

1. Amesbury Planning Board Meeting Minutes
2. In Person Meeting – July 28, 2025, at 7:09 PM
3. Chairman Pascal Rettig called the July 28, 2025, Planning Board meeting to order at 7:09 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 – YES
8. Joel Nice – YES
9. Michael Jewell – YES
10. Tracey Chalifour – ABSENT
11. Tom Salemi - YES
12. David Frick – YES
13. Pascal Rettig – YES
14. Also: Nick Cracknell (OCED Director) and Becky Frey (Community Development Coordinator)
- 15. ANR – 39-41 Hillside Ave**
16. Becky Frey commented that this was a condition of the decision, so the applicant has submitted the required materials to fulfill this requirement.
17. David Frick motioned to approve the ANR plan for 39-41 Hillside Ave. Seconded by Joel Nice.
18. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
19. Keith Ratner – YES
20. Joel Nice – YES
21. Michael Jewell – YES
22. Tracey Chalifour – Absent
23. Tom Salemi - YES
24. David Frick – YES
25. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 26. Motion passed by 6-0 vote.**
- 27. Presentation – 5 and 9 School St.**

28. Nick Cracknell commented that he was providing the presentation as a stand in for Nipun Jain. The applicants came to the TRC meeting last week to present and discuss. The city issued the RFP for the city owned properties and they received two qualified applications. The applications went through the review committee. The applications were ranked, and they held interviews. The winning candidates were Brad Kutcher and Mark Wojcicki. Mark Wojcicki has done a lot of work in Amesbury with the Historic Special Permit. Brad Kutcher has done projects in Newburyport. These developers have worked together before. They came to TRC to provide a quick overview of themselves and their design team, Scott Brown and John Hargraves. They are working on a purchase and sale agreement and a development agreement. They will work with police and fire on the equipment and utilities on the building. They will talk about parking with the abutting properties. The RFP noted 8 units in the Ordway Building and a single-family home at 5 School St. They are proposing 5 units in the Ordway and the one single family home at 5 School St. The developers are 100% committed to preserving and restoring the Ordway Building. The 5 School St. home will be a full reconstruction of the Greek revival. They may still put on a rear addition. This will go through the Planning Board and Historical Commission. The RFP was also proposing a pedestrian connection. Increasingly it did not make sense to locate it where they were thinking. They have discussed moving the walkway to the other side of the Ordway Building. The walkway will be a 5-foot-wide public access sidewalk to the parking lot. That offers them the opportunity to move the lot line between the properties and provide outdoor space between the School St. home and the Ordway Building. That is not set in stone. They have been talking about putting in a single car garage at 5 School St. as well. This application will most likely come as early as September. They would like to get going on this project before the end of the year.
29. Joel Nice questioned if there was any asbestos or toxic materials in the structures. Nick Cracknell responded he was not sure but would not be surprised if it did.
30. Pascal Rettig questioned if the brick was being extended a little or would there be any work on the sidewalk or if it was being left as is. Nick Cracknell responded that there is brick on most of the sidewalk. It will probably stay that way because of the driveway apron, but they will look at it. The concrete sidewalk is not in bad shape. The walkway along the Ordway could potentially be brick.
31. Joel Nice commented that moving the walkway is a strong move and would open the green space for the buildings. It is good they are maximizing the 5 School St. property. It will be an attractive project. Nick Cracknell commented that the garage will help provide a buffer for the library. That sidewalk will most likely be an easement not owned in fee.

32. Preapplication – 27.5 – 29 Clarks Road

33. Alex Loth commented that they were happy to work with the city to extend the 40R District. MinCo purchased this property a few years ago. It was a 40B, but they did not love the project and did not want to pursue it. They have been working with the city on this for the past few years. These preliminary plans are a culmination of a lot of thought. They don't have the overall civil site plans complete yet. The development will be on a little over 4 acres of a 10.5-acre site. That is less than half the site. The only development on the rest of the site will be walking paths. The intent has been to create a path to connect Clarks Road

out to Point Shore and Main St. They have taken some pains to stay out of the wetlands and slopes. They are more than 50 feet away from the wetlands and that will result in less work and impact to the site. The two front buildings of the development will have 3 units each. Then the development transitions to bigger buildings as it goes further back. The middle administrative building is helping with that massing transition. This is in the East End Overlay District, which helps to accomplish this scale. This development will have 152 units and 109 parking spaces. There is parking under the entire large building. They will show more landscaping and detail on the final submittal. The circle in the back will be broken up by pavers and the building colors will make it more inviting. These renderings are basic concepts to get the Board's thoughts and opinions. They are working to follow the design guidelines. The architect is a company out of Boston. The patio and landscaped area will be in front of the amenity building and there will be walking paths in the back.

