



Town of Dennis

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SESUIT HARBOR IMPROVEMENTS

PLANNING BOARD SPECIAL REVIEW - STAFF REVIEW – April 3, 2025

APPLICANT:	Town of Dennis Harbormaster C/O Catalyst Architecture
PROJECT ADDRESS:	351 Sesuit Neck Road
MAP AND LOT:	410-23 (9.01 acres)
APPLICANT ADDRESS:	685 Route 134, Dennis Town Hall
CASE NUMBER:	SR-1-2025 – Special Review for a Municipal Project
ZONING:	R-60
REVIEW DATE:	April 7, 2025

1. **Proposal and Project Summary**
2. **Town Department Comments**
3. **§ 4.1.2.5 Design Objectives – Criteria and Proposal**
4. **§ 1.4.2.1 Special Permit Granting Authority – Criteria and Proposal**
5. **Proposed Conditions**

PROPOSAL	A complete renovation and modernization of the land side Harbormaster facilities and site including a new Harbormaster building, workshop, garage, septic system, drainage, parking & new circulation.
PROJECT SUMMARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of the renovation is to raise the buildings above the AE Flood Zone, pull them out of the wetlands buffer, increase the number and size of parking spots, improve circulation within the boatyard and on Sesuit Neck Road and improve efficiency, safety and accessibility. • The improvements include the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harbormaster Facilities (Buildings): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Replace the existing ±200sf harbormaster office, ±265sf public restroom building, and ±786sf workshop/ garage building. All 3 structures are small, lack proper accessibility and are scattered around the site which contributes to inefficient vehicular circulation and parking and impacts pedestrian safety. b) A proposed new Harbormaster office of ±1,000sf with adjoining ±500sf public restroom facility to support harbormaster operations & staff and provide fully accessible restrooms to the public. The 2 are combined into a single structure for construction efficiency and consolidating pedestrian movement. c) A new workshop/ garage facility of ±1,524sf is proposed at a separate location on site to support ongoing dock maintenance and other marina operations. d) All proposed new buildings will be positioned and constructed to meet or exceed the AE flood zone requirements in which they are located. 2. Sesuit Harbor Marina Site: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Entire site is within a FEMA AE flood zone EL-14 or EL-15 with the top of the Coastal Bank in close proximity to the edge of existing pavement. Much of the

	<p>existing parking (paved and hardpack gravel) is within the 50' and 100' resource buffers with no stormwater controls in place.</p> <p>b) The proposed site improvements include paving all parking areas and providing compliant stormwater controls for the entire site. The improvements will result in a net reduction to impervious paving within the 50' & 100' resource buffers of over 7,000sf.</p> <p>c) A new advanced de-nitrification septic system is being proposed and will be located outside the resource buffer to serve all new structures on site.</p> <p>3. <u>Site vehicular circulation, parking, and pedestrian circulation:</u></p> <p>a) Existing paved parking at the central and south end of the site is marked to accommodate ±113 spaces. Many of the spaces and drive aisles do not comply with zoning standards. If the existing paved area was striped per zoning required dimensions, there would be ±99 standard spaces. The existing conditions contribute to inefficient parking and poor vehicular and pedestrian circulation.</p> <p>b) The Northern end of the site is currently hard-packed gravel used for boat trailers and tow vehicle parking. The area is not uniform and has no marked spaces resulting in parking capacity varying significantly day by day.</p> <p>c) The boat ramp is centrally positioned generally across from the site ingress and egress which, with the current circulation, can at times contribute to congestion and traffic backups onto Sesuit Neck Road.</p> <p>d) The entire site is proposed to be paved and striped for designated parking and circulation. There will be 120 standard vehicle parking spaces (inclusive of 5 HC) + 18 trailers and tow vehicle spaces for a total of 138 parking spaces.</p> <p>e) Existing curb cut along Sesuit Neck Road will be shifted south ±30' to better align with the boat ramp for improved egress. A new "entrance only" curb cut is proposed at the northern end of the site for boat trailers entering the site. This will provide onsite cueing for ramp access and should reduce traffic backups at the main site entry.</p> <p>f) Perimeter sidewalks are being provided to get pedestrians out of the vehicular circulation areas and directing them to the docks or harbormaster offices and public restrooms. A planted pedestrian pathway through the site from Sesuit Neck Road to the docks delineates trailer parking from non-trailer parking.</p> <p>4. <u>Zoning, Conservation, and Historic:</u></p> <p>a) All buildings are designed to comply with zoning setbacks.</p> <p>b) Parking improvements are designed to comply with zoning and/or in alignment with their current extends within setbacks.</p> <p>c) Intended to comply with all zoning requirements needing no zoning relief.</p> <p>d) The project has received unanimous approval from the local Conservation Commission and was seen as a significant net improvement to site.</p> <p>e) The project is currently in the process of seeking approval from the Old Kings Highway Historic District.</p>
PLOT PLAN	Site Plan of Sesuit Harbor Improvements, Dennis, MA prepared for the Town of Dennis by Coastal Engineering and Catalyst Architecture. Plan dated 2023-12-13
BUILDING PLANS	Sesuit Harbor Improvements, Dennis, MA prepared for the Town of Dennis by Catalyst Architecture. Plan dated 2023-12-13
OTHER	Revised plans are expected imminently

