

2021-131

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CITY OF AMESBURY, MA



# Amesbury

Mayor **Kassandra Gove**

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## ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2021-01

**September 3, 2021**

Pursuant to Section 6-1(a)(2) of the Amesbury Home Rule Charter (the "Charter"), the Technical Review Committee (the "TRC") is hereby created and established as a special committee upon effect of this Order. The TRC shall consist of nine (9) members who will serve by virtue of the positions they hold, as follows:

- Director, Office of Community and Economic Development;
- Planning Director;
- Conservation Agent;
- Inspectional Services Director;
- Building Commissioner;
- Fire Chief;
- Police Chief;
- Director, Department of Public Works;
- City Engineer

Each member may choose a designee to serve in their absence. The Community Development Coordinator shall serve as the Staff Liaison.

The TRC will coordinate review and facilitate cross-departmental discussion about development review projects in Amesbury.

  
**Kassandra Gove**  
Mayor

# TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

September 2021

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## Introduction

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A Technical Review Committee (TRC) is traditionally established by a community to coordinate review and facilitate cross-departmental discussion about development review projects in a community. In some communities it serves as the advisory board for the Planning Board. In Amesbury, a TRC was in place for many years, but put on hiatus by the former Director of the Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED). In early 2020, Interim OCED Director Joe Fahey, revitalized the TRC. Over the next several months, OCED held regular meetings of the TRC, led by Nipun Jain/Planning Director, which included a formal agenda with links to the associated projects under discussion. While this model had some merits, there were some complications, resulting another hiatus of the TRC in the Winter of 2021. Recognizing the TRC is a crucial element to introducing development projects to City stakeholders, OCED Director Angela Cleveland worked with Ernest Creveling and several TRC members to explore restructuring the TRC. We conducted research, talked with existing TRC members, consulted with other communities, explored the merits of the current model, and drilled down to the basic need and goal of the TRC. This document lays out the proposed restructuring and launching of a new TRC.

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## Justification for the Restructure

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In the winter of 2021, several members reached out to OCED to provide feedback on the status of the TRC. Some projects were continually coming back to the TRC members for their review and comments, but little or no guidance was given on where they should focus their review and how to provide the comments. Some members said they provided their comments but that the feedback was not followed and/or was ignored. There was also a feeling of repetitiveness from meeting to meeting. The TRC is comprised of very busy leaders from departments throughout the City. They are hired and retained for their expertise, years of experience in and familiarity with Amesbury, and commitment to exceptional and code-compliant development in the City. We need to find a way to engage them meaningfully, efficiently, and successfully throughout the life-cycle of development projects in the City.

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## Proposed Structure

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The Technical Review Committee shall have nine (9) members, who may designate someone to serve:

- OCED Director
- Planning Director
- Conservation Agent
- Director of Inspectional Services
- Building Commissioner
- Fire Chief
- Police Chief
- DPW Director
- City Engineer
- Community Development Coordinator (staff liaison)

- The TRC meets twice a month (or as needed) on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of the month in the morning or as necessary and agreed upon by the TRC Members.
- TRC Webpage will be created that outlines who is on the TRC, when they meet, the process to place something on the agenda. Ideally this is through OpenGov, but it may not be set up immediately.
- Agenda items (with supporting documents) are sent to OCED. Items need to be received two Wednesdays before the meeting to be placed on the agenda. A schedule will be posted to the website with these deadlines.
- The meeting agendas and supporting materials are posted on the TRC webpage by the Community Development Coordinator and the link is sent along to the TRC members by the Tuesday before the meeting (second and last Tuesdays of the month).
- TRC members will determine a Chair at their first meeting, and rotate annually at the beginning of every Fiscal Year. The Chair is responsible for facilitating the TRC meetings and (in coordination with OCED), developing the agendas for each meeting.
- At the first meeting, TRC will lay the foundation for how it will operate, including why each person has been invited to serve, what is expected of them in and outside the meetings, what types and phases of projects will be reviewed (i.e., ConComm, Fire Permits, Building Permits, Planning Board, etc.), timing for project submissions, how the public can participate, and protocols to govern TRC's work.
- At each TRC meeting, the Chair will lead the discussion through the projects on the agenda. Depending on where the project is in the review phase, the applicant/property owner may be asked to make a presentation. TRC members will provide specific comments on the project from their professional expertise. TRC comments will be documented by the Community Development Coordinator.
- After each TRC meeting, the Community Development Coordinator will prepare and send the draft notes within 3 business days (by Friday after the meeting). TRC members will review and provide any clarifications or changes by Tuesday of the following week. Within 10 days, a final packet will be provided to the applicant with comments from the meeting. This will help them make changes to their application prior to submission to the Conservation Commission or Planning Board. Depending on the phase of the project (i.e., NOI, Pre-Application or Definitive Subdivision, etc.), all comments will be forwarded in a report to the appropriate Board/Commission/Committee to guide their decision.
- TRC members may be requested to attend a ConComm, Planning Board or other Committee meeting to provide expertise and guidance on specific issues and to help inform their decision.
- Schedule regular (bi-annual) check-ins with the Planning Board, and any other Committees/Boards, to discuss TRC process, revisit coordination, and provide onboarding to new members.