

IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting in person

Thursday, May 18, 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, May 18, 2023, at Town Hall in Room A. Board members Toni Mooradd, Mitch Lowe, Helen Weatherall, Jenn Crawford and Associate Member Laurie Paskavitz were present. Carolyn Britt was absent. Interim Planning Director Glen Gibbs was present.

Mooradd convened the PB meeting at 7:15 pm with a quorum present. The start of the meeting was delayed due to technical issues. Attendance of members was taken noting Carolyn Britt was absent with prior notice.

Citizen Queries: None noted.

New Public Hearing: Request by Town Manager for Site Plan Review/Special Permit for the construction of a public safety building at 36 Linebrook Road, which is located in the RRA District and Water Supply Protection District Zone II, pursuant but not necessarily limited to Sections V, VI, VII, and X of the Zoning Bylaw

Mooradd opened the public hearing by reading the legal notice. Laurie Paskavitz was appointed a voting member for this application. Stephen Crane, Town Manager, Steve Powers (civil engineer – Samiotes Consultants, Inc.), Kristis Karklins (architect – TGAS Architects, Inc.), Ewan Ellis (architect – TGAS Architects, Inc.), Barry Hosmer (landscape architect), Bob Weatherall (Public Safety Committee) and Fire Chief Paul Parisi were present for the public hearing.

Crane provided an overview of the project. He noted Ipswich voters approved of the site. Crane explained the importance of the project to the Town. Inflation over the past few years has reduced the scope of the project. It was noted that the Public Safety Committee (13 members) has been working on the project for over 6 years.

Karklins presented the site plan (located at Pineswamp Road and Linebrook Road). He said the goal is to build a sustainable, cost-effective public safety building. The building needs to be close to the road for emergency vehicle access. The wetlands on the south side (rear) of the site were pointed out. Renderings of the proposed building were presented. The architecture and materials were reviewed. A sand color brick veneer and zinc panel access are proposed for the side of the building facing Linebrook Road. Concrete pavers are proposed for the front of the building. Water is intended to drain in between the pavers.

Hosmer reviewed the landscape design. Trees will be added near the entrances and for screening. Plantings proposed were described and the team will work with neighboring properties for screening. The No Disturbance Zone (NDZ) will increase by approximately 10,500 sq. ft. and will be seeded with native grass and wildflowers.

Powers discussed the function of the site. A wide curb cut is needed on Linebrook Road entrance for emergency vehicles. Electric vehicle charging stations are in the public parking area. The site is 8 acres with 3.2 acres of upland and 2.3 acres of buildable area. The dumpster is in the rear of the building. Gravel will be used on the outdoor storage area. Roof run-off will be captured by the infiltration systems.

Lowe asked if fire trucks pull into the site or if the fire trucks need to back into the site. The fire trucks will pull into the site. Street traffic will not be blocked and no traffic lights are proposed. Mooradd noted snow storage is not on the plan and requested the plan to be updated for it. Gibbs noted the proposed impervious surface for the project is below 15% and the project does not require a Water Supply Protection District permit. Gibbs noted 10 ft. wide screening is required, however the PB can approve an alternative plan given the wetlands on the site. PB can reduce parking requirements by 25%. Gibbs noted the setback on Pineswamp Road is requested to be reduced to 37.5 ft. from 50 ft. Gibbs noted the ZBA is reviewing several variance requests (parking setback, building height, portion of building constructed in the setback).

H. Weatherall commented on the use of large windows and said it seems to be an urban design. She commented on the Essex project and how that appears to have worked for Essex. H. Weatherall asked about the treatment of water used to wash the vehicles. Powers said the water is treated differently and vehicles will be washed in the bays. Bob Weatherall commented on the Essex project and reminded the PB that Ipswich has three times the population of Essex and primarily has a volunteer fire department. The project for Ipswich attempts to address a much larger program for public safety.

