needed to document the structure as is. The end of the document does show architectural drawings.
59. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
60. Keith Ratner – YES
61. Joel Nice – YES
62. Lorri Krebs- YES
63. Michael Jewell – YES
64. Tracey Chalifour - YES
65. David Frick – YES
66. Pascal Rettig – YES
67. Motion passed 7-0

68. **Continued Public Hearings – 2 Merrimac St.**
69. Keith Ratner motioned to continue the applications for 2 and 13 Merrimac St to the June 10, 2024, Planning Board Meeting. Seconded by Lorri Krebs.
70. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
71. Keith Ratner – YES
72. Joel Nice – YES
73. Lorri Krebs- YES
74. Michael Jewell – YES
75. Tracey Chalifour - YES
76. David Frick – YES
77. Pascal Rettig – YES
78. Motion passed 7-0

79. **Continued Public Hearings – 13 Merrimac St.**
80. This was addressed in the motion above.

81. **Continued Public Hearings – 12 South Hunt Rd.**
82. David Frick motioned to continue the application for 12 S Hunt Rd. to the June 10, 2024, Meeting. Seconded by Keith Ratner.
83. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –

84. Keith Ratner – YES
85. Joel Nice – YES
86. Lorri Krebs- YES
87. Michael Jewell – YES
88. Tracey Chalifour - YES
89. David Frick – YES
90. Pascal Rettig – YES
91. Motion passed 7-0

92. **Administrative – 39 Hillside Drive Extension Request**
93. John Smolak, Chris Angilillio, and Charles Costello were present to speak to the request. John Smolak commented that in 2022 the Board approved a mixed-use redevelopment with commercial on the ground floor and 8 residential units above it. They are here tonight to request an additional 2 years for the decision. The applicant is working through the preconstruction conditions. They are working on the site architecture and landscaping plans. The applicant has submitted a draft application to the city for the affordable unit through the LIP application process. Once the City approves that, they will submit it to the State. The application is also in the process of finalizing cost estimates with a contractor with the intention of pulling a building permit this summer.
94. David Frick commented that he was glad to hear they were getting close to doing things on the site.
95. Keith Ratner questioned why they were in the process of getting documents approved if they have an approved site plan. Nipun Jain responded that the plans were approved with conditions for minor adjustments. They are just finalizing the plans, and they need to file an ANR. They will come back to the Board for an endorsement.
96. David Frick questioned when the application will expire. John Smolak responded that it would expire in July.
97. David Frick motioned to approve a 2-year extension for the decision for 39-41 Hillside Ave. as requested. Seconded by Tracey Chalifour.
98. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
99. Keith Ratner – YES
100. Joel Nice – YES
101. Lorri Krebs- YES
102. Michael Jewell – YES
103. Tracey Chalifour - YES
104. David Frick – YES
105. Pascal Rettig – YES
106. Motion passed 7-0

107. **Administrative – Covenants and Bonds**
108. There were no other covenants or bonds to be addressed.

109. **Administrative – Contracts, Bills, and Invoices**

110. Pascal Rettig commented that they should take the invoices first. The invoice summary sheet is included.
111. Nipun Jain commented that staff has reviewed the Stantec invoices and noted that they recommended payment.
    1. A Stantec Bill for Bailey's Pond in the amount of $1,391.80
    2. A Stantec Bill for Bailey's Pond in the amount of $811.80

112. David Frick motioned to approve invoices listed above. Seconded by Keith Ratner.
113. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
114. Keith Ratner – YES
115. Joel Nice – YES
116. Lorri Krebs- YES
117. Michael Jewell – YES
118. Tracey Chalifour - YES
119. David Frick – YES
120. Pascal Rettig – YES
121. Motion passed 7-0

122. Pascal Rettig commented that they needed to review the Stantec Contract.
123. Nipun Jain commented that this was basically the umbrella contract for Stantec. The Planning Office did an RFQ in 2021 where they looked at professional services for consultants. They selected Stantec, BSC, and TEC as consultants the Board could use. They selected multiple consultants to have capacity for the volume of projects. They have not had that kind of workload yet and Stantec has been the primary service company. The Board has contracts for individual projects, but this is the umbrella that streamlines the scope. The Board's endorsement will approve this contract for the next 3 years. This is essentially re-endorsing the current contract the Board has in place.
124. David Frick motioned to endorse the contract with Stantec for providing inspectional services and construction monitoring services through the end of 2026 as submitted. Seconded by Michael Jewell.
125. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
126. Keith Ratner – YES
127. Joel Nice – YES
128. Lorri Krebs- YES
129. Michael Jewell – YES
130. Tracey Chalifour - YES
131. David Frick – YES
132. Pascal Rettig – YES
133. Motion passed 7-0