34. David Frick commented that there was surface parking and parking under the building. Alex Loth responded that was correct. There will be parking on both sides and under the building.
35. David Frick questioned if the other floors would be identical layouts as they go up. Alex Loth responded the first floor would have an amenity area and there will be units on the upper floors.
36. David Frick questioned what would happen in the back of the driveway extension. Alex Loth responded that it would be a temporary parking area for drop offs.
37. Joel Nice questioned if this development would require a parking waiver. Alex Roth responded that they would submit a list of waivers and one of them would be for parking. They will be providing 1.375 parking spaces instead of the required 1.5 spaces.
38. Pascal Rettig questioned if they have comparable developments to show those numbers work. Alex Loth responded that they actively seek out train stations, but the reality is almost every resident has a car. They have worked in North Andover, which is more car-dependent than Amesbury. Pascal Rettig commented that there is not any on street parking on Clarks Road. Alex Loth responded that they would not want them parking on the street either. They will upsize infrastructure as much as possible to be able to easily install EV charging for cars.
39. Michael Jewell requested more detail on the wetland impact. Alex Loth responded that they have not been in front of Commission yet, but the Conservation Agent did attend TRC. The buildings would be outside the 50-foot buffer.
40. Michael Jewell questioned if the houses at 29 and 27.5 Clarks Road were occupied. Alex Loth confirmed that both houses are occupied.
41. Keith Ratner commented that traffic was going to be an issue not only with this project, but others going in that area as well. Keith Ratner questioned if the traffic analysis went beyond just this project and if they were coordinating with project. Alex Loth responded that they were aware of the other projects and have had a traffic study done. The city has been proactive staying ahead of things. They have been involved and will continue to be involved. They wrote a letter of support for the MassWorks grant. Their traffic study did not show any huge improvements were needed to accommodate this development.
42. Tom Salemi questioned if they would have lighting on the trails. Alex Loth responded that there is a requirement for a certain amount of screening of taller buildings next to smaller

buildings. There are required amounts of screening. They don't have the space or ability to do a wide paved rail trail type of path for the trails. The trails will be a dirt walking path, but they are unsure of the width. They will reach out to the Point Shore neighborhood and they will develop a view to show the Board what they will see from the units.

43. Pascal Rettig clarified that the building faded to the edge on the plan was staying. Alex Loth responded that was correct. The trail will hug the outside of building then go out to the main area. They will figure out where to cross from there.
44. Joel Nice questioned if they would build a bog bridge over that. Alex Loth responded that there will be some kind of bridge. Nick Cracknell commented that it would be similar to the Quimby Lane bridge. Alex Loth commented that they would work with the Conservation Commission on it.
45. Michael Jewell questioned who would maintain the trails going forward. Alex Loth responded that they did not know yet. It could be an easement or property transfer. Nick Cracknell added that they will be working with the Conservation Commission and the Open Space Committee. Quimby Lane needs minimum maintenance because people use it. The trail needs to be 10-12 feet wide. They will be moving bikes through the site and connecting to a trail network. It will largely take care of itself. They will need to have some public parking on the site. There is no public parking on Quimby Lane and that was a mistake. The Quimby Lane bridge has been there for 20 years.
46. Tom Salemi commented that he liked the concept of the trail, but it is tight in that corner, so it will be interesting to see how it is.
47. Pascal Rettig commented they will need to be conscious of screening and impact the abutters as little as possible.
48. Tom Salemi questioned if they would access it through the parking lot with a sidewalk. Nick Cracknell commented that they envision 20-foot buffer to the difficult corner right out to Clarks Road and maybe up to number 4 if we get there. They will get on the system next to the amenity building.
49. Keith Ratner questioned if there would be affordable housing. Alex Loth responded that the overlay requires 20% affordable housing. They will be 80% AMI. Nick Cracknell responded they started with a project here in this community 15 years ago. This site had 54 units with 2 and 3 unit buildings. It was probably the worst design. That project was approved with limiting conditions that were argued as uneconomic. OCED was excited these guys came together and purchased this. Amesbury has a lot of developments coming its way. This is the first of 4 big projects coming in. There are over 1,000 units coming into Amesbury. Amesbury is only 8.5% SHI and so it is under 10% right now. They need 118 units for ownership. This rental project would all count toward the SHI. The SHI has to be over 10% for a city to deny 40B. Until the city is at 10% it is wide open as a community for 40B development. If this project does 152 rental units, then all of them would be counted on the SHI. That's how we ended up with Amesbury Heights. The city asked the applicant to wait for the 40R ordinance, which they would benefit from financially and the city got \$1.3 million in incentives. That project got Amesbury to 11.5% on the SHI. Once a project gets you over 10% then you have a 1-year freeze on the SHI. The benefit of this project is if there is something we see as a good fit, it will get 152 units added to SHI.

