

1. Amesbury Planning Board Meeting Minutes
2. In Person Meeting – April 13, 2026, at 7:03 PM
3. Chairman Pascal Rettig called the April 13, 2026, Planning Board meeting to order at 7:03 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. Tracey Chalifour – YES
10. Tom Salemi - YES
11. David Frick – YES
12. Pascal Rettig – YES
13. Also: Nipun Jain (Planning Director) and Becky Frey (Community Development Coordinator)
14. **Minutes – 1-12-26**
15. Tracey Chalifour motioned to approve the minutes from the 1-12-26 Planning Board Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Joel Nice.
16. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
17. Keith Ratner – YES
18. Joel Nice – YES
19. Tracey Chalifour – YES
20. Tom Salemi - ABSTAIN
21. David Frick – YES
22. Pascal Rettig – YES
23. Motion passed 5-0
24. **Minutes – 1-29-26**
25. Tom Salemi motioned to approve the minutes from the 1-29-26 Planning Board Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Keith Ratner.
26. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
27. Keith Ratner – YES
28. Joel Nice – YES

- 29. Tracey Chalifour – YES
- 30. Tom Salemi - YES
- 31. David Frick – YES
- 32. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 33. Motion passed 6-0

34. Minutes – 2-9-26

- 35. Joel Nice commented that line 54 had the word “planning” spelled wrong.
- 36. Joel Nice motioned to approve the minutes from the 2-9-26 Planning Board Meeting as revised. Seconded by Tracey Chalifour.
- 37. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
- 38. Keith Ratner – YES
- 39. Joel Nice – YES
- 40. Tracey Chalifour – ABSTAIN
- 41. Tom Salemi - ABSTAIN
- 42. David Frick – YES
- 43. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 44. Motion passed 4-0

45. Sign – 19 Main Street - Nunami

- 46. Keith Ratner motioned to approve the sign for 19 Main St. – Nunami as revised. Seconded by Joel Nice.
- 47. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
- 48. Keith Ratner – YES
- 49. Joel Nice – YES
- 50. Tracey Chalifour – YES
- 51. Tom Salemi - YES
- 52. David Frick – YES
- 53. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 54. Motion passed 6-0

55. Continued Hearings – Rocky Hill Development

- 56. Keith Ratner motioned to continue the application to the April 27, 2026, Planning Board Meeting. Seconded by Joel Nice.
- 57. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
- 58. Keith Ratner – YES
- 59. Joel Nice – YES
- 60. Tracey Chalifour – YES
- 61. Tom Salemi - YES
- 62. David Frick – YES
- 63. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 64. Motion passed 6-0

65. Continued Hearings – 9 and 9RR Oakland Street

66. Jeff Roelofs, counsel for the applicant commented that most of the project team is here: Bob Bollinger for traffic, Steve Sawyer, civil engineer, and Stefano Brasso for architecture. Jeff Roelofs commented that they were last here in November. They are working with staff, and been to DRC and the Historical Commission. They have started peer review on traffic and engineering and just got comments back. The project team has submitted updated materials in response. There are a few items that we haven't submitted yet, including the waivers list and preservation restriction draft. They will submit additional detail for the affordable units as well. They hope to go to the Historical Commission on May 7th. They have received generally positive feedback from them so far.
67. Stefano Basso commented that they have updated the project name from Carriage Hill Lofts to Oakland Street Lofts. There was discussion about how parking spaces will be assigned. The garage spaces will all be assigned to residents. They will need a key fob to get in and know which garage they are going to. The open lot will have 15-minute parking, and the rest will be floating spaces for businesses and guests. We have updated some of the landscaping and trees based on Fire Department and Planning feedback. We converted units 5 and 6 to live/work-style units. At this point, all the apartments on the sidewalk level or around the parking court are live/work-style units. Along that same walkway, we have reconfigured planting beds and made space for a bench as well. We have included spots for motorcycle parking in the garages. We have updated the fencing along the front street. We will do a composite, prefinished fence to match the historical look and replace a section with movable planters. We have adjusted the lamppost style. The corner of Oakland and Chestnut shows steps down to the sidewalk. They discussed this corner with DPW. We will be rebuilding the existing stairs in better condition with handrails. The site will have two curb cuts. We have flipped some of the signage to be hanging instead of wall-mounted. The exterior has been updated based on feedback from the Historical Commission and staff. They will have faux infill brick openings, and they have simplified the side of the building on Chestnut St. We incorporated train tracks in the sidewalk as a fun detail. They changed to a detention system based on peer review feedback.
68. Tom Salemi questioned if there would be a ramp at the sidewalk staircase. How would they handle that corner? Stefano Basso responded that they would cross the street. There's probably more work to be done from a city perspective at that intersection. We talked about it and determined that even if it were step-free, it would not be a safe condition.
69. Joel Nice commented that there was concern about construction traffic coming down Chestnut St. and tearing up the road. That will be the main entrance for the development. Are there any proposals to pave Chestnut St.? Steve Sawyer responded that, at this point, we have not made any commitment to repave Chestnut St. Joel Nice commented it will be worse after the construction. Steve Sawyer responded that the additional traffic associated with construction is probably minimal. Nipun Jain added if that was a problem, then it will be a good problem because this part of downtown is seeing new life. Projects of this scale and magnitude require a CMMP. They will look at existing conditions of roadways and other construction, and if there is a likelihood of damage, then DPW requires those issues to be fixed. It will not be a full reconstruction, but if there are significant repairs that need to be made, then it will be addressed in the CMMP.
70. Keith Ratner did not have any comments on the architecture.

