

MINUTES
March 4, 2021 Planning Board Meeting
7 PM, via ZOOM

Board members present: Keith Anderson, Mitch Lowe, Jeff Anderson, Helen Weatherall, Carolyn Britt
Others present: Kristen Grubbs, Beth O'Connor, Jack Whittier, Ethan Parsons, Wayne Castonguay

Citizen Queries: none

Open Space Committee Presentation

Wayne Castonguay of the Open Space Committee was present. He said he is requesting a support letter for the newest update to the Open Space and Recreation Plan. The plan has been submitted to the State. The State gave the Plan "conditional approval". Castonguay said the Plan is big on protecting natural resources. There is a specific action plan. There were more than 500 survey responses. The Committee analyzed needs and sought input from those involved with regard to resource protection, climate adaptation and resiliency, and active recreation. Castonguay discussed the Town's accomplishments since the prior Plan was adopted.

Keith Anderson asked if there are new funding sources. Castonguay said that the signs for funding opportunities are positive. He emphasized the importance of open space protecting, saying there are nearly 4,000 acres of unprotected land in Ipswich. Residents are concerned about saving land.

Lowe asked if Planning staff have reviewed the Plan to check for any conflicts with the Community Development Plan. Grubbs said that the plans coordinate and inform each other and staff worked together on the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Britt brought up the possibility of green burials on open space, such as at Kamon Farm.

Beth O'Connor, Open Space Steward, said she could raise the question with Greenbelt when she works with them on the conservation restriction for the Kamon property.

Keith Anderson asked for a motion to enthusiastically support the Plan. He also asked for authorization to sign a support letter indicating the same. Mitch made a motion that the Board enthusiastically support the Plan and authorize Keith Anderson to sign a letter on behalf of the Planning Board. Britt seconded Lowe's motion. Keith Anderson took a roll call vote. All members voted in favor, 5-0. Britt asked that the support letter include commentary about how extraordinary the Open Space Committee is.

Discussion about proposed zoning articles for Annual Town Meeting, 2021

Keith Anderson said that there will be an upcoming public hearing on the zoning articles. The Planning Board will be at the Select Board meeting on Monday to discuss the articles. He said the Finance Committee public hearing is also coming up. Anderson said that the purpose of tonight's discussion is to be clear on the language in the articles and their intent. He said he would also like to discuss the Board's strategy for presenting the articles to other boards and Town Meeting.

Citizen's petition: Parsons explained that the citizen's petition (Toni Moorad) has changed. Moorad's intent is to allow a single family and a two family home to exist on a lot as a multifamily development. Parsons said that currently the Town doesn't allow single family homes to comprise more than 25% of the

total units in a multifamily development. Moorad's petition would allow single family homes to comprise up to 1/3 of the total units on the lot.

Parsons said that Moorad will attend the Planning Board, Finance Committee and Select Board hearings to present her article.

Britt asked if the change would allow for two units behind a single family dwelling. Parsons said yes.

Jeff Anderson asked if this change would align with what is in the Housing Production Plan. Parsons said that it would as it does not force a reduction in the number of permissible units, but rather provides another option for a development.

Parsons discussed the energy efficiency article. He said he met with the Select Board recently. One of the Board members asked if the heat pump setback reduction allowance would cause nuisances because of noise or heat, etc. Parsons said Britt has researched this matter. He suggested the Board should be prepared to address this question. There was some discussion about noise emission from heat pumps and boilers. Jeff Anderson said that a heat pump should not be any more of a nuisance than an air conditioner. Lowe asked if the Board should provide a definition of a heat pump. Keith Anderson said that this would be a good idea. Jeff Anderson said the problem is heat pump is a generic term. There was a discussion about the advanced insulated walls. Parsons suggested incorporating guidance on what this means in the Planning Board's Special Permit Regulations.

Parsons discussed the water demand conservation-related article. The article would add standards to the Special Permit and Site Plan Review sections. Keith Anderson said that the purpose of the article is to put applicants on notice that this is an important issue for the Board. The teeth will be in the Water Commissioner's Regulations.

Parsons discussed the GEPD article. He said that one change that appears unnecessary is language that would permit previously conveyed land to count toward new floor area permitted on the GEPD lot. He said the proponent suggested the language but it appears to be unnecessary. Using previously conveyed land to calculate potential permissible floor area hasn't been sitting well with people. Parsons said he supports the article at this point with this language omitted. He said there is an opportunity for public access, economic development and other benefits if 55 Waldingfield Road were eligible and used as a GEPD. He said the Town should be cautious about new open space requirements, density, and other impacts but that he was confident a project could benefit the Town and fit onto the lot. Existing GEPD provisions are adequate because they give the Board teeth to control development. This is an opportunity to make 55 Waldingfield eligible. Keith Anderson asked if representatives of Ora, the business looking to locate to 55 Waldingfield Road, will be present at hearings during this process. Parsons said he suspected they would be.

Jack Whittier, a Waldingfield Road resident, said his main concern is an increase of traffic. He said there is already a traffic issue on Waldingfield Road. Keith Anderson encouraged Mr. Whittier to come forward during the Board's public hearing on the article.

Parsons discussed the inclusionary housing article. He said the article would lower the threshold for requiring affordable units from one per ten to one per seven, which is 15%. Parsons said the article also cleans up the inclusionary housing section by separating the requirement with the explanation about what is affordable. Keith Anderson said the article is taking away the option of making a payment from units seven to ten. He said the Board needs to work on a proposed fee structure for payments in lieu. There was a discussion about the payment in lieu amounts. Parsons said that he thinks there should be a fee increase

for ownership units but the fee should remain lower for rental units. Britt asked Parsons to review other towns to see which require 15%.

The Board discussed its strategy for explaining the inclusionary article to the Select Board and Finance Committee. Parsons suggested that the Board look closely at Footnote 11 this year as well, as that will be part of the discussion with other boards.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9 PM. Mitch moved to adjourn. Jeff Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes prepared by Ethan Parsons

Adopted: April 22, 2021