50. Pascal Rettig commented that this project approval would put the city over 10%. Nick Cracknell confirmed that was correct as long as it stays a rental property. The city would need 118 ownership units to get over this 10%. There are other candidate 40B projects that are talking to OCED because they know Amesbury is one of the few communities under 10%. There are other projects coming in as well. The MBTA project will only be 10% of the project. MinCo will be doing another project with 100 something units. That is also intended to be rental and the affordable percentage could get to 15-20%.
51. Pascal Rettig commented that he loved the two front buildings and that they are 2.5 stories. The 4 stories in the back is a little out of character for the neighborhood. There may be more ability to provide more screening. That would prevent the impact of the 4 stories visual from the side. There are sidewalks in the renderings but most of Clarks Road doesn't have one. Alex Loth responded that there is currently a sidewalk on that side of the road. They are sensitive to the 4-story building concern. They have worked hard to help blend the neighborhood. They put the admin building up front to help with the massing. They are sensitive to scale, but a 4-story building is more efficient than the 3-story building in this economy.
52. Pascal Rettig commented that they should look at any other screening they can put in. Alex Loth responded that they would work with their landscape plans. They are putting a lot of green around the buildings and will work with them on the screening.
53. Pascal Rettig questioned if they would be making utility upgrades with the project. Alex Loth responded that they looked at this during the overlay zoning. The power and gas are fine. The water line may need to be upgraded. The city has had issues with sewer capacity. They may be lining the pipe. They will need to update those studies and sit with DPW.
54. Joel Nice commented that there was a lot of good design cues in the overlay district meetings. They have a nice scale and approach. The most out of place is the middle roof. It could look better with a parapet or something to break it up. Its just a little busy. For the color it would be good to see more earth tones and less white. Joel Nice questioned if there was a willingness to put parking under the building and scaling it better.
55. Alex Loth responded that he agreed the middle section was the toughest part of the building. They are putting in less repetition in the middle. The next iteration will be a little simpler in the middle. They have intentionally not put in color for the building yet. That will be added.
56. Becky Frey read Tracey Chalifour's comment into the record. See the end of the minutes.
57. Pascal Rettig questioned if the entry was open the whole way down. Alex Loth responded that he believed it would be.

58. New Public Hearings – 38 – 40 Prospect St.

59. Becky Frey read the legal ad into the record.
60. Scott brown and Geno Ranaldi were present to speak to the application. Scott Brown commented that tonight they were seeking a Historic Special Permit and Site Plan. Geno Ranaldi came in for a preapplication on May 12th and the Historical Commission on May 1st. They did get some feedback and suggestions from the Historical Commission, and they have incorporated that into this submission. They are going back to the Historical Commission on August 7th. They are hoping for a determination on that meeting. They hope the Board will