71. Tracey Chalifour did not have any comments on the architecture.
72. David Frick commented he thought this was a great project and liked the changes that were made.
73. Pascal Rettig commented that they were asking for a significant waiver on parking. It will be good to understand how parking will be advertised. Will the parking be bundled or unbundled? They don't need to answer that now, but the Board will want to understand the justification and proposal.
74. Jeff Roelofs commented that item came up in peer review. They are generally comfortable with the numbers. Operationally, it will need to be a condition.
75. Bob Bollinger commented that he produced a trip generation and site access letter. Part of the due diligence was to measure speed, collision history, sight distance, and projecting future traffic. The existing conditions are a thickly settled area. The average speed on Oakland St. is 26–29 mph. There were similar results on Chestnut St. The collision history shows only one crash in the 5-year history. That is consistent with the low-volume and low-speed nature of the area. It is not possible to identify any preventable crash events. There is good sight distance for the full-access driveway on Oakland St. and Chestnut St. This proposal is for 124 bedroom units. It has residential and commercial components. The peak hours for a weekday morning has a total of 60 trips: 19 entering and 41 exiting. Peak evening hours are projecting 89 total trips: 52 entering and 32 exiting. They were combined for both driveways. During the Saturday peak hour, there are 72 total peak-hour trips: 37 entering and 35 exiting. Based on that, the increased projected traffic is expected to be fairly minor. The volume increase of that magnitude will not impact traffic in any meaningful way. They got constructive feedback from VHB. They have indicated in writing an appropriate understanding of traffic and volumes of roadways. The driveway split looks at the parking concentration and prevailing pattern: 60% would be on Oakland St. and 40% would be on Chestnut St.
76. Keith Ratner commented they were still working on support for parking. MVPC has produced a parking study but they haven't seen it yet. Bob Bollinger confirmed they would take a look into that.
77. Tom Salemi commented that the intersection for Oakland St. and Chestnut St. is a tricky corner. He was glad there were not a lot of accidents there. Bob Bollinger confirmed there was no crash history to speak of at that intersection. Tom Salemi commented that there was a lot of businesses up the street; parking is filling up over there. It would be good to see a parking plan for this.
78. Pascal Rettig questioned if the stop sign at Oakland St. would stay the same. Bob Bollinger confirmed it would.
79. Tracey Chalifour commented she wanted to reinforce the Chief of Police's memo speaking about the parking and the demand for the residents and commercial uses. They need to have adequate parking in that area.
80. Pascal Rettig opened public comment. No one was present to speak.
81. Pascal Rettig questioned where they were on peer review. Nipun Jain responded that this was a special permit for a historic preservation, they will need final sign-off from the Historical Commission. As far as the architecture design goes, the applicant has incorporated the comments from DRC and Historical Commission. Late this evening, they

received the engineering review from Stantec for the civil and stormwater. The memo is fairly innocuous; some items are still outstanding, but nothing requires significant changes. Some items may need to be retooled in the construction phase. The Board has heard from the traffic engineer, and they received a supplemental review. The parking and sightlines can be addressed. Clearly, additional improvements need to be made by the City for traffic calming on Chestnut St. There was nothing in the study assessment or anything from the Board that indicates there is anything outstanding on traffic. The Board can focus on any issues they feel have not been adequately addressed other than parking. The only other outstanding item is the Historical Commission sign-off. They plan to do that on May 7th. The Board can look to continue this to the May 11th meeting and ask for a draft decision for that meeting.

