

January 12, 2022

Statement to Ipswich Planning Board by Attorney Dennis Murphy on Behalf of Concerned Neighbors

This is our home. We are Waldingfield neighbors. We are extremely concerned about traffic. As daily users of this road — to bike, walk, stroll, or ride — we know its narrow and winding nature already requires heightened vigilance for children and adults alike. While we think the Ora HQ/Retreat is a wonderful idea that could work well on the right property, Waldingfield (both the property and scenic road) is just not the right place. This country lane is exceedingly narrow and astoundingly beautiful, which is of course why Ipswich town leaders saw fit to ensure its protection in 1974 by officially designating it as a *Scenic Road*.

The Waldingfield property is very different from other Great Estate developments (Biolabs, Turner Hill). Both of those are set on massive, self-contained estates which themselves are located on major thoroughfares. Waldingfield is tiny by comparison, and the adverse impacts from traffic on neighborhood character from Ora's proposal will be significant. It is for the above reasons that the surrounding community is increasingly mobilizing to protect Waldingfield as they learn more about what's going on.

Unfortunately, Ora has repeatedly threatened the town and neighbors with an either-or scenario: It either gets what it wants, or we will all be faced with a 10-13 lot housing development. Our response to this threat is to put up our own capital in an effort to protect the safety, beauty, and character of our town, neighborhood, and street. We acknowledge we are late to the party. We just hope we aren't too late. We believe there will be more appropriate future opportunities for Ora locally on more suitable properties.

In short, Ora's either-or scenario is a false choice. We are committed to providing a third option if Ora chooses not to proceed: permanent preservation of 55 Waldingfield. Here is our six-point plan.

- **Purchase.** We have now secured more than ample funds to purchase the property outright, in cash, if and when it becomes available.
- **Trusted Partnership.** The Trustees of Reservations, a preservation-minded neighbor with an extremely long-term perspective, has expressed interest in partnering with us.
- **No Additional Development.** We are committed to NO additional development at 55 Waldingfield. The road will become too dangerous, and someone is going to get hurt.
- **Permanent Open Space Preservation.** We are committed to permanently preserving ALL of the open space that currently exists, not just 40-50% of it. This means unimproved land — including the rivershed, forest, and paddocks — will largely remain as-is.
- **Guaranteed Public Access.** We are committed to creating public access to the property equivalent to that being proposed by Ora.
- **Stewardship of Historic Resources.** After placing the vast majority of the property into a permanent conservation restriction, we are committed to carefully maintaining the property until we can identify a more permanent owner with interests in preserving and restoring the historic structures.

The Result: 55 Waldingfield will be permanently preserved for future generations much as it has been since the Appleton family first established Appleton Farms in 1638, nearly 400 years ago.

