

IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD

Subcommittee MEETING MINUTES

Meeting in person at Town Hall Town Manager's Conference Room Tuesday, June 13, 2023

3:00 pm

Pursuant to a meeting notice posted by the Town Clerk, an Ipswich Planning Board subcommittee meeting, appointed by Planning Board Chair on June 8, 2023, was held on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at Town Hall Town Manager's Conference Room. Subcommittee members Mitchell Lowe and Jenn Crawford were present. Interim Planning Director Glenn Gibbs and Assistant Planner Andrea Bates were present.

Applicant team in attendance: Stephen Crane, Town Manager; Paul Parisi, Fire Chief; Paul Nikas, Police Chief; Steve Powers, Samiotes Consultants; Ewan Ellis, TGAS; Ted Galante, TGAS; Kristis Karklins, TGAS; Bob Weatherall, Public Safety Facility Committee; Alyssa Chatani, CHA; Joe Sullivan, CHA; Jamie Fay, Finance Committee Representative to the Public Safety Facility Committee.

Residents in attendance: Seth Perry, 29 Linebrook Rd; Mark Wilson, Law Office of Meredith Fine; Eric Josephson, 46-48 Washington St; Wendy Copithorne, 41 Linebrook Rd; Richard Covino, 65 Pineswamp Rd.

Gibbs convened the meeting at 3:02 pm.

Crawford stated the goal of the meeting was to facilitate the Planning Board's decision-making process and discussion would focus on the 13 site plan review standards as outlined in the applicant's Project Narrative. Discussion ensued.

Standards 1 & 2 – Traffic circulation and access / pedestrian safety and access:

Lowe stated concern about sight line distances from the drive fronting on Linebrook Rd and any emergency signaling when public safety vehicles are turning onto Linebrook Rd from bays. Crawford and Lowe stated they would like to have a traffic review. Discussion ensued about the need for a traffic study or peer review. Nikas stated police officers do not respond to emergencies from station but rather from patrols, unless on shift changes, so he does not see a need for signaling. Parisi stated that sight distance here is an improvement as compared to downtown station location and that he does not prefer signalization due to potential timing issues. Lowe requested the Applicant provide a narrative describing why signalization is not currently included in the plans. Lowe said the Board should consider a condition requiring a review of the system if signalization is needed in the future. Crawford asked applicant to consider signage. Lowe stated sight distances cannot be impeded by the memorial garden. Powers will review. Lowe stated sight lines from the eastern most driveway that is to be used by the fire fighters should be reviewed due to the grades coming up from the parking area and driveway and the geometry of Linebrook Road looking east. Powers will review. Crawford asked for a crosswalk to extend from the existing Linebrook Rd sidewalk and that this be connected to the building entrance walkway. Gibbs recommended the Planning Board outline specific traffic concerns and require an engineer conduct a limited review as a condition in a decision. Lowe and Crawford agreed.

Standard 3 – Off street parking and loading:

Lowe asked for a narrative from the applicant about how the proposed site plan meets the requirements of Section VII.Q of the Zoning Bylaw regarding the requirement to provide 10% internal landscaping within the parking areas. Discussion ensued. Applicant will supply narrative as to why they did not provide the 10% internal landscaping area and stated they will ask for a waiver from this requirement as allowed by Section X.H. Lowe asked about snow storage at the proposed landscaping area near the entrance off Pineswamp Road. Discussion ensued. Powers will supply narrative. Lowe asked about fencing around police vehicles and stated his concern about proximity to the communications tower. Nikas stated fencing is for visual screening as opposed to security. Galante said there is a lift gate to this area and the façade of the tower is designed to prevent climbing.

Standard 4 – Emergency vehicle access:

There were no questions about the response to this standard.

Standard 5 – Stormwater management:

Applicant stated the peer review engineer to review this aspect of the project was just retained. The review of this standard will be the purview of the Conservation Commission. If the review and approval of the Stormwater Management design by the Conservation Commission is not completed before the Planning Board decision is voted upon, the approval of this work will need to be a condition of the Board's decision.

Standard 6 – Water supply and sewage disposal:

Lowe inquired if a sewage ejector pump would be required for the sanitary sewer on the lowest floor of the building based on the floor elevation being lower than the invert elevation of the outgoing sanitary sewer piping. The Applicant stated one would be required. There were no other questions about the response to this standard.