82. Tom Salemi questioned if they would get an updated letter from Chief Bailey based on the traffic memo. Nipun Jain responded they could follow up with Chief Bailey. On the parking issue, they talked a little bit about this 29 Water St. and 45 Main St. There is a program providing paid parking for the downtown area. The City is looking more actively to expand the parking program and make it more viable with fees. Given that this is a rental project and not a condo there is more flexibility for the owner to decide how the parking arrangements can be made. As the Board deliberates the waivers for parking and they should think about all the options available. If the project moves forward, there is more incentive for the owner to seek out private parking arrangements. Tom Salemi commented he did not want to create a problem. Nipun Jain commented that the Board can condition that prior to the start of construction, they should provide a parking management plan.
83. Joel Nice commented that they may not have any parking issues at all. He was happy with the parking the way it is and doesn't want to add more parking that isn't needed.
84. Pascal Rettig commented that the Oakland St. area does get busy. There is not enough parking for the businesses there now.
85. David Frick commented that if a parking problem arises, a business owner will have trouble coming in to rent. The developer will want to solve that to retain businesses.
86. David Frick motioned to ask staff to start working on a draft decision and continue the application for 9 and 9RR Oakland St. to the May 11, 2026, Planning Board Meeting. Seconded by Keith Ratner.
87. Tracey Chalifour commented that all of us know their job is to sell the units; they don't care about parking. The Board will be remiss if we don't get the full information on that. It is the Board's responsibility to make sure the area is parked properly.
88. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote—
89. Keith Ratner – YES
90. Joel Nice – YES
91. Michael Jewell – YES
92. Tracey Chalifour – YES
93. David Frick – YES
94. Pascal Rettig – YES
95. Motion passed 6-0

96. Continued Hearings – 5 and 13 School St

97. Nipun Jain commented that he would quickly summarize the project. This is a historic preservation special permit for two buildings owned by the City. An RFP was sent out, and an eligible buyer was awarded the project. They submitted the redevelopment applications. The Board has been reviewing the project for quite some time. The project application has gone before TRC, DRC, and Planning Board. It has been reviewed extensively. Clearly, on a project of this size and scale, there are no engineering issues; utilities are available on site. There are no new roadways being proposed. They are just reorganizing parking for the Ordway Building. Not a lot of engineering work is involved other than creating two new lots. No new traffic issues in the downtown. This is a simple proposal for a historic restoration and renovation. The Historical Commission has approved the two buildings with architectural drawings. The Board has a draft decision for the project. It is up to the Board on how they wish to proceed. There are only a few specific conditions.
98. Pascal Rettig questioned if the draft was redlined. Nipun Jain confirmed it was.
99. Pascal Rettig opened public comment. There was no public comment.
100. Pascal Rettig noted the Board would take 10 minutes to review the draft decision. The meeting would resume at 8:15 p.m.
101. Pascal Rettig questioned the address. Nipun Jain responded that the Ordway has always been 9 School St. We will go by what the assessor's records say, which is 13 School St. We will verify what the assessor has. Pascal Rettig questioned if the one affordable unit was noted on the plan or if it would be decided later. Nipun Jain responded that all of the units are fairly similar in the Ordway, and that is where it will be.
102. Pascal Rettig requested that Nipun Jain take them through any specific pieces that should be noted. Nipun Jain responded that the findings are the facts of the project. There was one amendment noting that there are no connections being abandoned. They are adequate. The first two conditions are struck, but the sidewalk will be kept.
103. David Frick motioned to approve the special permit and site plan as per the draft decision as submitted for 5 and 13 School St. Seconded by Keith Ratner.
104. Pascal Rettig commented they will strike the first two lines of number 7 on page 3. Nipun Jain commented the only waivers associated are the dimensional controls. These are existing structures. The one being replaced will not be able to meet the setbacks. This is just to allow the lots to be buildable. The new structure is generally located in the same position. They are shifting it slightly to the left to make the driveway function better. The general conditions note there are 7 units in the project, 6 in Ordway and one in the Bagley House. There will be a Historic Preservation Restriction. There will be one affordable unit. The site and the building design will need to follow the design approved by the Board. One key thing that is still needed is a subdivision plan. That will come into play after the appeal period for the special permit is over. It can be a simple ANR plan after that. The setback waivers cannot change without further approval from the Board. The rest of the conditions are just documenting what has been presented to the Board for documentation or are required.
105. Tom Salemi questioned how they determine the size of the performance bond. Nipun Jain responded that typically, we do not require one until the applicant seeks to sell or completes site improvements. If they decide to sell before the site is done, at that time, they determine what is left for work to be completed and establish it then.

- 106. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
- 107. Keith Ratner – YES
- 108. Joel Nice – YES
- 109. Tracey Chalifour – YES
- 110. Tom Salemi – YES
- 111. David Frick – YES
- 112. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 113. Motion passed 6-0
- 114.

