

Andrea Bates

From: Dag Holmboe <dagholmboe@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 25, 2022 2:41 PM
To: Ethan Parsons
Cc: Jack Whittier
Subject: 55 Waldingfield

Hi Ethan, my name is Dag Holmboe, resident of Hamilton. I am an active runner (50+ marathons and ultra marathons) and cyclist of Waldingfield. With my wife, we take long walks and runs in the Appleton Farms (we are a member of the Appleton CSA), Pingree woods, Bradley Palmer and Willowdale. In the winter, we do the same but cross country skiing.

Over the last year, I have been to most of the 55 Waldingfield planning board meetings and I have listen to both pro and against the Ora development.

I encourage, strongly encourage the planning board to not approve the Ora project.

The reasons are as follows (not sorted in any particular order):

1. The hearings have not been fair. Ora has been given hours upon hours to present their case. Friends of Waldingfield (FoW) has been given 3 minutes each with a planning board member counting the seconds. FoW asked to present their case but the request was rejected by the planning board. The planning board never took the time to fully listen to the FoW which caused a total imbalance of views and presentations in favor of Ora.

Note that FoW have close to 1,000 signatures from Ipswich residents so although the name is "Friends of Waldingfield", they actually represent close to 7.5% of all of Ipswich, e.g. they represent a substantial group of Ipswich residents.

2. I am not familiar with the ins and outs of the rules and regulations with respect to new building vs additions to current buildings, however, the lawyer for FoW made a number of convincing arguments that there are strict definitions and strict regulations in the state law for buildings and additions. Nevertheless, it does not seem that the planning board have take any of that into consideration.

3. Defining a dirtpile as floorspace, thereby hitting the 30,000 mark does not meet the sanity check threshold.

4. Waldingfield is a very scenic route. It is very tight (I know because of running and biking) with lots of curves and hills. Placing a company headquarters on Waldingfield does not make any sense at all. Ora states that the traffic will only slightly increase. Currently, there are two types of people traveling on Waldingfield: residents and throughfares. By placing a company headquarters on Waldingfield, including employees, deliveries, catering, services etc, not only will traffic increase but the size of the vehicles will increase as well.

Ora has stated that most employees will work remotely so therefore traffic will not increase much. This flies in the face of many large and small companies worldwide that are now requiring their employees to come back to the office after the Covid restrictions have been lifted. There has been numerous articles in WSJ and other media about this. The husband of Helen (planning board member) made the same argument.

In addition, the planning board can not trust, shall not trust that Ora will keep to their promises about future working environments for their employees. After all, Ora is a business that has to change with a changing business landscape to stay profitable, even if that means that all employees have to work in their offices. Ipswich can not prevent that.

5. Which leads in to the next point. Ora and the planning board are working through a set of stipulations that Ora has to abide by. When asked who would police Ora, a planning board member stated that the neighbors would police Ora. Jack Whittier (resident of Waldingfield) made the remark that nor he nor any other resident of Waldingfield have the time nor the whereabouts to police their neighbors. It is simply not their job! So in essence, the planning board member (a) made a remark that flies in the face of common sense, and (b) basically laid open that the contract stipulations between

Ora and Ipswich are, to a large degree, unenforcable unless the town of Ipswich does weekly, monthly check-ins at Ora, which will not happen.

6. The planning board has a decision to make. The planning board can either irrevocable change the nature of Waldingfield. Once a yes vote has been taken, Waldingfield will never be the same. The planning board will have agreed to locate another corporation - like NE Biolabs - to the Waldingfield Rd.

Or, a no vote would keep Waldingfield the same, while the planning board can encourage Ora to look at other areas in Ipswich. For instance, rt 133 would make a lot more sense.

7. I don't understand the benefits to the residents of Ipswich or to the planning board by placing a corporate headquarters at Waldingfield. Furthermore, I don't even understand why Ora wants to go in there in the first place. It just does not make sense.

Nowhere have I seen Ora or the planning board make a convincing argument for Ora at Waldingfield. I have heard talks about taxes but a member from FoW made the argument that additional tax revenue is peanuts in relationship to the total budget of Ipswich. Ora was given room to make a counter argument but the neglected to do so, which simply means that they don't have an arguement with respect to taxes.

8. All in all, Ora is not fully open about their plans. They have presented different plans with different phases, all of which seem to depend on this or on that, which makes it really hard for the planning board to know what they are voting on. Ora knows this (Chris Nysten (sp!) is a smart guy) but because of Ora's obfuscation, the planning board can not, should not vote to approve this project.

Ethan, I encourage the planning board to vote no on the Ora project. There are too many unknowns in this project to go forward. The changes to Waldingfield and the surrounding areas (Appleton Farms) are far too great to take a chance on Ora's stated commitments. Even if the current leadership at Ora were to be totally upfront and honest, next year there could be a complete change of leadership and a potentially complete new set of plans. At that time, because the planning board voted yes to this project, it will be impossible to vote no on future plans.

The Ora project is not the right project for Waldingfield.

Ethan, feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Best regards,
Dag Holmboe
617 671 0734