Crawford asked about the project schedule, budget and phases. Bob Weatherall said the budget is \$27 million with an estimated construction cost of \$23.5 million. Construction bids are anticipated for October 2023. Construction is estimated to take 1.5 years to complete and is scheduled for calendar year 2024. Crane said the bidders will have say in the materials used to build the project and reminded the PB on budgeting constraints. Crawford suggested simplifying the exterior palette to reduce future maintenance. Lowe requested information on sustainability and energy conservation goals. Bob Weatherall said the building will meet carbon zero impact and will be all electric. The building will meet the Stretch Energy Code.

Public Comment:

Attorney Meredith Fine (representing Vanessa Gray, 34 Linebrook Road), said the abutter has concerns about parking on the east side of the site. She noted that 57 parking spaces are required for the project and noted there are 34 visitor parking spaces. She asked if 34 visitor parking spaces are needed and requested the PB investigate the parking spaces. She also noted a discrepancy with parking on application documents. The narrative in the application states there are 68 parking spaces and the plan states 70 parking spaces. Fine requested the project consider a retaining wall between the properties because the grading from the Town property will slope 5 ft. down to the abutting property and the grading will not manage stormwater. Fine noted a proposed balcony that appears to be an amenity and not necessary. The concern is for privacy on the abutting property. Screening is requested for the parking on the east side of the property.

John Crespi, 5 Cottage Street, asked about bicycle parking and if a crosswalk will be added in the area. The project has not included bicycle parking. A crosswalk is being considered for the intersection. Bicycle parking is not on the plan but can be considered.

Rick Covino, 65 Pineswamp Road, asked about the PB site visit and if the public could attend. Mooradd said a site visit will be scheduled. Covino asked about soil testing. Mooradd said the stormwater management plan will be peer reviewed. Covino is concerned about the project being able to fit on the site and said the project has many issues. Mooradd said that many issues will be resolved during the public hearing process.

Dan Trindade, 11 Pineswamp Road, is concerned with light pollution from the site, noise pollution, traffic, parking in the neighborhood and wastewater.

Amanda Tower, 29 Linebrook Road, asked about the portion of the project being built in the No Build Zone (NBZ). Powers responded that it is not a portion of the building. There is a small section of pavement at the rear of the building proposed in the NBZ. The project seeks a waiver from the Conservation Commission. A small portion of curb is proposed in the No Disturb Zone (NDZ). Conservation Commission requested the project pull back on the stormwater overflow to the wetlands.

Seth Perry, 29 Linebrook Road, is concerned about the exterior design. He looked at the Public Safety Building in Salisbury and other communities and noted those buildings fit with the neighborhood. He is concerned with emergency vehicles getting larger and the building not meeting future needs. He asked about a proposed communications tower and if there were any plans to lease it. Chief Parisi said the communications tower will be for all emergency radio communications. The project does not want to limit the future use of the tower.

Sue Cappola, 29 Pineswamp Road, noted traffic on Linebrook Road is significant. She is concerned with emergency vehicles exiting the site and asked why a traffic signal is not proposed. Chief Parisi said a traffic signal is not being proposed based on citizen input.

Mooradd noted the applicant received feedback from the PB and the public. PB will schedule a site visit.

Lowe made a motion to continue the public hearing to June 8, 2023 at Town Hall, in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Crawford seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

New Public Hearing: Request by GCTH Ipswich, LLC for a modification of an existing Special Permit/Site Plan Review decision for a GEPD use for the Turner Hill property for the rehabilitation of the “Hill Garage” to be used as dry storage for the golf course at the applicant’s 251 Topsfield Road property, which is located in the RRA district, pursuant but not necessarily limited to *Sections V, IX.H, X, and XI.J* of the Zoning Bylaw

Mooradd opened the public hearing. Laurie Paskavitz was appointed a voting member for the application. Attorney Connor Walsh (Glovsky & Glovsky) presented the application. Richard Ward (develop team) and Stephan Basso (architect) were also present.

