

IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Remote Meeting using ZOOM

Wednesday, August 25, 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 Wednesday, August 25, 2021 using ZOOM. Board members Carolyn Britt, Jeffrey Anderson, Mitchell Lowe, Toni Mooradd and Helen Weatherall were present. Staff, Kristen Grubbs and minute taker Odile Breton 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 Board members that were present as listed above.

Citizen Queries: None noted

Request by DC Ganley of Jeffrey's Neck Road Realty Trust for ANR plan endorsement for plan of land at 23-25-27 Jeffrey's Neck Road

Britt recused herself as she is an abutter. Larry Graham (H.L. Graham & Associates) was present for the applicant. Graham reviewed the site plan of the three lots and explained the owners would like to combine the lots and then split them into two lots. Graham noted that on July 15, 2021, the Zoning Board of Appeals approved the reduction for the side yard setback for the existing dwelling (40 ft. to 21 ft. noted on the site plan). Graham said the two lots have the required frontage and are not subdivisions. The minimum lot area is one acre.

Anderson moved to approve the ANR plan as submitted and Mooradd seconded. The motion passed with 3 votes (Weatherall abstained).

New Public Hearing: Ora, Inc. for Site Plan Review and a Special Permit to use 55 Waldingfield Road as a "Great Estate" for business purposes pursuant to Section IX.H of the Zoning Bylaw. The proposal involves the alteration of more than 2,500 sq. ft. of commercial space as described in Section X.B.1 and the increase of required parking spaces by more than 10 as described in Section X.B.3 of the Zoning Bylaw, as well as associated site work, at 55 Waldingfield Rd. (Assessor's Map 62, Lot 14), located in the Rural Residence A Zoning District, pursuant but not limited to the sections of the Zoning Bylaw cited herein as well as XI.J

Britt opened the public hearing by reading the legal notice. Attorney Chip Nylen, Jennifer Williams, Senior Management for Ora, Inc, Charlie Wear, engineer with Hancock Associates, and architect John Harden of Olson Lewis + Architects were present for the applicant.

Nylen noted a 20 minute presentation was prepared for this evening. He noted the applicant will have additional presentations for subsequent meetings. Nylen stated Ora, Inc. has a Purchase and Sale agreement (P&S) for 55 Waldingfield Road and a condition of the P&S is that Ora, Inc. file for local permits needed for development on the property.

Harden presented site plans and architectural diagrams for Phases 1a and 1b of the proposed development. Harden presented the Land Area Summary and noted the property has 39.9 acres, which abuts the Julia Bird Reservation. Prior to 1948, the Julia Bird Reservation (28.97 acres) was a part of the 55 Waldingfield Road property.

Harden reviewed the existing six buildings on the property: Great Estate Mansion (13,970 sq. ft.), Carriage House, School House, Pool House, Farm House and Barn. There is an existing conservation restriction (CR) for 8.8 acres of land along the Ipswich River. The remaining buildable area on the property is 16.95 acres.

The proposed development was presented as Phase 1A and Phase 1B. Phase 1A occurs at the mansion. The proposed project is for accessibility purposes and connects the mansion to the carriage house. The addition connecting the two buildings is glass with a copper roof. Phase 1A addition is 2,000 sq. ft. and Phase 1A includes 50 parking spaces.

Phase 1B has a proposed new entry to the property, renovated and expanded Farm House and Barn. Phase 1B addition is 21,000 sq. ft. and adds guest rooms, event space and six additional horse stalls. Phase 1B includes 30 parking spaces and the current conditions need to be cleaned up. The goal is not to add impervious surfaces and pea stone will be used.

For future hearings, Lowe suggested the applicant present sustainability and renewable energy sources. Lowe suggested scheduling a site visit before the next public hearing session.

Lowe inquired about the proposed loop on the property and asked about public access and public parking. Lowe is concerned about potential parking on Waldingfield Road. Weatherall is also concerned about parking, traffic and safety for cyclists and pedestrians on Waldingfield Road. Mooradd asked if public parking will be allowed on the property for people to access the trails. Williams said Ora, Inc. is not offering public parking but would like to work with Greenbelt in the future on public access. It was noted that there are existing horse trails through an agreement with Essex County Trails Association. Nylen noted the property owner, the holder of the CR and other Town entities need to work together for public access from land and the river.

Public Comment: Jack Whittier of Waldingfield Road in Hamilton thanked Ora, Inc. for the presentation. Whittier asked about Phases 2 and 3. He is concerned about Ora, Inc. not presenting Phases 2 and 3 and the impact those phases will create. Nylen responded by stating the bylaws are clear that a special permit is required to go forward with development on site. Nylen reminded the audience that Ora, Inc. is not the current owner of the property but has a P&S agreement with the seller. Development for Phases 2 and 3 are limited due to physical features of the property and the bylaws. If Phases 2 and 3 occur, the plans will require Planning Board review and approval. Whittier suggested hiding the parking behind the Mansion and Barn so it is not seen from Waldingfield Road.

Torii Bottomley requested clarification on buffer area and materials to be used for the structure connecting the Mansion to the Carriage House. Harden said the material is glass so the structure is transparent. Nysten described zoning bylaw constraints. One is there is a 100 ft. setback from adjacent properties. The bylaw also notes that the 100 ft. must be a vegetated buffer area.

Katie Hone, 29 Upper River Road, a member of the Open Space Committee, is concerned about Phases 2 and 3. She requested something in writing for Phases 2 and 3 so that the public can see that Ora, Inc. cannot exceed what is allowed. Nysten responded that the bylaws limit future construction. Anderson noted that the Board is reviewing the proposal presented this evening. The applicant will have to come back before the Board for any additional expansion. Weatherall noted there is public perception for future development and that there is transparency.

Ralph Williams, 9 Nags Head Road, suggested having another CR to prevent future phases. He said there is a disconnect on the proposed loop for the property because the trail does not go through the current CR area because of the wetlands. He asked if it is feasible to relocate the trail behind the mansion. Williams responded that Ora, Inc. is not the current owner and could not provide an answer about an additional CR. She noted there are already protections in place through the bylaws. The topography of the land limits building. Ora, Inc. has the same concerns about traffic and safety on Waldingfield Road.

Mooradd noted the bylaw does have protections and the applicant would have to come before the Board to modify the special permit.

Harden said there are approximately 17 acres available but there is also an 8% threshold. Ora, Inc. would not be able to use the entire 17 acres for building.

Dorothy and Ed Monnelly, 198 Argilla Road, would like input about the trails from Greenbelt.

For the next meeting, Ora, Inc. will discuss the use of the buildings. Nysten noted there is a meeting for abutters on September 8, 2021 (not on the property). A site visit is suggested for Wednesday, September 8 at 5 PM. An alternate date for the site visit is September 11 at 9:00 AM.

Lowe moved to continue the public hearing September 9, 2021 and Weatherall seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adopt minutes of July 26, 2021

Lowe moved to accept July 26, 2021 minutes as drafted and Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Announcements/New Business

A discussion of the use of the chat feature in ZOOM began. The discussion related to comments in the chat during an applicant presentation. It was noted that if the public hearing was in person,

members of the audience would be allowed comments and questions only during the public comment period. The chat feature allows comments and questions throughout the public hearing which could be distracting to the applicant, the Board and other members of the audience.

Adjournment

Anderson moved to adjourn and Lowe seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.

Meeting notes taken by: Odile Breton

Adopted on: September 23, 2021