1. **TOWN DEPARTMENTS COMMENTS:**

- **NATURAL RESOURCES:** Project has been reviewed and approved by the Conservation Commission.
- **HEALTH:** Project has been reviewed and approved by the Board of Health.
- **ENGINEERING:** Engineering made extensive comments at Staff Review that engineer is expected to address soon. Comments included the following:
 - Wanted to see the 100-year flood even though we know it will overflow, to see where the water will go.
 - As-built information for the stormwater near the street.
 - Question whether project needs a variance for the more than 30' wide entry. Probably simply need to note it since it is the entry to a public boat launch/ramp area.
 - Engineering would prefer granite to concrete curbs.
 - Question about bike racks.
- **PLANNING:**
 - a) **Traffic & Parking:** Parking and circulation are both improved with more and better delineated parking spaces and improved circulation flow. The new curb cut to direct vehicles with trailers to a second access should reduce, if not remove, some congestion on Sesuit Neck Road. Pedestrian circulation is improved with a sidewalk cutting through the site to the water.
 - b) **Stormwater:** Project will require a Stormwater Management Permit
 - c) **Wastewater:** Project has been reviewed and approved at Board of Health.
 - d) **Landscaping:** Buildings and pavement are being removed from the wetlands buffers and new landscaping is being added as well as locating buildings out of the line of sight to water.
 - e) **Built Environment/Design:** Well-designed new buildings will consolidate public services and raise out of the flood zone.
 - f) **Lighting:** TBD.
 - g) **FUNDING:** The project will be on the Annual Town Warrant and at the ballot box for funding of approximately \$8,000,000. Potentially ¾ of this amount could be defrayed by grants from the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program, the Seaport Economic Council, Coastal Resiliency Grants, and other grant programs.

2. **4.1.2.5 Design Objectives:** The following design objectives (*italics*) in addition to any standards elsewhere in the Zoning By-Law, shall be used by Planning Board in considering all site plans.

a. **Landscaping:**

- i. *Every effort shall be made to minimize removal of existing vegetation and to integrate existing mature trees and vegetation into the landscape plan. **Done***
- ii. *Natural buffers ... shall be maintained whenever possible. **Improved.***
- iii. *A minimum 10-foot vegetated buffer shall be maintained to abutting properties unless the appropriate permit granting authority deems crossing of buffer is warranted.*
- iv. *Landscaping shall include masses of trees and vegetation around/near buildings to reduce perceived scale and set them into the landscape.*

b. **Circulation:** *With respect to vehicular and pedestrian circulation, including entrances, ramps, walkways, drives, parking and loading areas, special attention shall be given to*

- i. *Location and number of access points to the public streets: **Improved.***
- ii. *General interior circulation: **Improved.***
- iii. *Separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic: **Improved.***
- iv. *Delineation of parking stalls and loading zones: **Improved.***

- v. *Surface material: More pavement but less within buffer zones to wetlands.*
- vi. *Access to community facilities: Improved.*
- vii. *Accommodations for the handicapped: Building will be accessible per A.D.A.*
- viii. **Surface Water Drainage: Improved.Requires a Stormwater Management Permit**
- c. **Building Location:** *Proposed structures shall be integrated as much as possible. Done*
- d. **Building Design:** *The design of proposed buildings, structures and additions shall complement, whenever feasible, the general setback, roofline, arrangement of openings, color, exterior materials, proportions and scale of existing buildings in the vicinity. Improved.*
- e. **Special Features:** *Exposed machinery, utility structures and areas for parking, loading, storage, service and disposal shall be screened from adjoining properties and streets.*
- f. **Safety** - *All open and enclosed spaces shall be designed to facilitate building evacuation and maximize accessibility by fire, police, and other emergency personnel and equipment. Improved.*

3. **§ 1.4.2.1 Special Permit Granting Authority:** Special permits may be granted only upon a finding by the Board that the proposed use will not create a nuisance, hazard or congestion, or other significant harm to the neighborhood, nor cause derogation from the general purpose and intent of the By-Law, the stated district intent or applicable use criteria. The following criteria must be met:
- a. *The use is allowed by special permit in the district in which proposed, pursuant to §2.2.2 - Use Regulations Schedule; The use is allowed and meets the District Intent.*
 - b. *Suitability of the site for the proposed use in light of the applicable district intent, as provided in §2.1.5; The use is allowed and meets the District Intent.*
 - c. *Adequacy of management of traffic flow within the site as well as in relation to adjoining streets and properties, so as to minimize unsafe or harmful impacts of the use; The proposal improves vehicular and pedestrian flow within and outside the site. Parking is increased and the propes size and better delineated with improved circulation.*
 - d. *Compatibility of the proposed use with surrounding land uses, so as to minimize harmful impact or conflict with existing desirable neighborhood character, including views, vistas and other aesthetic values; The proposal is compatible with the area and will improve aesthetics.*
 - e. *Adequacy of provision of utilities and other necessary or desirable public services; Adequate.*
 - f. *Adequacy of control of artificial light, noise, litter, odor or other sources of nuisance or inconvenience to adjoining properties, public ways and neighborhoods; The proposal should not generate excessive light, noise, litter, odor or other sources of nuisance.*
 - g. *Adequacy of protection from degradation and alteration of the natural environment, including but not limited to slopes and other topographical features, vegetation, wetlands, groundwater and water bodies and wildlife habitat. The proposal has been approved by Conservation and Board of Health to insure it will not degrade the natural environment.*