

RECEIVED

By City Clerk at 11:15 am, Jun 10, 2025

1. Amesbury Planning Board Meeting Minutes
2. In Person Meeting – April 14, 2025, at 7:14 PM
3. Chairman Pascal Rettig called the April 14, 2025, Planning Board meeting to order at 7:14 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. Acting Chair Keith Ratner initiated roll call –
7. Keith Ratner – YES
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. Motion passed 7-0
15. Also: Nick Cracknell (OCED Director) and Becky Frey (Community Development Coordinator)
16. David Frick motioned to take the Meadowbrook application out of order. Seconded by Tracey Chalifour.
17. Keith Ratner initiated a roll call vote –
18. Keith Ratner – YES
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 7-0
26. **Continued Hearings – Meadowbrook**
27. Jeff Roelofs commented that he represented the applicant and they have requested to withdraw the application without prejudice. They need the Planning Board's permission to

do that. The Hearing has not even commenced in any substantial way. The applicant put a lot of effort into this to try to make it a collaborative and cooperative process. When the zoning amendment process began things rotated 180 degrees. Syncarpha decided to regroup. They are not comfortable with a controversial process. They have heard that the residents and city are not supportive and have offered to withdraw the application. Mr. Roelofs did not have the sense that there were any immediate plans to pursue a different location in Amesbury. At this time, they are only withdrawing without prejudice.

28. David Frick motioned to accept the applicant's request to withdraw the Meadowbrook site plan and special permit applications without prejudice. Seconded by Joel Nice.

29. Joel Nice questioned if Syncarpha could sell their interconnection agreement to someone else. Jeff Roelofs responded that they would have the rights to do that.

30. Keith Ratner initiated a roll call vote –

31. Keith Ratner – YES

32. Joel Nice – YES

33. Michael Jewell – YES

34. Tracey Chalifour – YES

35. Tom Salemi - YES

36. David Frick – YES

37. Pascal Rettig – YES

38. Motion passed 7-0

39. David Frick motioned to close the public hearing for Meadowbrook. Seconded by Joel Nice.

40. Keith Ratner initiated a roll call vote–

41. Keith Ratner – YES

42. Joel Nice – YES

43. Michael Jewell – YES

44. Tracey Chalifour – YES

45. Tom Salemi - YES

46. David Frick – YES

47. Pascal Rettig – YES

48. Motion passed 7-0

49. Minutes 2-24-25

50. Tracey Chalifour motioned to approve the minutes from 2-24-25 as presented. Seconded by Joel Nice.

51. Keith Ratner initiated a roll call vote –

52. Keith Ratner – YES

53. Joel Nice – YES

54. Michael Jewell – YES

55. Tracey Chalifour – YES

56. Tom Salemi - YES

57. David Frick – YES

58. Pascal Rettig – YES

59. Motion passed 7-0

60. Minutes 3-10-25

61. This item was tabled to the next meeting.

62. Council Referral – Bill 2025-037

63. Lisa DeMeo, Assistant DPW Director and City Engineer, commented that this is a Massworks grant they applied for last year to do some design work for transportation, roadway, water, and sewer improvements. It's a \$500,000 grant to do the design for that. The Council needs to approve the city accepting and expending the grant before DPW can use it.

64. David Frick motioned to send Bill 2025-037 to the City Council with a positive recommendation. Seconded by Joel Nice.

65. Michael Jewell questioned where they would run the sidewalks from. Lisa DeMeo responded that the study will look at Clarks Road from Macy St. to Main St. That will help determine what can be done. There is a lot of other development activity happening in that area and they have met with those engineers to coordinate what they are doing. This money will look at the roadway work.

66. David Frick commented that they are looking at widening it at the Route 110 side. Lisa DeMeo added that would be coordinated with the Starbucks project because they are doing some work there as part of their project.

67. Nick Cracknell commented that it was important that the detailed scope and design elements that are incorporated into that corridor reference the recommendations of the Merrimack River District Planning Report. Whether they all fit or if there is enough money is always an issue. There is a lot of good information in there about what the city was expecting to do when they applied for this funding several years ago. It is important to have guardrails on what gets done and make sure the scope is clear. There was a lot of planning, expense, and civic engagement that went into this study. It is important for all city staff to acknowledge this study because a lot of us are new. The Board could include a stipulation that city staff shall develop detailed scope and ultimate design elements referenced in the Merrimack River District Planning Report.

68. Joel Nice commented that drainage was important to consider in the design process as well.

69. Lisa DeMeo confirmed that drainage was included in the scope already and they can include the report Mr. Cracknell highlighted as well.

70. David Frick amended the motion to include the recommendation that the engineering work will take into account the Merrimack River District Planning Report. Seconded by Joel Nice.

71. Michael Jewell questioned if they considered widening Clarks Road on the Main St. side of the road. Lisa DeMeo responded that there was not enough right of way to widen it on that end of the street.