115. Keith Ratner motioned to close public the public hearing for 5 and 13 School Street.
Seconded by Tom Salemi.

- 116. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
- 117. Keith Ratner – YES
- 118. Joel Nice – YES
- 119. Tracey Chalifour – YES
- 120. Tom Salemi – YES
- 121. David Frick – YES
- 122. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 123. Motion passed 6-0

124. **Continued Hearings – 14 Maple St.**

125. Nipun Jain commented that staff had provided a draft decision Similarly this is a Historic Preservation Special Permit. The applicant is not doing much to the existing structure to renovate it. They are creating another lot with a proposed new structure. This has also been to TRC, DRC and the Historical Commission. The most recent updates provided on the proposal for each building is consistent with comments received. This project is ready to be approved with standard conditions.

126. Pascal Rettig opened public comment. No one spoke.

127. Pascal Rettig questioned if there was any other specific conditions. Nipun Jain responded this was as simple as you can get. The existing structure will be restored and renovated to the degree the Historical Commission deemed appropriate and DRC supports that. The proposed single-family home has also been extensively reviewed and several revisions have been made to that as well. This is a good addition to that street.

128. Keith Ratner motioned to approve the draft decision for 14 Maple St. as presented.
Seconded by Joel Nice.

- 129. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
- 130. Keith Ratner – YES
- 131. Joel Nice – YES
- 132. Tracey Chalifour – YES
- 133. Tom Salemi - YES
- 134. David Frick – YES
- 135. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 136. Motion passed 6-0

137. Ketih Ratner motioned to close the public hearing for 14 Maple St. Seconded by Joel Nice.
138. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
139. Keith Ratner – YES
140. Joel Nice – YES
141. Tracey Chalifour – YES
142. Tom Salemi - YES
143. David Frick – YES
144. Pascal Rettig – YES
145. Motion passed 6-0
- 146.
147. **Continued Hearings – 19 Prospect St.**
148. Nipun Jain commented this was very similar to the previous two projects the Board already heard tonight. This project has done extensive work in the preapplication and formal review process. The project is now consistent with the performance standards. The project will be a substantial improvement to the neighborhood.
149. Pascal Rettig clarified that there was just dimensional requirement waivers. Otherwise, there was nothing else specific to this project. They had presented some comments at the initial hearing with the performance standards and those have been addressed. There were some design comments and site issues like moving the 3-car garage to give a clear path for cars to get in and out. That will be addressed in the final plans. They talked about the trees in the back and want existing to flourish but also provide screening toward the properties in the back. They will be replacing the trees with texture and color to expand in girth. A final landscape plan will be a condition of approval.
150. David Frick motioned to approve the draft decision for 19 Prospect Street as presented. Seconded by Joel Nice.
151. Pascal Rettig opened public comment. No one spoke.
152. Tracey Chalifour noted that page 6 under general conditions number 1 was just missing the word “units.”
153. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
154. Keith Ratner – YES
155. Joel Nice – YES
156. Tracey Chalifour – YES
157. Tom Salemi - YES
158. David Frick – YES
159. Pascal Rettig – YES
160. Motion passed 6-0
161. Keith Ratner motioned to close the public hearing for 19 Prospect Street. Seconded by Joel Nice.
162. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
163. Keith Ratner – YES
164. Joel Nice – YES
165. Tracey Chalifour – YES

- 166. David Frick – YES
- 167. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 168. Motion passed 6-0

169. Tracey Chalifour motioned to take the application for 2-4 Elmwood St. out of order.
Seconded by Keith Ratner.

- 170. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote–
- 171. Keith Ratner – YES
- 172. Joel Nice – YES
- 173. Tracey Chalifour – YES
- 174. David Frick – YES
- 175. Pascal Rettig – YES
- 176. Motion passed 6-0

