

IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting in person

Wednesday, August 16, 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 Wednesday, August 16, 2023, at Town Hall in Room A. A roll call was taken confirming Board Members Toni Mooradd, Mitchell Lowe, John Crespi, and Associate Member Tom Hammond were present. Helen Weatherall and Jenn Crawford were absent. Planning Director Brendan Conboy and Glenn Gibbs were 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 noted this is a special meeting for the 36 Linebrook Road hearings.

Citizen Queries: None noted.

Continued 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 noted Jenn Crawford and Helen Weatherall are absent. Mooradd appointed Tom Hammond as a voting member for the applications.

Krists Karklins (architect – TGAS Architects, Inc.), Bob Weatherall (Public Safety Facility Committee), Jamie Fay (Finance Committee), Attorney Amy Kwesell (KP Law), Police Chief Paul Nikas, and Fire Chief Paul Parisi were present for the public hearing.

Mooradd noted the Planning Office prepared a draft decision for the special permit and site plan review. The criteria of each and findings and conditions will be reviewed this evening.

Conboy provided background for the project. Gibbs reviewed special permit findings for the public facility use. Bylaw *XI.J* identifies 7 criteria for the special permits: (1) Social, economic or community needs which are served by the proposal, (2) Potential fiscal impact, including impact on Town services, tax base and employment, (3) Traffic flow and safety, including parking and loading, (4) Adequacy of utilities and other public services, (5) Compatibility with neighborhood character, (6) Impacts on the natural and built environment, and (7) Minimization of water demand

in accordance with the Board of Water Commissioners' Water Use Mitigation Program (WUMP) regulations.

It was noted that the municipal building is not subject to WUMP. Low flow fixtures will be installed in the building and no irrigation system will be used. Drought tolerant plants will be planted.

Under the traffic flow and safety criteria, Lowe suggested adding bicycle parking and EV charging stations as part of the findings. Lowe noted only two signs were proposed and asked if that is sufficient. Attorney Kwesell noted that a traffic study is part of the realignment of Pineswamp Road and Linebrook Road and suggested adding language for traffic signs to meet traffic study findings: "It is anticipated that the proposed realignment of Linebrook Road and Pineswamp Road intersection will result in traffic control signage sufficient to manage traffic that flows past and into 36 Linebrook Road."

Gibbs noted that to grant a special permit, the benefit to the Town must outweigh the adverse impact.

Gibbs noted the bylaws allow the PB to reduce the setback by 50%. Gibbs will add language noting the request is tied to the use of the building as parking in the front is in the setback.

Lowe noted the final landscape plan has not been submitted and is concerned about the screening for the abutters. B. Weatherall said the landscape architect continues to work with the abutters for screening.

Site plan review includes thirteen general standards; (1) Traffic circulation and access, (2) Pedestrian safety and access, (3) Off-street parking and loading, (4) Emergency vehicle access, (5) Stormwater drainage, based upon a professional engineering report, utilizing on-site absorption, and low impact development integrated stormwater management practices, (6) Water supply and sewage disposal adequate to support the intended use (7) Screening, including the use of natural land features, plantings and erosion control, (8) Protection and preservation of existing natural features and vistas, (9) Signage and exterior lighting, (10) Visual impact of parking, storage or other outdoor service areas, (11) Consistency with character and scale of surrounding buildings, (12) Energy, water and resource efficient design (such as use of solar or other energy collection apparatuses), and (13) Minimization of water demand in accordance with the Board of Water Commissioners' WUMP regulations.

It was noted that some of the site plan review standards overlap with the special permit criteria. Pedestrian safety and access will be provided via walkways to the front and rear entrance. The access conforms with accessibility requirements. Crespi said the crosswalks are not on the plan. It is important to connect crosswalks to the walkways.

It was noted that the site will have 70 parking spaces (36 for employee parking and 34 for public parking). Lowe suggested adding language to note bicycle parking. LED lighting will be used and lighting will be dark sky compliant. Stormwater management permit is under review by the Conservation Commission. There will be seven parking spaces equipped with EV charging stations.