Standard 7 – Screening, plantings and erosion control:

Crawford asked to see projected screening growth over time on the perspective views along the east property line. Galante stated the planting scheme is still being discussed. The Design Review Board is still reviewing the design. Gibbs said that the planting scheme will be included as a condition in a decision. Crawford asked about the design of the deck on the Second Level that possibly provides direct views to the neighbor at 34 Linebrook Rd. Discussion ensued. Crawford asked the eyesight illustration be moved to the corner of the balcony for better understanding of perspectives. Galante indicated they are considering the inclusion of mesh screening on the east side of the deck along with dense landscape screening. Final design of this to area to be further developed for Board review. Gibbs raised 34 Linebrook Rd abutter request that a retaining wall replace the natural swale in current plans. Powers states that retaining wall is less optimal solution as swale will preserve more vegetation. Lowe stated preference for swale, and requested the neighbor provide their rationale for wanting the retaining wall. Gibbs requested narrative about the rationale for the swale. Powers will provide written rationale.

Standard 8 – Protection and preservation of existing natural features and vistas:

The Conservation Commission will review the impacts of the project on the wetlands area. The Applicant stated the wetlands will be preserved as part of the project. A small area of the wetlands setback area will be encroached upon by the parking lot in the rear of the building. The PB grants relief of 25% from the 50 foot setback. An equal area of the site will be returned to wetlands based on the amount that will be encroached upon.

Standard 9 – Exterior lighting:

Lowé asked about building signage and lighting. Discussion ensued. Lowé stated the drawings do not make it clear how tall the light poles are. Lowé asked the Applicant provide that information on the drawings. Lowé asked the Applicant to consider lowering lighting height or include optics or cutoff panels on the light fixtures to avoid any light spillover onto adjacent properties. Galante said they will consider.

Standard 10 – Visual Impact of parking, storage, and other outdoor service areas:

Lowé asked where the roof top mechanical units will be located, as they are not called out on the drawings. The Applicant indicated they are tucked on the backside of the building. Lowé requested they be shown on the drawings. Lowé suggested that a condition of approval be made that requires all roof top equipment be screened visually and acoustically from public view and sound from Linebrook Road and from the adjacent residential properties.

Lowé asked where the diesel storage tank for the generator would be located. The Applicant stated it would be mounted directly below the generator. The Applicant stated the generator would have an acoustical enclosure. Lowé requested this information be provided on the drawings and acoustical screening be made a condition of approval.

Standard 11 – Consistency with character and scale of surrounding buildings:

Crawford asked architect to describe intent behind building design stating that the Planning Board is hearing negative feedback about design. Discussion ensued. Galante stated that program requirements (e.g. people housed in building, heavy machinery, durability-focused, privacy and security issues, site grading, community-focused needs) steer project design. Galante stated there are buildings from every era in Ipswich and this building design is from the current era. Lowé stated that most notable buildings in town are red brick and asked different materials or color palettes be considered. Galante stated color palette of the building is the color of sand and that red brick is not inherent to Ipswich. Crawford requested simplification of the building façade elements and referenced that community room design conflicts with main entrance. Lowé questioned if alterations can be made to corner windows since this is a significant budget and stated concerns with this design supporting above façade. Crawford stated sun studies show that glass areas on the west façade at the meeting rooms and police chief's office will have most solar glare and gain and raised concerns with the need for additional architecture such as blinds to shield rooms from sun. Crawford said she likes pavers but asked entry walkway be made into a more distinctive zone. Lowé said he is concerned about zinc panels on bay doors going to ground and asked a different base be considered for durability. Lowé and Crawford again asked the Applicant to consider alternate design schemes for the public facades of the building. Planning Staff stated the Design Review Board will be reviewing the building design again at a meeting the same week of the next Planning Board meeting. Staff will circulate the date and time to the PB in case they wish to attend. Galante stated he will consider feedback and respond.

Standard 12 – Energy, water, resource efficient design:

Lowé requested the Applicant indicate what energy efficiency standards will be followed, and those standards be made a condition of approval.

Standard 13 – Minimization of water demand in accordance with the Water Use Mitigation Program regulations:

Lowé requested the Applicant indicate what water savings standards will be followed, and those standards be made a condition of approval.

Crawford and Lowe stated they will not need a second subcommittee meeting. Meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Meeting notes taken by: Andrea Bates

Accepted on: June 29, 2023