find this to be a positive application. The project consists of 2 parcels. One is located in the southeast corner and the second parcel is to the north. They contain 2 nearly identical two-family buildings. The buildings have been in need of repair for some time, especially the siding and windows. Some of the original details have been stripped away. Something they are hoping to improve with this project is the parking. Right now, it is somewhat haphazard. There is an existing driveway large enough for one vehicle. This proposed plan is planning to utilize an existing curb cut and they will increase that. The proposed plan will define parking spaces for all 4 units. The project is 2 parcels. It is on the corner of Prospect St. and Chester St. It is an empty corner lot without vegetation. The empty lot is inconsistent with the neighborhood pattern, and they are asking for new structure. They are proposing a new single-family home with a new single car garage and curb cut on Prospect St. It is large enough for off street parking. There will be a privacy fence off the building and along Chester St. then along the back of the house. They are proposing patio areas and outlining materials and brick pavers up front. They will be locating heating and cooling equipment in the bulkheads and screened with landscaping. There will be two tandem parking spots for the first-floor unit then 2 tandem for the seconded. There will be two spaces per unit. The trash will be located at the back of the units. They are careful about where they are putting them relative to the tenants. The street elevation is nearly identical to what the Board saw in May. The proposed house is a traditional house that is modest in scale. The height is a natural fit for the corner lot. There were very few changes to the front elevations from the preapplication. The proposed elevations for the 2 family structures are nearly identical. For the most part they are maintaining the existing window and door openings. They will be adding square columns after discussion with the Historical Commission. They are maintaining the side entrance in both structures and flipping the stairs to the back. There will be new dormers allowing light and addressing egress situations. They are proposing all double hung windows with the exception of the dormer which will be a casement for the bedroom egress. The proposed elevations for the new house fits well with the proposed neighborhood context.

61. Tom Salemi commented that he lives in the neighborhood and questioned if the single car parking space was required. Otherwise, it could be an open space opportunity. Scott Brown responded that they needed the parking space.
62. Keith Ratner questioned if the driveway on the back was new or existing. Scott Brown responded that it was existing.
63. Pascal Rettig questioned if the two buildings were staying as two families. Scott Brown confirmed they were. The increase in density is the single-family home.
64. Michael Jewell disclosed that he has never met him, but he does rent from Geno Ranaldi.
65. Geno Ranaldi commented that they were planning to restore the windows if that is an option.
66. Nick Cracknell commented that he should consult with Scott Brown to ensure they meet energy code. They should go with what the Historical Commission says. It is critical that all the details put in the drawings are done perfectly. There should be a detail for the faux chimneys. Geno has a right under our ordinance and state law to put in a 1,500-sf structure with a 900 sf ADU on the second floor. That was the original proposal. Now the project is proposing an additional unit through a historic preservation special permit. They have been

to TRC and they did not identify any significant issues. They just wanted to see a final site plan. Currently the existing 4 units do not have enough parking, and this proposal will create the parking needed. It may make sense to add a cobbles strip behind the car to maintain clearance for other cars to turn around and get out.

67. Pascal Rettig commented that they don't normally do peer review on single family houses and questioned if the town could handle this review internally. Nick Crakcnell confirmed they could handle it. There are not any common access driveway changes. They will look at the curb cut to ensure there is not any additional drainage.
68. Pascal Rettig commented that the existing structures will now have a historic preservation to this. They are comparing the existing structures with vinyl siding and an ADU. By right that could be built. This investment and increase in neighborhood property value will be a benefit.
69. Pascal Rettig clarified that the existing 2 families will stay on one lot and the single family would be carved off. Geno Ranaldi confirmed that was correct. Scott Brown commented that the house design matches what was done on 6 Perkins St. Nick Cracknell commented that they will need to do an ANR plan to divide the lot.
70. Eric King of 25 Belmont St. commented that his property abuts the back of the property. This guy takes great care of his property and questioned where the single family house would be located. Nick Cracknell responded that it would be on the corner of Chester St. and Prospect St. on open existing open lawn. It is not near Belmont St. It will have a driveway on Prospect St.
71. Bill Mucharet of 47 Prospect St. questioned how the historic preservation special permit worked. Pascal Rettig commented that the special permit provides a density bonus. The property owner can build an additional unit or 2 in exchange for permanently preserving the project.
72. David Frick commented that the benefit is the neighborhood is upgraded because it is a nicer rehab and a new single family home.
73. Bill Mucharet questioned what waivers were being requested.
74. Nick Cracknell commented that there were waivers for the lot because it is on the corner and not 8,000 sf. The setbacks may not all comport to the R8 zoning. There will be a number of waivers but none of them relate to what's already there. The house will look like it fits.
75. Kevin Hennerty of 5 Chester St. noted that he had a few questions on the design and questioned if he could do a similar project on his lot. Geno Ranaldi commented that he was using all natural wood siding and planning to start work as soon as possible. Kevin Hennerty questioned if they would be using trash enclosures. Nick Cracknell commented they would encourage it. If Kevin is interested in pursuing a similar project he can discuss with OCED.
76. Bill Mucharet questioned if there would be off street parking. Right now, a lot of the tenants park on the street. Nick Cracknell responded that there would be 2 spaces for every unit except 1. The parking requirement is 1.5 spaces, so this complies.
77. Becky Frey read written public comment from Kathy Mucharet. See the end of the minutes.
78. David Frick motioned to have staff draft a decision for 38-40 Prospect St. for the August 11th Planning Board Meeting. Seconded by Keith Ratner.
79. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –

- 80. Keith Ratner – YES
- 81. Joel Nice – YES
- 82. Michael Jewell – YES
- 83. Tracey Chalifour – ABSENT
- 84. Tom Salemi - YES
- 85. David Frick – YES
- 86. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 87. Motion passed 6-0**

88. Administrative – Stantec Invoice

David Frick motioned to pay the Stantec invoice listed below. Seconded by Joel Nice.
Motion passed unanimously.

- 1. A Stantec invoice for 31 Newton Road in the amount of \$663.75.

- 89. Pascal Rettig initiated a roll call vote –
- 90. Keith Ratner – YES
- 91. Joel Nice – YES
- 92. Michael Jewell – YES
- 93. Tracey Chalifour – ABSENT
- 94. Tom Salemi - YES
- 95. David Frick – YES
- 96. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 97. Motion passed 6-0**

98. Adjournment

- 99. Tom Salemi motioned to adjourn at 9:04 pm. Seconded by Joel Nice.
- 100. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
- 101. Keith Ratner – YES
- 102. Joel Nice – YES
- 103. Michael Jewell – YES
- 104. Tracey Chalifour – ABSENT
- 105. Tom Salemi - YES
- 106. David Frick – YES
- 107. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 108. Motion passed 6-0**

Tracey Chalifour Public Comment 27.5 – 29 Clarks Road

The provided visuals are not complete, all the levels of the structures were not included. Also, a good visual for the garage entry portion of the property was not provided.

I am concerned about the lack of parking for a project of this size. Also There is no "extra" roadway for additional cars to park.

The configuration of # of bedrooms in units will result in more than 209 cars, especially since the project is not near public transportation

like the commuter rail.

Additionally, I look forward to seeing a traffic study that is done at a time of year and times of the day that accurately reflects the congestion in this part of the city.

The history in this part of the city has been to do traffic studies at times of year that have low volume and dont reflect the experience of living in this area during peak season - summer, rush hours, etc. I would hope that plans are being developed to mitigate about 600 more car trips a day on Clarks Road from this project and at this already stressed inflection point where Route 110 and Elm Street and Clarks Road meet, especially give other housing developments in the pipeline.

Lastly, the location of three units on either side of the underground garage entry is not optimum in my opinion. Not many people want to live near a garage entry where headlights, property lighting and noise will be a constant thing, and it would not be good form to designate those units as the affordable units. It is not a great lifestyle experience to live near a garage and should be avoided if at all possible.

Also, please indicate location of the required affordable units.

A possible solution would be to move the walkway leading to the building that is next to the 2BR, 2 Bath unit on the west side of the garage entry to the edge near the garage, to provide a little more buffer, or put some of the common areas/amenities near the garage entry.

Thank You - I will have more thoughts as the project develops

Kathy Machurat Public Comment 38-40 Prospect St.

Hello, we live at 47 Prospect St. and was pleased to read the phrase will “accommodate parking” (see below). Parking at the 2 existing dwellings has always been a problem as there never seemed to be enough spaces for the tenants, and we were frequently unable to park in front of our own home. I would like to know how this will be addressed, particularly since more cars may be involved. No objection to improving the the dwellings or adding a single family residence as long a parking is addressed.

I would also like to inquire as to how long this project will take. While construction noises of course are unavoidable the blaring music all day, 6 days a week, has been a bit much. I like music as much as the next person, but can't the workers wear headphones so that I can enjoy my own music or enjoy the birds? Is there a compromise? Thank you for your attention.