177. New Hearings – 2-4 Elmwood Street

- 178. Nipun Jain read the legal notice into the record.
- 179. Tracey Chalifour commented that she works with someone who is related to the owner of this property. There is no conflict of interest, but she wanted it in the record.
- 180. Matt Landis, from Scott Brown Architects commented that they did an initial presentation on January 8th. They have been to the Historical Commission, Design Review Committee and Technical Review Committee. They have incorporated the changes from the feedback. They expect to have a draft preservation restriction this week. The site has an existing historic 2 story-structure that was built in 1891. There is an existing single-car garage that will be demolished. As part of the architecture site plan, they show they will split the lot. The lot with the existing home will be 8,000 SF and the new home lot will be just over 5,000 SF. Both will have detached garages. The 2-family home will have a 2-car garage, and the single-car garage will be for the new home. The streetscape rendering shows how they will fit together. The existing 2-family will remain a 2-family. Both units will have entrances on the front door and there will be stairs up to the deck. Part of the restoration has been underway, and they replaced the siding and windows. There will be a composite trim and asphalt architectural shingles. The goal is to keep it as symmetrical as possible. They spent more time on the three-season porch in the back. They refined the windows and paneling under it. The other renovations on the home are pretty minor. The back elevation shows they will have 2-over-2 windows. The middle section will have fencing to screen the HVAC and basement. The left elevation will have a deck. The siding went up quite some time ago. The front and rear porch are pending approval. There has been a lengthy design review process. The new 2.5 story single-family home will be a three-bedroom home with Colonial Revival style. The roof lifts on the front elevation and on the side. The rear elevation has most of the windows. The left side is more private, and they will provide more privacy to the neighbor on the left. They are proposing a similar-style single-car garage. The landscape plan shows the existing house will have granite curbing, and 2 paths, one for each unit. The lots will be separated by vegetation. There will be patio pavers in the back and access to the backyard. The left unit has the expansive deck. The new house will be a bit more of a focal point, so there is minimal landscape. There are two

flanking street trees and hydrangeas on the side of the driveway. There will be a cedar privacy fence ranging from 4–6 feet. It starts out at 4 feet and, once you get to more privacy it starts to scoop up to 6 feet and maintains that height until the end.

181. Tom Salemi did not have any comments.
182. Joel Nice did not have any comments.
183. Keith Ratner clarified that the new house parking will be tandem for the garage and behind it. Matt Landis confirmed that was correct. They can fit 6 off-street parking spaces on the existing driveway. Keith Ratner questioned if the existing house was rentals or condos. Matt Landis responded he was not sure but will review with an attorney if condo docs are needed.
184. Tracey Chalifour did not have any comments.
185. David Frick did not have any comments.
186. Pascal Rettig noted the proposed lots would be 8,000 SF and 5,000 SF. Is that lot going to fit in with the other lots in the neighborhood? Matt Landis responded that most of the houses are in the same realm of square feet. A lot of the lots are relatively comparable. Cushing St. has a cohesive relationship for lot size and square foot of the house. Houses are 1,800 SF and 2,900 SF. Pascal Rettig questioned if the parking being provided was adequate for the zone. Matt Landis confirmed it was.
187. Nipun Jain commented this was similar to other Historic Preservation Special Permit projects. They presented their plans at that time. Comments were made at the pre-application by TRC and DRC. They have been incorporated in the formal application. From staff's perspective, they have addressed the technical and design aspects. This project meets the standards for this special permit.
188. Nick Cracknell commented when the applicant came into the city 10 months ago, their proposal was for a 900 SF ADU that was a modern-looking container. That would have been an as-of-right development with no special permit or preservation. The new state statute allows someone to add an ADU as of right under 900 SF. The ordinance on the books would require a special permit for that but it is no longer consistent with state law. They could have put in a corrugated metal container and new driveway, not subdivide the lot, and not have any requirement to do any restoration. This has been a great pathway taken instead. It is a better outcome. As for the rhythm of the street, this is a double lot, so there is a gap. Normally, this would have a house on it to meet that character of the street. This will generate more tax revenue than the ADU would have presented. The ADU container would have diminished property values.
189. Pascal Rettig opened public comment.
190. Mary Ellen Lawler, 7 Elmwood St. commented that she was thrilled this new house is there. It used to be a disaster. This is a huge improvement. Her concern is that it will set a precedent in our neighborhood. There is a huge lot next to her house and 5 other lots in their neighborhood. This would change the neighborhood considerably. It is reducing open space. She also had concerns about how many bedrooms are in the current house. It went from 2 bedrooms to 4 bedrooms on the right side of the house. She was concerned about parking. They can currently park 3–4 cars now, and they will be tandem. The street will be impacted when there are parties. Her main concern is the additional bedrooms, parking, and preservation of the neighborhood.

