

IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting in person

Thursday, June 29, 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, June 29, 2023, at Town Hall in Room A. A roll call was taken confirming Board Members Toni Mooradd, Mitchell Lowe, Helen Weatherall, Carolyn Britt, Jenn Crawford and Associate Member Laurie Paskavitz were present. Interim Planning Director Glen Gibbs was present.

Mooradd convened the PB meeting at 7:01 pm with a quorum present. Please note all PB votes are done by roll call.

Mooradd announced this is the last PB meeting for Carolyn Britt and Laurie Paskavitz. Mooradd thanked each for their efforts, work and contributions to the PB. Britt and Paskavitz both thanked the PB and its members for all their work.

Citizen Queries: Charlotte Kahn (member Shade Tree Beautification Committee) asked if STBC could be involved with reviewing landscaping for the project at 36 Linebrook Road (Public Safety Building). STBC is requesting reviewing the landscaping design by July 12, 2023. Mooradd said information is on the Town website and can be shared with STBC.

Continued 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

Laurie Paskavitz was appointed a voting member for this application on May 18, 2023. Stephen Crane, Town Manager, Steve Powers (civil engineer – Samiotes Consultants, Inc.), Ted Gallante (principal architect – TGAS Architects, Inc.), Barry Hosmer (landscape architect), Bob Weatherall (Public Safety Committee), Police Chief Paul Nikas and Fire Chief Paul Parisi were present for the public hearing.

Gibbs announced the application will be re-advertised for a Special Permit and a new public hearing will begin on July 20, 2023. Gibbs explained an error that was caught in the application and review of the application. The classification use is essential community services. Gibbs noted buildings are excluded and the government building requires a special permit. The application is currently under site plan review and special permit for parking (waivers). Gibbs explained how the PB is the granting authority for special permits. The applicant will submit an application for a special permit and the hearing will be advertised for the July 20, 2023 PB meeting. Mooradd added the project is also under review with the ZBA and the Conservation Commission (ICC). Lowe asked if this public hearing needs to be closed. Gibbs said no.

Crane stated the project received feedback from various groups. The project team received peer review comments for stormwater management and responses are being prepared for the ICC. The

project team is looking into the design of the building as it relates to compatibility with neighborhood character.

PB Subcommittee (Lowe and Crawford) met with the applicant to review site plan review standards. Lowe summarized the site plan review. Traffic circulations was discussed with Police Chief Nikas and Fire Chief Parisi. The project preference is to not have a traffic signal on Linebrook Road. Signage is needed to alert drivers of the police and fire station. PB said adequate site distance for vehicles leaving the site needs to be addressed. B. Weatherall suggested Powers document the site distance review. Crawford noted that DPW will be re-aligning Pineswamp Road. Lowe said the parking lot is compact due to site constraints. He noted the bylaw requires islands in the parking lot. Gallante said the perimeter offers more green space than interior islands. There is only one drive aisle. Britt noted that solar canopy may be added in the future and the parking lot should be flexible.

Water and utilities were reviewed and there are no issues. Impacts on the natural and built environment were discussed. Lowe suggested adding screening for mechanical units. The screening is for the neighbors and for the street view.

Lighting should be dark sky compliant. The light pole on the plan is 20 ft. in height. Gallante said it will be lowered to 18 ft.

The PB may grant 25% relief from the 50 ft. set back (bringing it to 37.5ft.). The bylaw does not allow parking in the set back in the RRA district.

Powers discussed the traffic circulation. He noted grading is 6.5% and goes down to 5%. It is a gradual slope into the site. Powers said site distances were calculated and it looks for stop distances. Lowe requested the applicant submit the calculations with the application. Powers said gravel will be eliminated and replaced with grass pavers. Britt noted two entities in the neighborhood that generate traffic at different times: Our Lady of Hope church and 1640 Hart House. Britt is concerned traffic at peak hours for the two entities may impact public safety vehicles. Gallante noted that call volume is used to determine public safety traffic. There is no national standard to determine if a traffic light is needed.

Public Comment:

Attorney Meredith Fine, representing “Build it Right”, asked about the PB input on design and the character and scale of the surrounding buildings. Mooradd said the applicant is making changes to the design which will be presented at a later hearing.

