

January 25, 2022

Via email to: Ethan Parsons

Ms. Carolyn Britt, Chair
Planning Board
Town of Ipswich
25 Green Street
Ipswich, MA 01938

RE: 55 Waldingfield Rd

Dear Chair Britt and Members of the Planning Board,

My husband and I have lived on Waldingfield Road now for 30 years. I am an avid daily walker and until a few years ago, a runner; and whether running, walking, pushing a jog stroller, teaching my children how to ride a bike or the impromptu lemonade stands while the kids were little; Waldingfield Road has been a part of my daily routine. I recently calculated approximately how far I had run over these 30 years and it totaled over 16,000 miles always starting or ending with the mile long length of Waldingfield. I have become closely acquainted with this special road over the years and its gentle slopes and curves, elegant stone walls and perfectly formed canopies of sugar maples. I know to expect the bluebirds on the Julia Bird Reservation, the occasional coyotes, deer and wood ducks on the riverbanks, and my favorite call of the Great Horned Owl at dusk along the riverside by 55 Waldingfield. This is true peace.

The solace of running on Waldingfield and then along the river on the Julia Bird Reservation, weaving back across Waldingfield into Appleton and over to the Grass Rides and back home has been a daily gift. It is a place where all people can find a form of quiet communion with the environment thanks to the Appleton Family, the Trustees and the Town's foresight in designating Waldingfield as a scenic road. Over the years, the traffic has increased and become faster and more aggressive. It's hard to imagine teaching our kids to ride their bikes on Waldingfield today and it is unfathomable to try and imagine adding an even greater number of cars and trucks to such a pristine and delicate area with so much pedestrian use.

Many years ago, Chet Raymo, an astrophysicist at Stonehill College and contributor to the Boston Globe, wrote a beautiful book called, "The Path – a One Mile Walk Through the Universe". In it he details his ruminations as he walks the same one-mile path, over forty years, from his backyard to Stonehill College where he was a professor. The land was once owned by the Ames family who, like the Appletons, arrived in 1638 and settled in Braintree and whose descendants went on to live for many generations in Easton Mass. On his daily walks his simple observations inspire awe and reverence for the landscape, its biology, its history and deepening his connection to the land and the universal beauty created by the Ames family's ability to preserve this gift for generations. He poetically captures the unquantifiable and essential value

that exists in human experience in natural and historical settings. “Step by step, year by year, the landscape I traversed became deeper, richer, more multidimensional, always overflowing the mind that sought to contain it. Ultimately, almost without my willing it, the path became more than a walk, more than an education, more than a life; it became *the Path*, a *Tao* (Way), a thread that ties one human life and the universe together.”

I am asking the Board to please consider not only the quantifiable factors of the special permit application, but also the *unquantifiable* beauty of 55 Waldingfield and Waldingfield Road, which quietly awaits its own fate. I am also asking you to use your power to say no to the issuance of a special permit to Ora. There is no metric, chart, model, or statistic to measure the extraordinariness of its pastoral landscape that is so rich with history. It is not simply unique; it is an exquisite treasure that should be protected and preserved as is.

The Waldingfield estate is a touchstone property along with the Winthrop’s as original roots of the Town’s establishment. It is relatively unchanged. Generations of residents have enjoyed it and many more have the potential to enjoy what we have been able to up until this juncture. Who can experience the peace of this property and road with another 500 or more extra cars a day (one more per minute) and a big building plopped in the middle of it? Please examine this landscape that asks nothing from us and gives us all so much. The loss suffered by the Town if developed into a corporate campus will be beyond tragic.

I am grateful for your time and consideration,

Maryann M. Friend
951 Highland St
Hamilton, MA 01982