

## IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD

### MEETING MINUTES

Meeting in person  
Thursday, July 20, 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, July 20, 2023, at Town Hall in Room A. A roll call was taken confirming Board Members Toni Mooradd, Mitchell Lowe, Helen Weatherall, John Crespi, Jennifer Crawford and Associate Member Tom Hammond 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 introduced John Crespi and Tom Hammond as new members of the Planning Board (PB). Gibbs noted that Hammond is an associate member and when needed, may be appointed a voting member on an application.

**Citizen Queries:** None noted.

**New Public Hearing:** Request by Town Manager for Site Plan Review; Special Permit for the use “Town Government Building”; and non-use Special Permits for 25% reduction of front parking setback requirement and alternative side & rear yard screening 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 *X, V.D, VII.K, VII.M.5, VI.E and XI.J* of the Zoning Bylaw

**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

Mooradd opened the new public hearing by reading the legal notice. She noted both the new public hearing and the continued public hearing will be reviewed together for these applications.

Stephen Crane, Town Manager, Steve Powers (civil engineer – Samiotes Consultants, Inc.), Kristis Karklins (architect – TGAS Architects, Inc.), Bob Weatherall (Public Safety Committee), Jamie Fay (Finance Committee) and Fire Chief Paul Parisi were present for the public hearing.

Gibbs reminded the audience what led to a new application and public hearing. Gibbs explained an error that was caught in the application and review of the application. The correct classification use is government building. 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. Mooradd provided guidance for the hearing and said citizens can also email or write letters to the PB. She noted communications from citizens are posted on the Town website.

Fay noted there has been a lot of public feedback on the building design. The Public Safety Facility Committee (PSFC) decided to revisit the design based on the public suggestions for a more traditional look for a municipal building. The presentation for this evening is responsive to comments and concerns from the public.

Karklins reviewed the site plan and revised building design. Karklins reviewed the parking areas and noted the apron in front of the fire station bays will be level with Linebrook Road. Karklins reviewed the site plan review standard “consistency with character and scale of surrounding buildings”. Red brick will be used for the exterior of the building which has been traditionally used for Ipswich municipal buildings. Karklins said the metal panels proposed are zinc interlocking panels to be used around the windows and accents. B. Weatherall noted that the zinc panels proposed will have a variation of tones. A transparent main entrance is proposed. Bike racks were added and there are two accessible parking spots in the front. One parking spot will have a charging station for electric vehicles. The west-end of the building design was altered to be more “traditional”. The windows at the west-end were reduced in size to be more traditional proportions of windows. Karklins reviewed three techniques being used to reduce the visual impact of the building. Mooradd thanked the applicant for listening to public input. Gibbs noted the redesign will go back before the Design Review Board (DRB). He noted DRB meetings are open to the public but the meetings are not public hearings.

B. Weatherall noted that the goal is to go out for construction bids in October 2023. Crane noted there have been project delays and delays can cause increases in costs. It is a new application before the PB but much of the content is similar. B. Weatherall noted the PSFC looked at a number of sites in Town and there were a limited number of viable sites for the proposed facility. It is a critical project for the citizens of Ipswich.

H. Weatherall asked if there was any compromise with the redesign for building sustainability. Crane said the building will meet the Stretch Code and will be energy efficient. B. Weatherall noted that only one third of the site is disturbed. He said the architects consider the design to be equivalent to a “Leed Silver” qualification. B. Weatherall noted the decision to not pursue a “Leed” certification as that is an expense. Powers noted that drought tolerant plants will be planted, there is no irrigation system, and the project will be using pervious surfaces such as grass pavers. Crane said a focus is on energy efficiency. Crane said going beyond the Building Stretch Code maybe challenging with the project budget. Lowe asked if the design changes will help save money for the project. B. Weatherall noted that the design changes did not add or subtract costs in any meaningful way.

Mooradd discussed waivers requested. Gibbs noted a 50 ft. setback requirement on Pineswamp Road and the PB may grant a 25% reduction (bringing the setback to 37.5 ft). It is a 15 ft. setback requirement for parking off of Linebrook Road. The application is seeking a waiver from the ZBA for the building setback. Crawford suggested the applicant bring material samples to the next meeting. PB feedback was the redesign is going in the right direction.

**Public Comment:**

Charlotte Kahn, 39 Spring Street (member of Shade Tree Beautification Committee) met with the PSC for landscape suggestions for the site. Native species plant listing was provided as a suggestion for the site.

