

IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting in person

Thursday, February 16, 2023

7:00 pm

Pursuant to a meeting, notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Ipswich Planning Board (PB) was held on Thursday, February 16, 2023, at Town Hall in Room C. Board members Toni Mooradd, Carolyn Britt, Mitch Lowe, Helen Weatherall, Jenn Crawford and Associate Member Laurie Paskavitz were present. Staff Andrea Bates and Interim Planning Director Glenn Gibbs were present.

Mooradd convened the PB meeting at 7:00 pm with a quorum present. Attendance of PB members was taken. Members of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board (AHT) and Ipswich Housing Partnership (IHP) were also in attendance: John Doonan (IHP), Charlie Allen (IHP), Stacey Pedrick (IHP), Jim Warner (IHP & AHT), Ken Redford (IHP), Binni Hacket (IHP & AHT), Michael Jones (IHP & AHT), Sarah Player (AHT/Select Board), Patsy Valcour (IHP), Michael Schaaf (AHT), and Mark Godin (Ipswich Housing Coordinator). All members introduced themselves.

Citizen Queries: None noted.

Discussion with Affordable Housing Trust and Ipswich Housing Partnership

Mooradd noted the business meeting between the PB, AHT and IHP is discuss what each board does and how to move forward in a collective manner to achieve affordable housing goals. Mooradd noted that Legislation related to 3A will not be discussed this evening and announced the first public meeting for 3A is scheduled for Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at Town Hall.

Charlie Allen began the discussion by summarizing how AHT and IHP function. He noted they are two separate boards but meet jointly. AHT has the funds (primarily from “payment-in-lieu”). IHP advises on how to use the funds. AHT must be comprised of three members of IHP, the Town Manager (or designee) and a Select Board member.

Allen noted the need in the community for affordable housing exceeds the 10% Safe Harbor requirement. Allen provided a brief history of funding for AHT. There is approximately \$1.3 million in the trust. AHT and IHP are working to encourage development patterns to create and maintain affordable housing. Members discussed various programs of AHT and IHP. Planning Board members discussed various zoning bylaws implemented in recent years to encourage affordable housing development. It was noted that not a lot of progress has been made with affordable housing and a collaborative effort is needed.

Crawford noted the amount of development in recent years and AHT funds have grown. She said developers need to be made aware of resources available to make affordable units. Allen suggested making the “payment-in-lieu” large enough to encourage developers to create affordable units. Gibbs discussed recent zoning bylaw changes requiring a multi-unit development of 7 or more

units be required to provide an affordable unit. The choice of creating an affordable unit or making a “payment-in-lieu” is for multi-unit developments of 6 or less units.

Jim Warner said it is best to leverage AHT fund to help developers. Warner noted the need to create more multi-family housing in Town. IHP and AHT would like to be made aware of developments that may have affordable units. It could be opportunities to negotiate for more affordable units.

Several programs and zoning bylaws were discussed for opportunities to encourage more affordable housing. Mooradd suggested a working group with members from each board to discuss potential zoning bylaw amendments for Fall Town Meeting. Lowe suggested re-visiting the “payment-in-lieu” for potential adjustments. PB members thanked IHP and AHT members for meeting this evening.

Discussion: Planning Board authority and responsibilities

Gibbs distributed hand-outs and Mooradd noted hand-outs provided to the PB at the prior meeting. PB has two functions: Permitting and Long-term Planning. Gibbs reviewed the responsibilities and resource documents provided. Gibbs noted that a copy of sub-division regulations will be provided. Lowe requested a hard copy (11 x 17) of the Ipswich zoning map.

Gibbs discussed the differences between approval of a special permit and sub-division. Under state law for sub-division, property owners have a right to create single-family homes. For the PB not to approve a sub-division, it must identify what criteria was not met. Gibbs noted Site Plan Review is not applicable for single-family homes. Gibbs reviewed special permit criteria. The benefits to the Town of a special permit project must outweigh the adverse impacts. Gibbs noted that the special permit criteria help shape projects. He also noted that Footnote 11 density bonus is not by right of an applicant. Variances and waivers were discussed noting only the Zoning Board of Appeals can grant a variance. PB can approve waivers if the bylaw specifically has language allowing PB to do so.

Adjournment

Crawford made a motion to adjourn, and Weatherall seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm

Meeting notes taken by: Odile Breton

Accepted on: March 9, 2023