

IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting remotely using ZOOM
Thursday, March 31, 2022 at 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 was held on Thursday, March 31, 2022, at Town Hall in Room A and remotely using ZOOM. Board members Carolyn Britt, Mitch Lowe, Toni Mooradd, and Helen Weatherall were present. Jeffrey Anderson and Associate Member, Laurie Paskavitz, were absent. Staff, Ethan Parsons, and recording secretary, Odile Breton, were also present.

Britt convened the meeting at 7:01 PM with a quorum present.

Britt requested an acknowledgement of attendance for all members present. Britt reviewed meeting purpose and procedures for the Board, applicants and other participants. She noted the Board will end in-person meetings by 10:45 PM.

Citizen Queries: Larry Graham, 12 Labor In Vain Road, made a query regarding requiring applicants to appear in person. Graham reviewed reasons for remote meetings and is concerned about the Board's unwritten policy for applicants to appear in person. He emphasized safety reasons for remote meetings. Britt noted Graham made valid points. She apologized for the technical difficulties experienced at the last meeting. Mooradd said that meeting remotely is a choice and not a requirement. Weatherall added that meeting in person reduces the risk of technical issues. Lowe wants the applicants to present their applications in the way an applicant would want. Applicants should note that technical issues may inhibit a presentation and could cause delays or stop the public hearing. The Board said it will discuss the topic further at the end of the meeting.

Request by Lou Rubino for minor modification of special permit for project at 126-128 High Street to allow for stormwater management system to function irrigation system

Larry Graham, H.L. Graham & Associates, was present for the applicant. Graham explained the request. The applicant would like to reuse captured stormwater for irrigation instead of paying for Town water. He said it does not impact stormwater management design. Graham explained that stormwater is captured in tanks. The captured water will be used to irrigate and increases recharge. Britt confirmed that it will not be an in-ground sprinkler system. Graham said it will likely be a pump and hose. Pump will have float switches. Tanks fill when it rains.

Lowe made a motion to approve the minor modification to allow for stormwater management system to function as an irrigation system and Mooradd seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

New Public Hearing: Request by 214 High LLC for a Special Permit for a multi-family dwelling (10 units) at 214 High Street (Assessor's Map 21 Lot 13), which is located in the Highway Business and Water Supply Protection Zone II Districts, pursuant but not necessarily limited to Sections V.D, VI, VII, IX.C, IX.K, and XI.J of the Zoning Bylaw

Jeff Anderson is recused, and Laurie Paskavitz is appointed a voting member. Charrissa Vitas, Larry Graham (design engineer) and Tom Mayo (architect) were present for the application. Vitas began the presentation by reviewing the need for rental housing in Ipswich. She noted the project proposes 10 units (9, 1-bedroom units and 1 studio). She said 1 unit will be affordable and 1 unit will be handicap accessible.

Graham reviewed the site plans. Sheet 1 documents the overall property, which is approximately 3.3 acres. There is 125 ft. of frontage along High Street. Graham pointed out the wetlands, noting they had been delineated. Work is on 13,000 sq. ft. of the 3.3 acres. Sheet 2 includes existing conditions of the site. There is an existing single-family home and shed on the site. The home is serviced by Town sewer. Sheet 3 presents the proposed layout and planting plan. Planting plan is expected to be revised and presented at a later meeting. The proposed building is 82 ft. in length and 34 ft. in depth (rectangular shape). Graham said the layout is driven by the location of the Wetlands Protection Act and Conservation Commission. The project also goes before MassDOT for a change in use. Graham pointed out 6 parking spaces in the front and noted there are 9 garage parking spaces. There are 2 additional guest parking spaces that are not technically compliant with the bylaw but are an extra. The project is requesting a waiver for the guest parking spaces. Graham pointed out the location for snow storage and noted a resident gathering area. Sheet 4 documents the grading and utility plan. Graham said the stormwater management plan is designed to meet State and Town regulations. Sheet 5 details the elevations.

Mayo reviewed photographs of the neighborhood. He presented a rendering of the proposed building. Mayo said the rear roof is ideal for solar panels. The front and side yard have landscape block walls. The project will go before the Design Review Board (DRB). Parsons noted the next DRB meeting is April 4.

