

**The Sprouse Family
19 Waldingfield Road
Ipswich, MA 01938**

November 6, 2021

Dear Planning Board,

I have lived at 19 Waldingfield Road for 29 years with my wife Stephenie. Stephenie has lived at this same address for over 50 years. Stephenie's mother, Joan Joslin sold the home to us 28 years ago. We've recently remodeled the home so that Joan could return to the property she so loves for the remainder of her life. Steph was raised in our home, we raised our three children in this home, and we have made it a residence that accommodates multiple generations. We hope that one of our 3 children will continue to make 19 Waldingfield their home long after we are gone. Needless to say, there are few more committed to this very special location in Ipswich. We will be impacted by Ora should they move forward with their project as our properties are only separated by the Julia Bird Reservation.

We support the Ora project at 55 Waldingfield Road. We submit this letter not as one person with an opinion but as three generations who will be greatly impacted by the decision made. We have considered viable potential options, ie development of between 10 and 15 homes, and others less viable. From what we understand, no single buyer has come forward with plans to maintain the property as a private residence, protecting the open space and preserving the trails. The estate has remained on the market for years.

We have reviewed the documents for and against the project. As a family, we have taken our time to listen to various opinions and discuss the ramifications of the Ora proposal as compared to other possible outcomes. In our collective analysis, Ora is the only rational option available to the community today that will protect a significant percentage of the property (50%) in accordance with the Great Estates Preservation District Bylaw (GEPDB). The Ora proposal will maintain many of the key vistas we have all come to enjoy, and make the property and adjoining trails available to the public for generations to come. While the proposal may be unconventional to many when you explore the specifics, one can not dispute that the Ora proposal offers significant value to the community. That is not to say that we as a community should not evaluate all proposals and options and strive to fully understand what is being proposed and how each option could impact our community.

We are disturbed by many of the misrepresentations and assumptions based on outdated business models that have been widely circulated in the community. Many of these have been perpetrated by one individual who resides on Waldingfield Road. As a result of his poorly developed analysis and willingness to misstate facts, people in the community have taken opposing positions to the Ora project based on inaccurate information. We are also very saddened by this individual's attacks on Stuart Abelson, and his organization.

For the better part of eight months, Stephenie, Joan, our children, and I have read and listened to the supporters and detractors of Ora's proposal to convert 55 Waldingfield into a business retreat and meeting center. I have taken the time to meet with Stuart Abelson numerous times to better understand his vision and the intent for the property. I have asked many questions and been given honest answers to all the questions my family, friends and neighbors could present.

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I had not met Stuart before this past July, but I have worked in the BioPharma industry for over 34 years. I've been very aware of his father's extraordinary reputation, Stuart's reputation, and commitment he has made to advancing the human condition, and the high level of integrity of the organization Stuart leads. It has been said publicly that Stuart and Ora have misrepresented and provided limited transparency to what they intend to do. This is radically inaccurate. Ora said they would listen to the community and their response has been nothing but transparent, respectful, and thorough. Ora has addressed all requirements of the Great Estates Preservation District Bylaw. They have also responded to many requests from the community and offered additional solutions that will enhance the property, increase public access, and make 55 Waldingfield a safer, better-maintained property for generations to come.

Let's examine some of the key facts.

1. Concerns regarding traffic. There will be more traffic on Waldingfield. Unfortunately, this is a given, but the increase in traffic won't be solely attributed to Ora. New England Biolabs (NEB) has been a valuable contributor to the community for many years. NEB has shown that corporations can do the right thing to preserve space and create properties that meet the needs of an organization while also creating jobs and enhancing the community. NEB has recently expanded its facilities; this will add traffic to Waldingfield Road. The proposals to develop Bruni's property will also increase traffic on Waldingfield Road. It is disingenuous to attribute the coming changes in traffic patterns to Ora's business retreat and meeting center on 55 Waldingfield Road. Given the growth of the community, Waldingfield Road will certainly experience continued increasing traffic, as it has for the 29 years I've lived on the street. I work from home and I'm familiar with the traffic patterns. Ora has also proposed traffic easing strategies that will slow traffic. Ora has offered plans to create walking paths and horse trails that will allow the community to enjoy both the 55 Waldingfield Property and Appleton properties without having to use the road and train bridge that can present significant danger to those crossing on foot, bike or horse.

The nature of the Clinical Research Organization (CRO) that Ora runs is not one that is conducive to large corporate headquarters for many reasons. They do not commercialize products, rather they partner with companies that assume the responsibility for commercialization. Nor will they be locating manufacturing facilities at the 55 Waldingfield site. Ora is in the business of conducting clinical research studies that require a decentralized operating model to effectively serve its clients and partners. While we expect and anticipate Ora will grow, the company's growth will not be directly felt on Waldingfield Road. CROs are growing by expansion. The industry growth is not in communities that present like Ipswich. The CRO growth is in US, Europe, and Asia, that present with more challenging health care dynamics as these geographies provide previously untreated patient populations for research.

