

January 11, 2021

To: Ipswich Planning Board
From: Jim Umile, 110 Central St.
Re: 108 Central St. Proposed Project

Dear Ethan and Members of the Planning Board,

As a concerned resident of Ipswich and the Lord Square/Central St. neighborhood, I do not approve and sternly disagree with the January 8, 2021 presented development of 108 Central St., which includes six townhomes and one separate condominium. The proposal infringes upon and appears to violate the town's bylaws that allow the planning board to prevent the "overcrowding of land" and "preserve and increase amenities". Additionally, the proposal does not meet the bylaws intent, which primarily concerns the "reasonable consideration to the outstanding characteristics and unique position that Ipswich holds in the Historical background of the country and the character of each district".

While I am not an expert in these topics, I do know from conversation with Ipswich and neighborhood residents that a development like this is an example of dismissing the roots of this small, beach town's historical character and future preservation. In the 21 years I've lived here, I've been involved in two other proposed projects to develop this land, including a combined commercial/residential property in 2010 as well as the proposed Town Police and Fire buildings in 2005/06, that were not approved due to the mission of the planning board as well as conservation land impact. Furthermore, the gross error made on the 100 Central St. townhome project from 2004, completed by a Salem, MA developer with no concern for the town's historical preservation, is an exemplar and resounding, profound reminder of what the town does not need. Lastly, the current spike of increased development in town is concerning for myriad reasons, including water availability, overcrowding, congestion and traffic in our already dense areas, school concerns and developers lack of concern for a project's overall impact.

The proposed project lacks any historical architectural integrity, significantly increases traffic and density and is harmful to Farley Brook, a perennial stream with existing pollution/contaminant concerns that feeds the Ipswich River and has an immediate impact on things like our clamming flats. Central St., with a 25-mph speed limit, is a town neighborhood with significant historical period homes, as stated by the project architect, Tom Mayo. I'm surprised with the responsibility and understanding of one in his position, and current resident, why he would even choose to propose or be associated with these plans. I would also include the civil engineer, Larry Graham, as walking a fine line of his responsibilities to the 108 Central St. property and its adjacent conservation land. It is apparent everyone involved in the project has only one concern: monetary profit. This is the frequent disappointment in regard to this property.

It is my hope the Planning Board is consistent with past rulings and intent on following its' mission once again as it pertains to the development of 108 Central St. I also feel strongly the Planning Board has an opportunity to set a tone for future developments. The continued efforts to preserve the special characteristics that make Ipswich the highly desirable small town so many love, and have loved for years, are always very much appreciated.

Sincerely,
Jim and Kristin Umile
110 Central St., Ipswich, MA