Weatherall is concerned about vehicles parking in front of garages. Lowe requested Parsons inquire with the Building Inspector if an elevator is needed. Mooradd likes the small rental units. She is concerned with parking in front and garage doors in the front as it is not in line with special permit guidelines. Mooradd noted the Highway Business District only allows 50% of parking in the front of the building. Mayo said 6 spaces are in the front of the building and 9 spaces are in garages behind the setback requirement. There will not be any parking in the drive aisle. No public comment noted.

Britt noted that information on this project is on the Town website. A site visit is scheduled for Wednesday, April 6, 2022 at 5:30 PM. Parsons suggested a peer review for drainage and stormwater management.

Lowe made a motion to continue the public hearing until April 28, 2022, at Town Hall in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 PM. Mooradd seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Continued Public Hearing: Request by Carl Gardner for a Special Permit to build a detached accessory dwelling unit at 5-7 Turkey Shore Road (Accessor's Map 42A, Lot 37C), which is located in the In-Town Residence District, pursuant but not necessarily limited to Sections IX.U and XI.J of the Zoning Bylaw

Jeff Anderson is recused, and Laurie Paskavitz was appointed a voting member on this application when it opened on March 10, 2022. Carl Gardner, 9 Woods Lane, was present.

Britt reviewed Board member comments from the site visit. Mooradd is concerned with the current state of dwelling units and noted many letters from neighbors. Britt is concerned with the proposed project fitting in with the neighborhood. There are drainage concerns on the site. Lowe noted there are existing stone walls to help mitigate grading changes on the site. Lowe asked if the Conservation Commission has reviewed the project. Gardner responded that he filed a Notice of Intent with Commission and will go before it in April.

Gardner has owned the property since 1986 as a rental property. He reviewed the stormwater management plan. Stone beds are proposed with pipes leading water to a rain garden.

Weatherall noted a neighbor's property will be shaded by the new building. She is also concerned with the project fitting with the character of the neighborhood and is not comfortable with the proposal. Lowe is not sure the project is appropriately sized for the neighborhood. He said the stormwater management issues must be resolved before moving forward.

Gardner presented an aerial view of the neighborhood and reviewed its evolution over the past 30 years. His project has minimal impact to the neighborhood.

Public Comment: Catherine Bartholomew, 16 Turkey Shore Road, said Turkey Shore Road provides a scenic road for pedestrians. She described the neighborhood as consisting of single-family homes. She noted there are 22 properties and 32 households. Each lot contains one building for housing, which is the character of the neighborhood. The proposed project would be the first of its kind in the neighborhood. She is concerned with added density, traffic flow and safety. The project is a departure from the neighborhood character.

Parsons noted the DRB reviewed the project but has not issued a final recommendation.

Lowe made a motion for the DRB to review the project and issue a recommendation to the PB and Mooradd seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Lowe requested a third-party review for drainage. Mooradd and Weatherall agreed.

Lowe made a motion to continue the public hearing to April 28, 2022, at Town Hall in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Weatherall seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Continued Public Hearing: 5 & 11 Washington St: Request by Triple Q LLC for a Special Permit and Site Plan Review for a 16-unit multifamily residential development at 5 and 11 Washington Street (Assessor's Map 41B Lots 274 and 275), which is located in the General Business District, pursuant but not necessarily limited to Sections V.D, VI, VII, IX.I, IX.K and X of the Zoning Bylaw and associated regulations

Jeff Anderson is recused. Laurie Paskavitz was appointed a voting member for this application on September 9, 2021.

John Colantoni and Attorney James Juliano were present. Jim Emmanuel (landscape architect), Thad Barry (engineer) and John Duggar (architect) were present on ZOOM.

Britt noted at the last meeting that members expressed concerns about density, size of units and the massing of the buildings. Attorney Juliano provided a summary of the project and the hearings. He noted the benefits of the project outweigh any adverse impacts. He noted the size of the project is not designed for large families and will not burden the school system.

Colantoni presented the changes. He presented a chart listing the units and square footage of each unit. He noted the height of buildings was reduced to 34.15 ft. The chart documents 5 units over 2,000 sq. ft. Unit B looks like a 2-story unit and a single car garage which allows for more first floor living space. Unit B used to look like a 3-story unit. Four units have roof decks, which is down from six units. Mooradd noted the bylaw only allow for 25% of the development to be single-family stand-alone buildings. That would be 3 units and the project has 5 units that are stand-alone. Parsons said the bylaw does not provide the Board with authority to waive this requirement. Lowe said the changes are moving in a good direction. Weatherall appreciates the work done and the changes made.