Emergency vehicle access is provided by Linebrook Road and Pineswamp Road. Stormwater Management is being reviewed by the Conservation Commission and is subject to its approval. Town water supply and sewer is adequate. Screening is provided between abutting properties and mechanical units will be on the rear roof. Impervious surface of the development is below 15%. Exterior lighting will be LED and dark sky compliant. The project will maintain natural vegetation and permeable grass pavers will be used in rear parking area. Similar to the special permit, the project proposes to be consistent with character and neighboring buildings. Drought tolerant plants are proposed to minimize water use. The project has a net carbon zero goal and will meet the Stretch Code. Crespi suggested adding language about the materials selected which may help minimize future maintenance costs.

Attorney Kwesell suggested combining conditions 6 and 14 as they are similar. Condition 9 notes no permanent irrigation system is allowed. Condition 10 notes screening building equipment located on the roof and adjacent properties. Condition 11 notes suggestions made by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board and the PB encourages the project to consider the suggestions. Attorney Kwesell said the applicant shall consider suggestions when Linebrook Road and Pineswamp Road are realigned. Condition 12 notes Shade Tree Beautification Committee suggestions to use native plants. Condition 13 Linebrook Road and Pineswamp Road have adequate widths to serve the public safety facility. PB added “based on the proximity of the public safety committee to the school and Bialek Park, the PB suggests working with the School Committee and DPW for traffic management”.

B. Weatherall noted that the project will go out for bids in October 2023 and begin building in 2024. Anticipated completion is Fall 2025.

Public Comment:

Wendy Copithorne, 41 Linebrook Road, noted the issue that there was no sound system or Ipswich ICAM to televise or record the meeting. She said it was very difficult for the audience to hear. She read a letter prepared by John Sarni who is a member of the DRB. The letter stated the project does not meet the criteria for compatibility with the neighborhood character. It was noted that the DRB did not approve the design. Copithorne asked why the PB is not considering comments from the DRB. Mooradd responded that design changes were made based on PB and public feedback.

Julian Coleville, 34 Linebrook Road, requested maintaining existing trees between 34 and 36 Linebrook Road. He also requested a retaining wall to help maintain the existing trees. He noted the request and information on a retaining wall had been provided to the PB and applicant at a prior PB meeting. Coleville asked if the applicant provided a written response for the rationale to not install a retaining wall. Lowe responded that adding a retaining wall creates a lot of disturbance. Mooradd said the applicant did review the option of a retaining wall. Karklins noted that Stephen Powers (civil engineer) provided an estimate and noted there is nothing gained by adding a retaining wall. Coleville noted the work for the retaining wall would be further away from the property line and requested the PB to require the retaining wall. Coleville said that Jaime Fay (Finance Committee) agreed to install one tree well to save a mature tree. B. Weatherall said the retaining wall is not required and an additional expense. Fay said the area will be graded and

revegetated. Coleville noted revegetation is not the same as existing mature trees. Fay said the project team will continue to work with abutters on screening.

Marlene Markos, 20 Damon Road, said modern thinking is conservation. She said all conditions have not been presented (traffic study, completed landscape plan). Markos noted the project team did not work with the DRB. Markos expressed concern about the process to approve the project. She said the project should not be approved since all requirements are not fulfilled. Mooradd responded that requirements have been reviewed and met. Mooradd explained the functions of various boards involved in the review process. Lowe encouraged the Public Safety Facility Committee and project team to continue working with neighbors.

Mooradd said the applicant requested a withdrawal for the original application for Site Plan Review/Special Permit.

Hammond made a motion to close the public hearings and Lowe seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Lowe made a motion to accept the applicant withdrawal for the original application without prejudice and Hammond seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Hammond made a motion to approve the Special Permit and Site Plan Review for 36 Linebrook Road and Lowe seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.*

New Business/Announcements

Conboy announced the Select Board will be reviewing PB proposed zoning articles on Monday, August 21, 2023.

Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm

Meeting notes taken by: Odile Breton

Accepted on: August 31, 2023