Attorney Meredith Fine, representing “Build It Right” group, asked about the increase to the gross sq. ft. of the building. It is approximately 28,000 sq. ft., an increase from 26,000 sq. ft. Karklins explained removing the angles on the west-end of the building increased the sq. ft. The west-end includes the community center, a conference room and the police chief office. Attorney Fine asked about vehicle movement on the site. B. Weatherall noted a slide is included in the application that documents how fire vehicles will move on the site during fire training. Attorney Fine noted she submitted a letter to the PB noting criteria that must be met for a special permit. Attorney Fine said Town equipment is being stored on the site and an equipment garage is on the site. These are permissible uses in the district. Gibbs explained the difference between a “principal” use and an “accessory” use. The principal use is a Town government building with accessories such as parking and equipment storage. The principal use is not equipment storage.

Vanessa Gray, 34 Linebrook Road, is an abutter. She read a prepared statement to the PB. The statement notes her concerns for the number of trees that will be removed from the site and provided several reasons to maintain the trees (absorbing water, canopy, natural screening). The statement includes her concerns for privacy and quality of life as an abutter.

Mary and Bob Manning, 8 Randall Road, said the building does not belong on this site. Mooradd noted the Town citizens voted on the location for the public safety building. The location is not part of the Special Permit or Site Plan review.

Amanda Tower, 29 Linebrook Road, asked about the scale of the building and how it was determined. She noted churches are an exception for scale. The building is designed to meet the needs of the public safety departments.

No further PB comments.

Lowe made a motion to continue both public hearings (special permit and site plan review) to August 10, 2023 at Town Hall, in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Crespi 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 applicant requested withdrawing the application.

Lowe made a motion to accept the applicant withdrawal without prejudice and Crespi 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.

Crespi made a motion to continue the public hearing to August 10, 2023 at Town Hall in Room A at a meeting beginning at 7:00 pm and Crawford seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Continued Discussion of Potential Zoning Amendments for Fall Town Meeting**

Mooradd said the PB should initiate articles this evening. The Planning Office will send out a referral memo tomorrow. The first public hearing for the proposed articles will be scheduled for August 10, 2023. The Select Board will meet on Monday, July 24, 2023 and the proposed articles are on the agenda to discuss.

Gibbs noted that three zoning articles are being proposed for changes.

1. Accessory apartments (IR and RRA districts) and Detached Accessory dwelling units (only in the IR district). Gibbs noted there are modest changes being proposed to provide flexibility and there is language added to prevent accessory units from being used for short-term rentals. The allowable area is proposed to increase from 900 sq. ft. to 1000 sq. ft for the accessory apartment.
2. Drive-throughs – in non-residential districts will need a special permit.
3. Miscellaneous changes – cleaning up language in the zoning bylaws.

There was a discussion regarding the language to prevent accessory units for being used as short-term rentals. The proposed language states “a minimum leasing requirement of 30 days”. Mooradd questioned how the Town could enforce the bylaw. Lowe is uncertain that this language belongs in a zoning bylaw. Crespi asked if minimum leasing requirements language is common in other municipality bylaws. Gibbs said it would be a condition of the special permit. Weatherall is not in favor of increasing density with the upcoming 3A zoning requirement. Gibbs noted that accessory apartments and accessory dwelling units adds minimal to density.

Gibbs said drive throughs are currently allowed through site plan review. Drive throughs should not be in areas with heavy pedestrian traffic. He said drive through facilities should be by special permit and site plan review.

The miscellaneous language changes were suggested by Jim Bone, Ipswich Building Inspector. Lowe suggested referencing the Massachusetts Building Code for average grading calculations for consistency. Gibbs noted the language changes for fences aligns with Massachusetts law. A special permit is needed for fences of 7 ft. or greater.

Lowe made a motion to initiate the three proposed zoning amendment articles as drafted and discussed this evening and to move the articles forward to the Select Board and Crespi seconded. *Weatherall voted no on proposed article 1 (accessory apartments and accessory dwelling units) and voted yes for the other two proposed articles. Mooradd, Lowe, Crespi and Crawford voted yes for all three proposed articles.*

### **Adopt Minutes June 29, 2023**

Lowe requested an edit to use his full first name. Mooradd noted a typo to be corrected from RR to RRA.

Crawford made a motion to approve the June 29, 2023 minutes as drafted and amended and Lowe seconded. *The motion passed with 4 votes yes (Weatherall abstained).*

### **New Business/Announcements**

Site visit for New England Biolabs. Gibbs suggested the site visit occur in August 2023. Weatherall is recused but asked for information about removing the temporary road and restoring the public trail.

### **Adjournment**

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 pm

Meeting notes taken by: Odile Breton

Accepted on: August 10, 2023