Britt requested discussing peer review comments. Colantoni received the peer review comments last Friday and the engineer is working on a response. Britt is concerned with peer review comments on stormwater management and the inconsistency with numbers/calculations and potential flooding. She is also concerned about a drainage structure on Town property. Lowe requested Parsons inquire with the DPW Director regarding a drainage structure on Town property. Parsons will get a response from DPW in writing. Lowe asked how removing the rain garden would impact the stormwater management plan.

Attorney Juliano explained the purpose of the rain garden is to slow the water flow. For the next hearing, the response to the peer review will be completed. Berry discussed the drainage and stormwater management plan. The plantings at the edge of the road will break up water flow.

Parsons noted the DRB recommended the project but have not reviewed the recent changes. Colantoni would prefer not to go back before the DRB and noted the multiple hearings between the Planning Board and DRB.

Public Comment: Larry Graham, 12 Labor In Vain Road, said the location of the project is great. The current site does not offer much to the Town. He is concerned that an egress only on Mineral

Street is not a good idea. Traffic will not go through the Town. Drivers will cut through Mineral Street.

Britt said for the next meeting peer review comments need to be completed and changes to connect buildings to comply with bylaw need to be completed. It was noted the project application needs to be extended. Colantoni agreed to the extension.

Mooradd made a motion to extend the public review timeline to April 28, 2022, and Lowe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mooradd made a motion to continue the public hearing to April 28, 2022, at Town Hall in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 PM and Lowe seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Continued Public Hearing: Request by New England Biolabs Inc. for a Special Permit pursuant to Sections IX.N and XI.J of the Zoning Bylaw for uses involving hazardous and toxic materials associated with the uses and activities in the main laboratory building and the expansion currently under construction at the New England Biolabs, Inc. property at 240 County Road (Assessor's Map 63, Lot 7), located in the Rural Residence A District (an on NEB's GEPD lot)

Jeff Anderson and Helen Weatherall are recused. Laurie Paskavitz is appointed a voting member.

The applicant requested a continuance without discussion.

Lowe made a motion to continue the public hearing to April 28, 2022, at Town Hall in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Mooradd seconded. The motion passed with 3 votes (Britt, Mooradd, Lowe).

Continued Public Hearing: Ora, Inc. for Site Plan Review, and a Special Permit to use 55 Waldingfield Road as a "Great Estate" for business purposes pursuant to Section IX.H of the Zoning Bylaw. The proposal involves the alteration of more than 2,500 sq. ft. of commercial space as described in Section X.B.1 and the increase of required parking spaces by more than 10 as described in Section X.B.3 of the Zoning Bylaw, as well as associated site work, at 55 Waldingfield Rd. (Assessor's Map 62, Lot 14), located in the Rural Residence A Zoning District, pursuant but not limited to the sections of the Zoning Bylaw cited herein as well as XI.J

Britt noted voting members for the application are Anderson, Lowe, Weatherall, Mooradd and Britt. Parsons noted that at the March 3, 2022 Planning Board meeting the application was continued without discussion to April 28, 2022. The extension for the application is through May 5, 2022. No action from the Board is necessary this evening.

Adopt minutes of February 17, 2022

Lowe made a motion to adopt the minutes of February 17, 2022, as amended from Parson's and Mooradd seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business: Discussion of meetings in person, on ZOOM and hybrid. Parsons said the choice to meet in person or virtual is the prerogative of the PB. It was suggested that one person from an applicant's team be in person during hybrid meetings to reduce the risk of technical issues.

Public Comment: Larry Graham, 12 Labor In Vain Road, suggested the Board develop an interim policy for an applicant's representative to present in person. He also suggested that it be encouraged and not required.

Lowe made a motion to continue hybrid meetings and to encourage applicants to present in person and note that technical issues may cause a hearing to be cancelled. Mooradd seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discuss Potential Zoning Amendments for Fall 2022 Town Meeting

Mooradd reviewed a four-page document summarizing ideas for potential zoning changes. She noted goals documented in the Community Development Plan and Housing Production Plan that are related to zoning. Parsons said the list can be amended. He suggested narrowing down the list so the Planning Department can work on items during the summer.

Mooradd would like the issue documented and how the potential change in the bylaw resolves the identified issue. Lowe said some definitions in the bylaw need to be added or cleaned up. PB to review the document and provide comments to Parsons and Mooradd.

Adjournment

Lowe made a motion to adjourn, and Mooradd seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:31 PM

Meeting notes taken by: Odile Breton

Accepted on: April 28, 2022