

IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Remote Meeting using ZOOM

Thursday, July 26, 2021

7:00 PM

Pursuant to a meeting notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a remote meeting of the Ipswich Planning Board was held on Monday, July 26, 2021 using ZOOM. Board members Carolyn Britt, Jeffrey Anderson (arrived 7:19 PM), Mitchell Lowe, Toni Mooradd and Helen Weatherall were present. Kevin Westerhoff was absent. Staff, Ethan Parsons and Kristen Grubbs, were present.

Britt convened the meeting at 7:00 PM with a quorum present.

Britt requested an acknowledgement of attendance for all members present. She noted the members that were present as well as Town staff, Ethan Parsons and Kristen Grubbs, and minute taker Odile Breton.

Citizen Queries: None noted

New Public Hearing: Special Town Meeting Fall 2021 articles that would amend Ipswich Zoning Bylaws as follows:

- A. Article 1: Eliminate the ability to use the density bonus as defined in *Footnote 11 to Section VI. Table of Dimensional and Density Regulations* within the IR District.
- B. Article 2: Revise *Section IX. Special Regulations Subsection S. Infill Single-Family House Lots* by: (1) reducing the allowed maximum house size and allowing flexibility for the house size based on the size of the Infill lot; (2) remove reference to the \$40,000 affordable housing payment required in lieu of creating an affordability restriction and add reference to Planning Board Payment-in-Lieu Option Regulation; and (3) amend *Subsection IX.P. Conversion of Accessory Building into Dwelling Unit* by removing the reference to the \$15,000 payment in lieu option and replacing it with a reference to the Planning Board's Payment-in-Lieu Option Regulation.
- C. Article 3: Amend Section IX. Special Regulations by adding a new Subsection: "U. Detached Accessory Dwelling Units", which would allow said use by Special Permit within the IR District on certain eligible lots.

Britt opened the public hearing by reading the legal notice. Lowe requested the review include the intent of the articles. Lowe asked Parsons for clarification regarding the IR District for new area minimum of 19,000 sq. ft. for 3-unit multifamily dwelling. Parsons said the current minimum is 12,000 sq. ft. lot area for a multifamily dwelling using Footnote 11. In the Table of Dimensional and Density Regulations it is 19,000 sq. ft. of lot area without Footnote 11. Lowe requested clarification in FAQs and for presentations.

Britt summarized for Article 1 the reference to Footnote 11 is removed from the Table of Dimensional and Density Regulations for the IR District. Mooradd noted the change is for the IR

District only. The density bonus can be used in the General and Central Business Districts. No public comments noted for Article 1.

Article 2: Revisions to Infill Housing and to Accessory Building Conversion. Parsons explained the intent for all of the proposed articles. The broad intent is to recalibrate context sensitivity of development within the IR District. New development is permissible but in a manner that is compatible with neighborhood character and existing density. Proposed amendments are in Section IX. The proposed change includes moving sections relating to inclusionary housing and accessory building conversion to the Payment-in-Lieu Regulation. This will give the Planning Board flexibility to amend the fees. The permissible floor allowed to be built is also amended with a cap of 2,000 sq. ft. and with a minimum of 1,600 sq. ft. The allowable floor area would become 20% of the lot area. This allows the houses to be appropriately scaled for the lot. Additional amendments try to provide flexibility for accessory garages. It would allow for a detached garage up to 330 sq. ft. if the principal dwelling does not contain a garage. Additional amendments include requiring the applications to be reviewed by the Design Review Board (DRB), review criteria and a condition of approval relating to affordability.

Lowe asked if the application will be required to be reviewed by the DRB if the application falls under the APDC (Architectural Preservation District Commission). Parsons said he did not think it should have to be both. Parsons noted that the APDC does not report to or make recommendations to the Planning Board. Lowe said an applicant should not be made to go before both the APDC and DRB. Anderson noted complexities of going before multiple boards. He said if the project is in the APDC, then the project should go before the APDC and not DRB. Anderson does not expect the DRB to have a lot of comments for a single family home. Anderson suggested revising wording under the criteria section (removing design, materials and layout) because it appears to be prescribing similarity.