Walsh provided background on the property. He noted there are seven historic buildings. Five buildings were restored and one building was demolished and replaced with a new concession building. The Hill Garage is the seventh historic building. The project proposes to use the Hill Garage for dry storage for the golf course. Walsh said the project was presented to the Design Review Board (DRB) and the Historical Commission.

The Hill Garage is near golf cart paths. The structure was damaged by fire. Photographs of the remaining structure were presented. Crushed stone is proposed in the front of the building. There is an existing water line on the property which will be extended to the building. No new sewage line is proposed. Screening around the building is proposed. Native plants will be used. The project proposes to replace the building in-kind. A new slate roof is proposed.

PB noted the project is straightforward and requested the Planning Department to prepare a draft decision.

No public comment noted.

Lowe made a motion to continue the public hearing to June 8, 2023 at Town Hall in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Paskavitz seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Continued Public Hearing: Request by PGN Real Estate Trust for a Special Permit for a multifamily dwelling (4 units) at 145 High Street (Assessor's Map 30A Lot 26A), 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

The public hearing is being continued without discussion at the applicant's request.

Lowe made a motion to request the applicant to extend the application hearing to July 6, 2023 and Crawford seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Lowe made a motion to continue the public hearing to June 8, 2023 at Town Hall in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Paskavitz seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Continued Public Hearing: Request by 214 High Street LLC for Site Plan Review for a hotel at 214 High Street located in the Highway Business and Water Supply Protection Districts, pursuant but not necessarily limited to *Sections V, VII, IX, and X* of the Zoning Bylaw

The public hearing is being continued without discussion at the applicant's request.

Lowe made a motion to continue the public hearing to June 8, 2023 at Town Hall in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Paskavitz seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Continued Public Hearing: Request by GCTH Ipswich, LLC for a Special Permit to install an irrigation well at the applicant's 251 Topsfield Road property (Assessor's Map 51 Lot 7), which is located in the RRA and Water Supply Protection Zone II A and C Districts, pursuant but not necessarily limited to *Sections IX.C and XI.J* of the Zoning Bylaw

The public hearing is being continued without discussion at the applicant's request.

Lowe made a motion to continue the public hearing to June 8, 2023 at Town Hall in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Paskavitz seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Continued Discussion of Potential Zoning Amendments for Fall Town Meeting

Gibbs suggested the PB define responsibilities for potential zoning articles. Gibbs noted the planning staff is limited and not equipped to pursue zoning article that require extensive research. Gibbs suggested going forward with the following:

1. Lot Area definition – focus on the issue and how lot area is calculated.
2. Special Permit approval for drive-through facilities.
3. Accessory Apartment provision.
4. Accessory Dwelling Unit provision.
5. Housekeeping revisions – such as definition of building height and fencing.

Weatherall noted there is a lot of work for 3A zoning and is concerned with moving forward with any other zoning articles that add density (accessory apartments and dwelling units). Mooradd noted the PB agreed to look at articles that are in line with the Community Development Plan (CDP). Gibbs provided a recommendation to move forward with certain topics. The PB will vote on articles when it has all the necessary information. There is no initiation of zoning articles this evening.

Public Comment: Kathy Bento, 49 East Street, said an accessory apartment is ideal for her property. Currently, 750 sq. ft. is allowed and that is small. Mooradd said the amendment may propose an increase in square footage. The Town will vote on a zoning amendment at Fall Town Meeting.

Adopt Minutes April 27, 2023

Weatherall request language change to not supporting waivers from uncomfortable. Crawford requested an edit to elaborate the review of an application withing 30 days regardless of if the application is incomplete.

Lowe made a motion to approve the April 27, 2023 minutes as drafted and amended and Weatherall seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

New Business/Announcements

None

Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 pm

Meeting notes taken by: Odile Breton

Accepted on: June 8, 2023