The nature of the CRO business model is to also decentralize the operations, legal, finance, accounting, and project management functions of the business to allow people to work from home creating a better quality of life that attracts better, more diverse talent. When Ora tells us the property will be used as a business retreat center with limited numbers of employees on-site from day to day,

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we can be comfortable they are telling the truth as this is the industry trend. I work with the executive leadership of hundreds of companies in the BioPharma/Clinical research space who have seen on-campus censuses drop by as much as 75% in the last 18 months. This has become the norm as people do not want to commute to an office. The work model forced on us by COVID has proven workers don't need to commute, in fact the industry data shows that many key people will quit if they are forced to commute back to an office. Recent data from the Korn Ferry Consulting firm suggests that 40% of people being asked to go back to the office are looking for jobs with flexible working environments. Ora can't force people to an office and hope to keep high-quality employees. The 200 cars a day presented as a scenario by Ora would be at the very limits of what we would see on Waldingfield Road a few days a month. The company currently has 400 employees worldwide. The property will be predominantly used for staff strategy sessions, training, and client/partner meetings. Anyone stating otherwise does not understand the Ora business model, the industry, or the competitive environment in which Ora operates.

2. Structures to be built by Ora in Phase I, II, and III. The proposed building structures to be added to the property, approximately 50,000 sq feet, will encompass an area equal to one to five private homes. The Ora development will represent a concentration of development with a smaller burden on the property than the development of residential homes, allowing for more open space. This scenario is much smaller in scale than any other subdivision development option we could anticipate if, in fact, developers were interested in the property at a price that exceeded \$5 million. Our understanding is that no other material offers have been made in years. Should a developer meet the seller's requested price we can anticipate that the developer will push the limits on the number of units they can build. Anyone who questions that logic need only look at the original proposal to build 199 apartment units on the Bruni property. The Ora buildings being proposed in all three phases are restricted to a relatively small segment of the property and will not affect the river views, pastures or views from Waldingfield Road. In fact, the proposal to recreate the original Appleton Homestead near the barn at the entrance to the property is a brilliant plan that will restore some of the original features of the property and preserve its history.

3. Open Space Requirement - Ora is required to provide 40% of the property to open space but can extend its offer to up to 50% according to the Ipswich Great Estates Preservation District Bylaw (GEPDB). Some people on the Open Space Committee (OSC) have taken an aggressive position that requires Ora to give 77% of the property being purchased to open space. As the Planning Board and Building Inspector of Ipswich have stated in their public opinions, the town by-laws were written to create permanent public access, create trails, the protection of vistas, the protection of historic buildings, landscapes, architecture, plantings and provide an alternative to subdivisions. The Town Bylaws are to facilitate open space and community progress, not to restrict growth or hamper a property owner's ability to use a parcel for their intended purposes, as long as the Bylaws are adhered to. It's important to clarify that the 8.8-acre Conservation Restriction (CR) that was generated in 1973 did not provide public access. There have been many different opinions about how this 8.8 acre section of the property should be factored into the (GEPDB) calculation. This parcel was a private transaction by Julia Bird Reservation and should be included in the 40% calculation so that the Conservation Restriction can be modified as Ora has proposed to provide legal public access. This change alone will improve the community's position and access. With the 8.8 acres and all other setbacks, Ora has now agreed to offer 50% of the land being purchased to open space. Ora has also

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offered 100% public access to trails that will be extended around the property. This part of the plan will increase general access to the property and improve equestrian access/safety to trails that will be formally maintained with the support of Ora.

There are other factors that have been presented regarding this project and the impact it will have on Waldingfield Road, none of them have a material bearing on the community as many of these opinions have to do with style, semantics and emotion. After considering the requirements of the GEPDB that have been met by Ora, one should apply logic. The objective of Ora and its leadership is to create a destination of which they, the neighbors, and the community at large can be proud. They strive to create a property that will promote creative thinking and collaboration. It is not meant to be a corporate office but a special place where people can meet. Reviewing Ora's architectural drawings and site plans as well as the adjustments and refinements they have made over the last few months as a response to community concerns show a responsiveness and responsibility to the property and the community.

It is our family's opinion (and that of others who have asked to join this letter) that Ora will exceed the community's expectations, that we will be left with a property that makes us proud and offers future generations many of the same experiences our family has enjoyed for the last 50 years. We ask that the Planning Board examine the facts of the situation and support a transition that will protect the elements of the property that define the special experience of walking, riding, and canoeing along the borders of the property. We ask that the Planning Board facilitate well-meaning and properly conceived change; change that is inevitable and necessary if the property is to maintain many of its current characteristics.

We are happy to answer questions that your committee may have and are open to expanding on the process that led to our collective position. Thank you for your time and commitment to the Ipswich community.

Sincerely,

Curtis, Stephenie, Joan, Luke, Max, and Maia

PS – The Sprouse family has been asked to include Nathaniel Pulsifer as a signer to this letter