72. Tracey Chalifour commented that she was happy to see this grant because this neighborhood has been asking for this for a while. There is still a lot lacking in this grant application like improvements to the Main Street corridor that would be impacted by these improvements. They need to judiciously incorporate the items that are outlined in the Merrimack River District Planning Report that deal with the Main St. corridor. There was a

shared street grant for that, and the money went to something else. This grant application references a master plan, and we are still operating under the Master Plan from 2004.

73. Tom Salemi questioned if the traffic calming would include lights. Lisa DeMeo responded that they would not look at streetlights, but a signal would be investigated as part of the study.
74. Tracey Chalifour questioned if there would be public meetings as part of the process. Lisa DeMeo responded that there were meetings included in the task schedule. They are not on the calendar yet but are part of the grant process.
75. Kieth Ratner commented that it was good to hear there was coordination across the projects.
76. Tracey Chalifour requested clarification that the scope of this grant did not go across Route 110 and that some work would be done by developers. Lis DeMeo confirmed that was correct. It was for Clarks Road, and not across Route 110. Developers will be doing some of the work which is why they are coordinating.
77. Keith Ratner initiated a roll call vote –
78. Keith Ratner – YES
79. Joel Nice – YES
80. Michael Jewell – YES
81. Tracey Chalifour – YES
82. Tom Salemi - YES
83. David Frick – YES
84. Pascal Rettig – YES
85. Motion passed 7-0

86. Council Referral – Bill 2025-042

87. Lisa DeMeo commented that this was a complete streets application for funding to construct two items from the tier 3 complete streets list. This is from a list of projects that the city would like to work on that all constituents would benefit from the improvements. That list went through the Planning Board, City Council, and the mayor. This year the two projects they are focusing on is the sidewalk on the west side of Highland St. starting at the Macy St. side. The goal is to go as far as the medical center, but they will go as far as the funding allows. The second project is at the intersection of Market St. and South Hampton St. DOT has approved both projects. City Council needs to approve to accept and expend the money. There was one question earlier about the Market St. and South Hampton St. intersection. It does not work well today. The intent is to create a 90 degree turn to create a T intersection with a stop sign. The design is the first step on this project.
88. Keith Ratner clarified that the movement onto Market St. would be a left turn. Lisa DeMeo confirmed that was correct. The exact design of the intersection and park improvements will be discussed during this process.
89. David Frick commented that it may make sense to have the intersection align with the Pine St. across from Market St. That could create a 4-way intersection. Lisa DeMeo that would be evaluated during the design process. Joel Nice commented that would save the whole existing park if they did that as well.

90. Keith Ratner commented that South Hampton Road was also in bad shape and questioned if that would be addressed. Lisa DeMeo responded that she was not sure what the total scope of the project would be yet.
91. David Frick motioned to send Bill 2025-042 to City Council with a positive recommendation. Seconded by Tom Salemi.
92. Keith Ratner initiated a roll call vote –
93. Keith Ratner – YES
94. Joel Nice – YES
95. Michael Jewell – YES
96. Tracey Chalifour – YES
97. Tom Salemi - YES
98. David Frick – YES
99. Pascal Rettig – YES
100. Motion passed 7-0

101. Administrative – General Communications

102. Joel Nice commented that they had initial training for the Community Preservation Committee on Thursday, and it went well. They've had success in the towns and cities that have adopted this with infrastructure, historic buildings, and recreation improvements. They are looking forward to seeing what applications come forward.
103. Tracey Chalifour commented that the training is on ACTV.
104. Nick Cracknell commented that the Board just accepted withdrawal without prejudice for the Meadowbrook application. There is still funding in the Planning Board budget for consulting services. It would make sense to hire an appraiser to assess the market value of the property. This is a parcel that we will all continue to struggle with. The city needs to engage with the people who own the property. The first step is to look at what the property is worth and include the Nihan property because that was part of that deal for access. After the property is assessed, they will have the hard issue of raising revenue to try to purchase it. The ball is in the city's court to do something proactive to preserve the property. It's important for Amesbury and protecting the drinking water. They can look at the whole property, but they definitely need to look at the 100 acres and Nihan property. There is still an interconnection agreement available. OCED can draft an order for the next meeting if the Board agrees.
105. David Frick questioned if it would be good to have a development around the air strip. Nick Cracknell responded that a lot of things that could happen on that parcel. The air strip is still licensed and is north of the 100-acre parcel. There is also 40 acres of gravel above that. This has been zoned residential since 1971. There could be a Dover Amendment use, 40B or single-family housing on that parcel. The only part of the property that is marginally suitable for development is the former gravel pit. The focus should be on the 100-acre older wooded area. The more complicated the appraisal gets the more expensive it gets. Nick Cracknell commented that he would bring something in next meeting.

106. Adjournment

107. David Frick motioned to adjourn at 8:00 pm. Seconded by Joel Nice.

- 108. Keith Ratner initiated roll call vote –
- 109. Keith Ratner – YES
- 110. Joel Nice – YES
- 111. Michael Jewell – YES
- 112. Tracey Chalifour – YES
- 113. Tom Salemi - YES
- 114. David Frick – YES
- 115. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 116. Motion passed 7-0