

Kitty Bartholomew, Public Comment
Planning Board Meeting, March 31, 2022

I'm going to guess that most people in this room have walked down Turkey Shore Road, or maybe you've jogged, or ridden your bike. Turkey Shore Road is enjoyed by young and old alike, dogs of all kinds – and on occasion, even a horseback rider.

With views of the Ipswich River on one side, Turkey Shore Road provides a scenic in-town walk for all. Properties are well cared for and the interest in neighborhood beautification extends to the sidewalks where daffodils are planted.

Historic Ipswich identifies Turkey Shore Road as a Colonial and Victorian Neighborhood. The Ipswich Town Character Statement, issued in 2004 by the Planning Department, describes Turkey Shore Road this way:

“The Ipswich River is a dominant feature here, and many properties have been developed along the waterfront. Densely built, the neighborhood is almost exclusively residential and the age of its housing ranges from pre-1725 to present day. Houses are predominantly of wood construction on small lots.”

The description continues with: *“Housing along Turkey Shore Road is densely built and faces the Ipswich River.”*

When the Legal Notice appeared for a Special Permit to build a new, Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit, at 5-7 Turkey Shore Road, it gave me reason to look at Turkey Shore Road in a new way.

Turkey Shore Road is approximately four-tenths of a mile long, consisting of 32 properties. There are 10 properties in the Rural Residential zone and 22 properties in the In-Town Residential zone. The In-Town Residential zone is approximately three-tenths of a mile long.

There are several types and numbers of dwellings in Turkey Shore's In-Town Residential zone: 14 single family homes, 1 condo/townhouse, 6 two-family homes and a 1 four-unit apartment building. When one takes into account the multi-family properties, there are an additional 10 households. In all, the In-Town Residential zone on Turkey Shore Road, which is three-tenths of a mile long, consists of 22 properties with 32 households.

Despite the wide variety of these dwelling types, there is one thing in common with all of these properties. Every property in this zone has one housing unit on a single lot – it could be a single-family home or a 4-unit apartment building, but each property has one building for dwelling. I consider this housing pattern to be part of the neighborhood character of Turkey Shore Road.

The proposed new home at 5-7 Turkey Shore Road has given me reason to learn more about Ipswich zoning. First, that this proposal is being presented under the new zoning bylaw approved at Town Meeting last October, Zoning Bylaw Section IX.U. One of the purposes of the new bylaw is to:

“Promote development that is compatible with the character and development pattern of its surrounding neighborhood.”

I’ve also come to find out that the proposed new home at 5-7 Turkey Shore is the FIRST of its kind under the new bylaw. While there have been other Detached Accessory Dwelling Units passed under this new bylaw, they have all involved CONVERSIONS of existing buildings.

The 5-7 Turkey Shore project would be the first NEW BUILD Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit under the new bylaw. Specifically, a NEW two-story 1,000 square-foot house to be built on a parcel with an existing two-family house. This is a precedent-setting project, with lots of governing statutes to consider.

Some of the concerns I have with the 5-7 Turkey Shore Road project at this point include:

1. adding density to a neighborhood that’s already described as “densely built”
2. the increase in the number of households and vehicles on the property, with related neighborhood concerns around traffic flow, safety and parking
3. the impact it will have on the neighborhood, as a departure from the existing housing pattern and neighborhood character
4. the impact it would have on the natural environment as it relates to building on a property with existing stormwater runoff and flooding issues

Thank you for the opportunity to share these concerns.