191. Pascal Rettig commented that by right they can do a 900 SF ADU. They are doing this under a historic preservation special permit. They are preserving the existing house under the historical preservation.
192. Keith Ratner commented that when they do an ADU, they don't have as much control as a Board.
193. Mary Ellen Lawler commented that she was also concerned that the second house garage is 5 feet from the property line.
194. **Carolyn Welch, 9 Elmwood St.** — Read a written public comment statement that is attached to the end of these minutes. The proposed renovation is already done. It was a two-bedroom that increased to four bedrooms. That was done without their knowledge. In her opinion, if you want to build an ADU, you don't care what it looks like. They are subdividing the property and making a profit off land that was not intended to be built on. All the other houses with double lots can build. People come to our neighborhood to ride bikes. If they are going to allow one development to set a precedent, then they would allow six properties to have the same allowance. Ms. Welch asked the Board to not to approve this.
195. Pascal Rettig commented this was not a variance. They do not have to prove hardship. This is granted as a density bonus.
196. Tracey Chalifour commented that this has been on a publicly published agenda. It has been in the pipeline. That is why I, as a Planning Board member, publish the agendas on Facebook. We encourage people to keep looking at the city website.
197. Carolyn Welch commented they are tying in a caveat saying they are going to historically update this.
198. Pascal Rettig commented they are allowed to pull a building permit to do a renovation. They are allowed to do what they have been doing. They are just pulling a building permit. It is maybe not a good idea to do because they spent money on higher-end materials if the Board doesn't approve this, then they will not get the density bonus. The only thing that would likely change is the actual preservation restriction that goes on that building. If the preservation restriction goes on the building, they would not be allowed to just build an addition on it. That is part of the requirements that grants the density bonus. The building needs to be maintained. That is the core of the historic preservation special permit.
199. Tom Broad, of 32 Congress St. commented that he wanted to see what type of building they would stick on the small lot. He was happy to see what they are planning to do with the house. He was concerned, looking at the lot, about what they will do with snow. There is no place to put it.
200. Tatiana Espinal of 8 Elmwood St. commented were concerned abutters about the proposed project. They own the next-door abutting property. They were very happy that the existing house has been fixed. That was done first and they had no idea about the new construction. They opposed approval because of concern with parking issues, additional traffic, setting a precedent of new homes being squeezed into new lots. This could affect property values and be detrimental to the neighborhood's quality of life. This has nothing to do with the design. They appreciate the work put into this. This is about quality of life and preserving the character of the neighborhood.

201. Lynn Teel read her public comment into the record and that is attached to the end of the minutes. The driveway abuts the 2 Elmwood side. The house looks lovely. Her question about parking was answered. The 2-4 Elmwood St. owner is living on the property. She hoped the privacy aspect can be addressed.
202. Matt Langis commented that a portion of the fence from the corner of the existing garage and where the deck starts is a 6-foot fence, then it starts to slope to a 4-foot fence. They are recommending the fence they put between the units is also a 4-foot fence. There is not a lot of landscaping on that side. The trash bins will be kept there. There is a paver patio behind the fence and a gate would separate it from the street. The majority of the landscaping in the front is hydrangeas and ferns. The back is proposed to be lawn. This is not a variance, so it doesn't require a hardship. Housing is critical. New construction houses are happening all around the city. This is a better use of an oversized lot. The lot is nonconforming on the front and side. The goal is to increase the side and rear setback as much as possible and to accommodate the garage. Some lots are 2,900 sq. ft. and some are 12,000 sq. ft; it's a big mix of lot sizes in the area. This does fit in the neighborhood.
203. Keith Ratner motioned to continue the meeting to 10 pm. Seconded by Tom Salemi.
Motion to continue to 10 p.m. Seconded by Tom Salemi.
204. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote—
205. Keith Ratner – YES
206. Joel Nice – YES
207. Tracey Chalifour – YES
208. Tom Salemi - YES
209. David Frick – YES
210. Pascal Rettig – YES
211. Motion passed 6-0
212. Matt Langis commented that it was absolutely a risk to start the renovation ahead of time because they are using higher end finishes. However, they believe the risk was a benefit to the streetscape. The expensive materials are not a requirement for the building permit. The number of bedrooms in the existing house is two on one side and two on the other. The proposed single-family home is a three-bedroom house. It will be sold as a house on its own lot and a condo for the duplex home.
213. Tracey Chalifour clarified that each unit gets a garage bay. Matt Langis confirmed that was correct.
214. Lynn Teel commented it was four bedrooms.
215. Matt Langis responded that it was legally, two bedrooms, and had storage space in the attic.
216. Tatiana Espinal commented that she kept hearing the new house absolutely fits in the neighborhood, and it really does not. People should google Elmwood and Albion St. They are so different. Albion St. is really dense and close together. It has a completely different character than Elmwood St. Elmwood is spacious and green. This does not fit the character.
217. Carolyn Welch commented that she understood wanting a bigger backyard, but as far as the neighborhood goes, it is preferable to push it back to be in line with all the other houses on the street. The other issue that she had was there is a tree/utility pole right on the property line. That is a hazard if hit by a plow or car.