134. **Administrative – IAMesbury 2030 Master Plan**
135. Pascal Rettig commented that Master Plan is regulated by MA General Law 81D. The intention is the Planning Board should be involved and the plan is formalized by a majority vote. Unfortunately, the primary parties involved at the beginning of the process are not

here now. Robert Laplante was the Chair at the time and OCED Director Angela Cleveland is no longer with the City. The Board was aware of the Master Plan work going on and the Task Force provided a presentation with updates. The work was primarily done by the Task Force. The Board was aware of the process could be involved if they wanted. Given Covid, there was lower participation. Joel Nice was involved in the housing segment and other members were involved in some of the listening sessions. The 2004 plan was done with a professional consultant. The Planning Board was involved then, but also did not write the majority of that plan either. The majority vote of the Board adopts the Master Plan. The law outlines that a Master Plan has to have goals and policies, and an interactive public process. It would be good if this plan outlined that process a little more clearly. This plan does not have an explicit land use element, so that is a shortcoming that the Board should ask to be addressed. It does have the other elements outlined. This plan does not include an implementation plan which was brought up in the last meeting. Internally they do have one, but it should be included in the plan. It would also be a benefit to include a more extensive bibliography highlighting the other plans used to build it. Some Planning Board members requested more time to review the plan. It would be good to better understand what people are looking for in terms of the elements. The law shows some pieces are missing, but otherwise it does meet the criteria. They want the next plan ready in 2030, so they will start that in the next couple years. This plan has a shelf life.

136. David Frick commented that it would be good if Staff could work with the Task Force to put those missing elements together. It would be good if the Board members could list out any other remaining questions and modifications. The Task Force did a great job on the plan. The plan should be updated to include the new Planning Board member Tracey Chalifour. The Board should set up a subcommittee or informal working group to review the Master Plan and consolidate any outstanding comments. Then bring it back to the Board for further discussion.

137. Joel Nice commented he was the most involved in the process and the Task Force put in a lot of work and sifted through a lot of data. They should not need to remake a lot of things, and this is a living document. One of the consultants worked with talked about building a decision support tool that allowed us to rate a project based on how the public wants it.

138. Keith Ratner commented that procedurally it is the Board's responsibility to adopt the plan, and questioned if it could be adopted with stipulations. Pascal Rettig commented that they should wait until the document is complete to adopt it.

139. Tracey Chalifour commented that she was not comfortable with the plan because there is still more work to do on it.

140. Nipun Jain commented that it was the Task Force's intent to create a plan in a different format than the 2004 Master Plan. This plan was doing similar work, but the document presented is an abridged summarized version of the first part then it jumps into goals and actions. Some information is purposely not included. It would be a good idea to include a bibliography to reference other plans and reports used as a basis for this discussion.

141. Lorri Krebs questioned how much review the Board was expected to provide. The Mayor was pretty clear at the end of the last meeting that they would take the Board's comments into consideration, but may or may not incorporate them.

142. Pascal Rettig commented that they have two different types of feedback between typos and more substantive comments. This plan is based on a bunch of other documents. It is not productive to layer our myriad of opinions on top of the feedback and data that has already been received. The Board should call out the missing elements from the plan.

143. Keith Ratner commented that idea of a Master Plan is to have a high-level document to help guide the community. It sets a framework of how the City wants to do things. The Board needs a clear list of feedback and a timeline with action items to wrap this up.

144. Michael Jewell commented that there was obviously a lot of work done on the plan. However, to me this is not a plan, it's a wish list. This is not quantifiable in a lot of ways. There needs to be an implementation plan. There needs to be more specific details on funding. It's too vague. It would be very helpful if someone has some type of spreadsheet that shows what was and was not accomplished in the 2004 plan.