Public Comment: Carl Gardner of Woods Lane said he agreed with Anderson but asked if Parsons asked the DRB if it wanted this responsibility. He agrees that if the project falls under the APDC that there should not be a need to go before the DRB. He asked what is accomplished by having the DRB review a single family application. It does not appear that another layer provides benefit to the Planning Board. He pointed out that a detached garage would be an accessory structure and is not required to meet setback requirements that a dwelling unit needs to meet.

Lowe reviewed the design review standards in the APDC guidelines. He suggested mirroring the standards in the amendment. Anderson suggested not mirroring it because the criteria may be too restrictive outside the APDC. Weatherall suggested asking the DRB. Mooradd understood that in instances where an application falls under the APDC, then the criteria should mirror or follow the review criteria for the APDC review process. In instances where an application is outside the APDC, it may not need to go through the DRB. Mooradd also suggested asking the DRB for its input on this amendment.

Britt brought up items (utility elements: bulkheads, heat pumps) in setbacks and asked if this topic should be included. Lowe did see these items as part of the APDC. Parsons suggested tackling the issue at a larger scale.

Britt requested Parsons summarize the above input regarding APDC and DRB review. Lowe will continue to review the APDC review criteria and make a list of review criteria to potentially add. Britt will review APDC regulations regarding external utility element placements and locations.

Anderson commented on the size amendments and the reality of cost of construction. He noted the average construction cost for new homes in Ipswich is over \$350/sq. ft. Affordability would not be realistic. Lowe said it is confusing. It is not requiring building a home of at least 1,600 sq. ft. If you have a lot of 8,000 sq. ft. or less, the maximum floor area that could be built is 1,600 sq. ft. Parsons said a 1,000 sq. ft. home could be built if someone wanted. He will re-word the amendment for the next hearing. Britt asked Parsons to review a map/listing documenting the potential infill lots and analyze the Planning Board's questions regarding lot width and size. The minimum lot width on the frontage for infill lots is 50 ft.

Public Comment: Carl Gardner said the review criteria under #4 is worthwhile as stated and can be applied objectively to improve a project.

Parsons noted under the article there is a proposal to move the payment-in-lieu fee option for accessory building conversions to the Payment-in-Lieu Regulation.

Article 3: Revisions to Affordable Housing Incentives. The intent is to offer a counter balance to removing Footnote 11. The Housing Production Plan and Community Development Plan state a commitment to finding ways to add housing close to the center of Town. The amendment allows for small scale housing that may or may not be affordable. Detached accessory dwelling use is a new type of housing that is permitted by special permit only in the IR District. It increases the supply of small, moderate and affordably priced housing within the IR District. It also promotes development that is compatible with the character and development pattern of its surrounding neighborhood. It would be applicable on lots in the IR with at least 12,000 sq. ft. of land area with an existing single or two family principal use only, by special permit. The maximum floor area for the new dwelling would be 900 sq. ft., which would not include garages, basements or attics that are uninhabitable.

Lowe had similar concerns regarding DRB and APDC jurisdiction.

Public Comment: Carl Gardner of Woods Lane said he is concerned about the 900 sq. ft. floor area for a single story dwelling and a two story dwelling. He suggested the single story sq. ft. be reduced. He also suggested considering building height restrictions.

Mooradd also has concerns about the floor area and not including garages. It is an opportunity to encourage the types of smaller dwellings desired. Parsons said on-site parking requirements must be met.

Lowe moved to continue the public hearing to August 5, 2021 and Mooradd seconded. The motion passed with 4 votes.

Adopt minutes of May 13, 2021

Westerhoff was absent from the May 13, 2021 meeting. Mooradd became a member on June 24, 2021 meeting.

Anderson moved to accept the May 13, 2021 minutes. Lowe seconded. The motion passed with 3 votes (Britt, Lowe, Anderson).

Announcements/New Business

There was a discussion of scheduling upcoming meetings (August 26, 2021) because a few members may not be available.

Adjournment

Anderson moved to adjourn. Mooradd seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Meeting notes prepared by: Odile Breton

Accepted on: August 25, 2021