

MR. & MRS. THOMAS P. EDDY  
187 COUNTY ROAD  
IPSWICH, MA 01938

October 19, 2021

Ipswich Planning Board  
Town Hall  
25 Green Street  
Ipswich, MA 01938

**Re: 55 Waldingfield Road – Ora, Inc.**

To the Members of the Ipswich Planning Board:

We reside at 187 County Road in Ipswich which abuts Greenbelt's Julia Bird Reservation and actively use the Bird trail system and connecting trails behind 55 Waldingfield. As new details about Ora's longer-term plans for 55 Waldingfield have come to light, we have become increasingly concerned about the scope and nature of the project and wanted to share our specific concerns with the Planning Board.

The original scope of Ora, Inc.'s plan has changed significantly since first presented to us in an introductory meeting with Ora representatives in August 2021. We initially were led to believe that Ora was going to renovate the house, carriage house and barn with minimal new structures being added to the property and that the property would be used primarily to house out-of-state doctors working with Ora and to hold smaller business meetings. Ora representatives indicated at that time that no more than 30-50 individuals would be accessing/using the premises daily.

Since that initial meeting, Ora's longer-term plans for the property have been disclosed and our perception of the project has changed materially. Specifically, Ora's longer-term plans for the project now include:

- up to 200 individuals on the premises daily<sup>1</sup> (not including increased traffic associated with vendors, delivery trucks or others providing services to Ora), up from the 30-50 first indicated;
- a significant expansion of the existing barn and farmhouse at the entrance to the property rather than a renovation of the existing structures that will be visible from Waldingfield Road; and
- the construction of a 56,000 ft. glass office building that is 3 stories high with a parking deck structure underneath which appears to be close to a conservation area and would be visible to both trail users as well as from Waldingfield Road.

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<sup>1</sup> Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI); *Supplemental Traffic Memorandum- Ora at Waldingfield Ipswich, Massachusetts*; October 2021

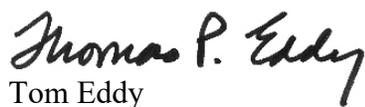
Our concerns about the Ora project primarily relate to the fact that it is inconsistent with the stated purposes of the Great Estate Preservation Development (GEPD) Bylaws. We now believe that the project will not “preserve the design integrity of landscape features, both natural and built, which contribute to the character of a Great Estate” which is one of the stated purposes of GEPD. The proposed 56,000 ft<sup>2</sup> three story glass office building will change the vista from Waldingfield and is inconsistent with the natural features of the RRA District.

In addition, we also believe that Ora’s argument that adding the acreage from the Greenbelt’s Julia Bird Reservation to the property’s 40 acres in order to meet the 60-acre minimum threshold and qualify as a “Great Estate” in Section IX.H of the Zoning Bylaw is disingenuous. The Great Estate Zoning Bylaws clearly and unambiguously establish the fact that the property must be at least 60 acres to qualify. Allowing the Ora project to qualify flies in the face of that requirement and would set a dangerous precedent for the Town for others seeking to do the same.

Finally, we find the *Supplemental Traffic Memorandum* prepared by GPI which concludes that traffic will not be significantly impacted by the project to be misleading as it ignores the increased traffic associated with vendors, delivery trucks or others providing services to Ora. GPI’s analysis also fails to account for incremental staff that will be required to provide meals, housekeeping and other services to the guests that are spending the night there as well as incremental hires to manage the equestrian and other leisure activities Ora will be offering its guests. We believe that GPI’s traffic analysis represents the minimum level of traffic that this project will generate.

Although we appreciate Ora’s efforts over the past several months to meet with the neighbors and maintain an open dialogue, we have also found their lack of disclosure about the long-term plan for this project to be concerning. We urge the Planning Board to weigh our concerns as part of their deliberations.

Respectfully,

  
Tom Eddy

  
Jennifer Eddy