218. Mary Ellen Lawler commented she was concerned about the snow. This winter she had to call the city because their road became impassable because of the snow. This is with the double three-car driveway and double lot. The street became so narrow, she had to call the city to get it cleared. There was no frontage on these places.
219. Mary Louise Bartley, 35 Congress St. submitted written public comment that can be found at the end of the minutes.
220. Nick Cracknell commented that staff and the Board share all concerns about infill development and what happens to Elmwood St. However, the state legislature has already made these decisions for us, unfortunately. A lot of things are happening at the state level. It will be increasingly shocking when we see what the result is for neighborhoods. They have had this on the books for 10 years and had 14–15 projects. This is an alternative to an ADU that gives the city = more control. The ADU is 900 sq. ft. which is not big, but they are allowed to be bigger with a garage and shed. There was no doubt in his mind it would have an adverse impact on the property. They have no control over the setbacks. Unless there is a conservation restriction on the land, there is no long-term protection on Elmwood. When a property transitions to a new owner, people have a right to do these things. The ADU statute is overriding zoning. There is no design review. Staff talked them into this so they didn't ruin the Elmwood neighborhood. Elmwood St. is different but look the streets on either side; that is what this street will look like unless you put a preservation restriction on the lots. This proposal is a great outcome. It adds more to the tax base and enhances the renovation.
221. Pascal Rettig commented on the next steps of this project. It has already gone to the Historical Commission, and they recommended approval and support the redevelopment of the property. They have been to TRC; and there are no engineering issues. They have gone to DRC during the pre-application and they have already incorporated the comments, so there are no wholesale change in terms of design and structure. The placement of the new structure and garages have been dealt with in great detail and discussed. This will need to come back to the Board for a final vote.
222. Pascal Rettig questioned if there was anything outstanding for this application.
223. Nipun Jain commented that they have to follow the provisions of the zoning ordinance made under Section XI.J.2. The Board has all the information needed as required of that zoning provision. There is nothing outstanding.
224. Keith Ratner motioned to continue 2–4 Elmwood St. to the April 27, 2026 Planning Board meeting and ask staff to prepare a draft decision. Seconded by Joel Nice.
225. David Frick commented it sounds like people think anybody can come in and sell off part of their property and do this and they are setting a precedent. That is not the case. In order to qualify, someone needs to have a historical home and renovate it to historical standards. It has to fit in the character of the neighborhood, and be approved by DRC and the HC. If you have one of the big lots and want to keep it from happening, then leave them green. Nobody can just sell off half the property. They need to do it with the whole lot. These projects are greatly enhancing the neighborhood. They are turning the property into something beautiful. He viewed it as a positive thing. It will be much nicer for the neighborhood. In general the HSP is a wonderful thing and has served our community well.

This is the first time they had a group of people come out and be against it. It may end up being a good thing for your neighborhood.

226. Tom Salemi commented he thought it was an attractive property. People can apply a restriction to their own property to ensure this doesn't happen. Thank you for coming out, we appreciate your thoughts.

227. Tracey Chalifour clarified that a draft decision doesn't mean public meeting portion is closed.

228. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote—

229. Keith Ratner – YES

230. Joel Nice – YES

231. Tracey Chalifour – YES

232. Tom Salemi - YES

233. David Frick – YES

234. Pascal Rettig – YES

235. Motion passed 6-0

236. Tracey Chalifour motioned to continue the meeting to 10:30 pm. Seconded by Tom Salemi.

237. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote—

238. Keith Ratner – YES

239. Joel Nice – YES

240. Tracey Chalifour – YES

241. Tom Salemi - YES

242. David Frick – YES

243. Pascal Rettig – YES

244. Motion passed 6-0

245.

246. **New Hearings – Bill 2026-068**

247. Nipun Jain read the legal ad into the record.

248. Nick Cracknell commented that they were proposing to amend the existing ADU ordinance. They have actually carried over 90% of the text and focused on 6 main changes. This will comply with the state statute adopted in August of 2024. The Affordable Homes Act passed in 2024 and designated ADU's as a protected use. All we are trying to do is comply with some provisions in 2024 that are inconsistent. For example, the size of the unit can be 900 sf, the owner occupancy is not a requirement, and it is not restricted to single family homes. The second purpose is to allow people to have ADUs who have residences in the Central Industrial District. Amesbury's zoning was adopted in 1971 and was done in a hurried manner. At least half of the Central Industrial zone in the downtown is residential. No one has gone back to fix that zoning. We still need to do that. One of the new provisions is to allow those folks to come to get a special permit to do an ADU. The third set of amendments relate to the design standards of the building height and dormers. People can put garages 5 feet off the lot by right because they are accessory structures. Some will do a detached ADU they can comply to dimensional standards for the code. There is a 15 foot height restriction and no dormers in the roof of an accessory structure. It is not

conducive for an ADU because it is too short. They are proposing small changes. They will use site plan review for as of right review and a special permit finding for IC district or non-conforming proposals.