Wendy Copithorne, 41 Linebrook Road, asked about escalating costs of the project. Crane said increased costs are due to inflation. The project manager explained costs of the projects and how costs are monitored and estimated.

Seth Perry, 29 Linebrook Road, asked about finances for the project. Crane said the Town citizens authorized bonds to be issued to pay for the project. Perry said the parking islands intent is not being met. He is concerned about the buffer maintenance based on his experience with the Town. Crawford suggested adding a condition in the decision to maintain the buffer/screening between

the neighboring property. Perry has been following meetings on the design of the building and has been told changes will be made. B. Weatherall said the design evolves. The project team has shown progress on the design and we welcome public input. Perry said when he purchased a home in a rural residential district that he would be protected from such development.

Eric Josephson, 46 Washington Street, asked about project finances. Crane said money has not been spent. The project team is still nailing down details. Josephson suggested eliminating items to save money.

Amanda Tower, 29 Linebrook Road, suggested an objective traffic study should be done. She said the article the Town voted on stated funding was to be set aside for a traffic study.

Molly Marcisum, 20 Damon Avenue, said it appears that individual Town boards and departments are not coordinating efforts. Mooradd said there is a process and each Town board is following the process. All boards are doing due diligence. Britt said there are resources available for information such as the Town website.

Crawford asked the applicant what the project team has taken away from the hearings. Crane said the project team will evaluate the design options and the budget.

Michelle McCarthy, Emery Road, said the neighbors did not know what was going in for a building until it was in the newspaper. She noted that construction materials are stabilizing or going down in price.

No further PB or public comment.

Lowe made a motion to continue the public hearing to July 20, 2023 at Town Hall, in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Crawford 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

Laurie Paskavitz was appointed a voting member for the application when it opened on November 10, 2022. Larry Graham (H.L. Graham & Associates), and Bill Nolan (Savoie Nolan Architects) were present for the application.

Gibbs noted a draft decision was prepared and reviewed conditions and findings. Graham noted the site plans were updated and submitted on June 28, 2023 to the Conservation Department.

In the decision, Graham noted the reference to parking is not accurate. The site is required to have 8 parking space and it has 9 parking spaces. Gibbs to revise the reference to state parking requirements are met. Gibbs noted the applicant chose to make a payment in lieu to the Affordable Housing Trust. The amount is not specified and Gibbs will update the decision to include the amount of the payment (under condition 18). It was noted that a planting plan for the rear of the site will go before the Conservation Commission. The area in the rear of the site will be part of the No Disturb Zone (NDZ).

Gibbs asked about curbing in the front of the site. Graham said the MassDOT would have to approve curbing on Rt. 133/1A. Gibbs said DPW can provide feedback. Gibbs asked about the height of the retaining wall. Graham said retaining walls are 4 ft. in height.

Gibbs noted there are no easements required by the Water Department. Gibbs noted no metal roofs are allowed in the Water Supply districts.

No public comment noted.

Lowe made a motion to close the public hearing and Weatherall seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Lowe made a motion to approve the decision for the Special Permit as amended and discussed 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 July 20, 2023 at Town Hall in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Weatherall 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 July 20, 2023 at Town Hall in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Weatherall seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Continued Discussion of Potential Zoning Amendments for Fall Town Meeting

Mooradd confirmed assignments for zoning articles to Lowe, Crawford and Mooradd. Gibbs said PB should initiate articles at the July 20, 2023 PB meeting. Weatherall is concerned about pursuing articles related to increasing density. She said Section 3A will increase density and the PB should not go forward with any changes in zoning bylaws that will also increase density. Gibbs said that accessory apartments that have been added over the past 20 years is approximately 80 units. That is not a significant increase to density.

Adopt Minutes June 8, 2023

Britt requested an edit about a comment she made for 36 Linebrook Road application. She suggested the applicant change the color of the building.

Lowe made a motion to approve the June 8, 2023 minutes as drafted and amended and Paskavitz seconded. *The motion passed with 4 votes yes (Weatherall abstained).*

New Business/Announcements

None.

Adjournment

Britt made a motion to adjourn, and Paskavitz seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 10:11 pm

Meeting notes taken by: Odile Breton

Accepted on: July 20, 2023