145. Nipun Jain commented that the Master Plan is a visioning document. It's not a specific action-oriented plan. It can be but it's hard to have a very specific action plan when you're looking at many years ahead. Dates and funding are impossible to nail down. The Master Plan should focus more on timeframes like short term vs long term. Funding can come in various ways. The 2004 plan assigned terms like low medium or high cost to identify what it would take to accomplish that item. Amesbury has done 3 Master Plans, and the last one was the most comprehensive because growth was outpacing the resources. They tried to look at growth control, resource, and infrastructure capacity. An individual element review is more intensely researched and analyzed vs. a grouping of elements together in a concise document. It loses the detail. The Task Force wanted to create a digestible document that everyone can read. The land use element was not called out specifically. However, there are references to it in other places in the plan. It should not be too challenging to pull data from other areas in the plan and call out the land use element specifically. The land use and implementation plan need to be incorporated into the plans. They can add timeframes and cost estimates. The plan should include the bibliography of reports included, surveys that were sent out, and summits that were held to provide a basis of how they formed the plan.

146. Keith Ratner commented that it sounded like the Mayor already had the beginnings of an implementation plan and questioned if the Planning Office would help with the land use element.

147. Nipun Jain responded that they could. They can work to pull out some of the land use references in other parts of the plan and call it out more specifically as its own element. If there's a spreadsheet already existing, then it should be easy to update and incorporate. No element is done in a silo because they all overlap. They should also add a future land use map that combines the priorities to help show what sections of the town they should protect vs allow to grow. Then people can see areas that are prime for development and protection. Staff will work on the land use element and maps.

148. Pascal Rettig questioned how sequential in time Master Plans typically connected to each other. Nipun Jain responded that they usually don't diverge significantly but there is not necessarily a continuous flow. Typically, priorities shift with time. The goal of a Master Plan is not to check all of the boxes but see how much they can achieve. It is purposefully vague in some ways because so much can depend on funding.

149. Michael Jewell questioned what the next steps should be.

150. Pascal Rettig responded that at a minimum they need a Master Plan that fulfills the elements identified in MGL. They are not solving anything tonight but need to figure out next steps and how to execute them. One of the concerns is where this all came from, so including survey results and a bibliography would help solidify that.
151. Nipun Jain commented that staff will not be able to start unraveling the entire plan. The land use element will be created with actions and goals. That is the time that staff has to dedicate to the revisions. The other items will be completed with the assistance of the Mayor's Office and Task Force. It would be helpful if the Board was more specific about their feedback to help provide direction to what needs to be updated.
152. Tracey Chalifour commented that they need to go through the entire plan to gather comments.
153. Pascal Rettig commented that it would be great to have a consensus on this. The Board agrees that the land use element and the implementation plan are missing. A bibliography should be included to cite reference material. There are a number of typos and formatting that need to be fixed. The Board needs to authorize an offline process to compile comments and typos to send to the Task Force.
154. David Frick agreed it would be helpful to have a small group work on this. Nipun Jain commented that it sounded like Pascal, Tracey and Michael would be interested in working in that group.
155. David Frick agreed and noted that they should have at least an update by the June 10th meeting.
156. Lorri Krebs commented that climate resiliency should be incorporated more into the Master Plan.
157. Nipun Jain commented that it would be helpful to identify specifically where that should be inserted to address climate resiliency.
158. Pascal Rettig requested a motion from the Board to make sure they were all in agreement.
159. David Frick motioned to ask staff to work on the land use plan, work with the Task Force and mayor's office on the implementation plan and bibliography and authorize a subcommittee with Pascal Rettig, Michael Jewell, and Tracey Chalifour to review and come back to the Board with some comments. Seconded by Keith Ratner.
160. Nipun Jain suggested making it a working group instead of a subcommittee.
161. David Frick amended the motion to authorize a working group of Planning Board Members. Keith Ratner seconded the amendment.
162. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
163. Keith Ratner – YES
164. Joel Nice – YES
165. Lorri Krebs- YES
166. Michael Jewell – YES
167. Tracey Chalifour - YES
168. David Frick – YES
169. Pascal Rettig – YES
170. Motion passed 7-0

171. Adjournment

172. Keith Ratner motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 pm. Seconded by Joel Nice.

173. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –

174. Keith Ratner – YES

175. Joel Nice – YES

176. Lorri Krebs- YES

177. Michael Jewell – YES

178. Tracey Chalifour - YES

179. David Frick – YES

180. Pascal Rettig – YES

181. Motion passed 7-0