249. Joel Nice questioned if people could to ADUs in their basement. Nick Cracknell confirmed they could.
250. Tom Salemi questioned if 900 sf was the living space. Nick Cracknell confirmed that was correct and the parking is excluded in the GFLA.
251. Nick Cracknell commented this was a short-term solution to allow the ability to issue special permits.
252. David Frick requested clarification about whether or not they had control over the design standards. Nick Cracknell commented they still have a requirement under the site plan review to go to the Design Review Committee. They need to meet all the standards for the special permit situations.
253. Tom Salemi motioned to extend the meeting to 10:40 pm. Seconded by Keith Ratner.
254. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote—
255. Keith Ratner – YES
256. Joel Nice – YES
257. Tracey Chalifour – YES
258. Tom Salemi - YES
259. David Frick – YES
260. Pascal Rettig – YES
261. Motion passed 6-0
262. Pascal Rettig opened public comment. No one spoke.
263. Tracey Chalifour motioned to accept the recommendations and send Bill 2026-068 with a positive recommendation to the City Council. Seconded by Tom Salemi.
264. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote—
265. Keith Ratner – YES
266. Joel Nice – YES
267. Tracey Chalifour – YES
268. Tom Salemi - YES
269. David Frick – YES
270. Pascal Rettig – YES
271. Motion passed 6-0
272. Keith Ratner motioned to close the public hearing for Bill 2026-068. Seconded by Tom Salemi.
273. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote—
274. Keith Ratner – YES
275. Joel Nice – YES
276. Tracey Chalifour – YES
277. Tom Salemi - YES
278. David Frick – YES
279. Pascal Rettig – YES

280. Motion passed 6-0

281. **Administrative** - 27.5-29 Clarks Road.

282. Nipun Jain commented that the decision was filed with a condition relative to sidewalk improvements. It was condition number 17. It noted a sidewalk east of the driveway at 25 Clarks Road. It is a smaller section of linear feet on the east side of Clarks Road. There were design proposals extending the sidewalk and a crosswalk with more sidewalk improvements to Main St. That is already being designed. The Board needs to fix the decision as voted.

283. Keith Ratner motioned to make a minor modification to strike the language about the existing utility pole across from Clarks Road and the east driveway in condition 17 of the decision. Seconded by Tom Salemi.

284. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –

285. Keith Ratner – YES

286. Joel Nice – YES

287. Tracey Chalifour – YES

288. Tom Salemi - YES

289. David Frick – YES

290. Pascal Rettig – YES

291. Motion passed 6-0

292. **Administrative - ZBA referral – 27 Kimball Road**

293. Nipun Jain commented this was a request from the ZBA. The Planning Board provided comments to the state in December. If the Board had more comments they want to send in the future they could. Nick Cracknell commented the developer presentation in March was similar to the one in December. They have not committed to any changes, but they have had productive informal conversations.

294. **Administrative - Invoices.**

295. Tracey Chalifour motioned to continue the meeting to 10:45 pm. Seconded by Tom Salemi.

296. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –

297. Keith Ratner – YES

298. Joel Nice – YES

299. Tracey Chalifour – YES

300. Tom Salemi - YES

301. David Frick – YES

302. Pascal Rettig – YES

303. Motion passed 6-0

304. David Frick motioned to authorize the payment of the invoices listed below. Seconded by Keith Ratner.

1. A VHB invoice for Clarks Road in the amount of \$9,900.
2. A VHB invoice for Clarks Road in the amount of \$8,900.
3. A VHB invoice for Clarks Road in the amount of \$1,700.

4. A VHB invoice for Clarks Road in the amount of \$2,252.
5. A Stantec invoice for Oakland Street in the amount of \$271.50.
6. A VHB invoice for Oakland Street in the amount of \$5,200.

305. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
306. Keith Ratner – YES
307. Joel Nice – YES
308. Tracey Chalifour – YES
309. Tom Salemi - YES
310. David Frick – YES
311. Pascal Rettig – YES
312. Motion passed 6-0

313. **Adjournment**

314. Tom Salemi motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:42 pm. Seconded by Tracey Chalifour.
315. Pascal Rettig initiated roll call vote –
316. Keith Ratner – YES
317. Joel Nice – YES
318. Tracey Chalifour – YES
319. Tom Salemi - YES
320. David Frick – YES
321. Pascal Rettig – YES
322. Motion passed 6-0