

April 21, 2022

Carolyn Britt, Chair  
Planning Board  
c/o Ethan Parsons at [ethanp@ipswichma.gov](mailto:ethanp@ipswichma.gov)  
Town of Ipswich  
25 Green Street  
Ipswich, Ma 01938

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

We are writing this letter in support of the Application by Ora Inc. First, we feel we must disclose that our daughter is an employee of Ora, but that is NOT why we support this project, but it is the reason we knew about Ora's plan to purchase the property in January 2021, and we started to follow and watch planning board meetings regarding this project.

Let's recap from the beginning:

- January 20, 2021 - The Planning Board was aware of Ora's interest in purchasing the property, and that the Great Estate Preservation Development Bylaw would need zoning amendments changed for the project. The members of the Planning Board worked long and hard for months on the decision to amend sections of the GEPD for Ora's project.
- April 1, 2021 - The Planning Board voted unanimously to support Article 17 and recommended it go to the May Town Meeting for Ipswich citizen's vote.
- March 22, 2021 - The Select Board voted unanimously to support Article 17 for the May Town Meeting for approval.
- March 23, 2021 - The Finance Committee voted 7-1 to support Article 17 for the May Town Meeting for approval.
- May 15, 2021 - Town Meeting - The *Ipswich* (not Hamilton) citizens voted 309 to 21, in support of Article 17 to make changes to the GEPD Bylaw.

The Waldingfield property was on the market for 10 years before Ora's offer was accepted for purchase. It's a shame that in those 10 years the "Friends of Waldingfield" didn't seek purchase of the property. **Now, the application before you, is Ora's application and only Ora's application.** The Planning Board is now responsible for ensuring that Ora meets the GEPD Bylaw requirements for a Special Permit.

We believe that Ora's Project is beneficial to the Town of Ipswich in many ways. Not only for the property tax revenue, but also the preservation of this valuable and beautiful property. Ora is willing to give more than 60% of the land to be permanently conserved open space that will include a one-mile trail loop around the entire property that will provide public access to the Ipswich River. The GEPD only requires 40%, which means Ora is offering a substantial 20% more land than required by law.

Stuart Abelson could have picked any property for his Corporate Retreat, but he fell in love with the quaint charm of the Waldingfield property in our town.

Ora has listened and implemented many suggestions from the Planning Board, and have changed plans to accommodate the requests. Some members of the Planning Board have spent immense amounts of time, weighing and discussing personal feelings and issues, including 'strangers petting horses', or how the horses will move between stables and paddocks.

A resident of Hamilton who is against the project wrote in letter to the Planning Board, stated "Perhaps by repurposing this property, the town can enjoy a tiny bump in tax revenue, but in truth, this tax bump will be so inconsequential as to be hardly noticeable to anyone". He also stated the Ipswich voters didn't understand what we were voting on at Town Meeting. As an Ipswich taxpayer, we will welcome any new property tax revenue to help with all the needed future infrastructure needed in *our* town. We believe it is the residents of Ipswich who will be positively impacted by the Ora plans for Waldingfield, and the opportunity to partner with an amazing company, making great strides in the Ophthalmic research space. Hamilton residents are seldom concerned with the future of Ipswich.

Board members with a direct conflict of interest in this project should not be allowed to vote on this project, and should be asked to recuse herself. Board members like Helen Weatherall.

In closing remarks, we call for the Ipswich Planning Board to review the project for what it is, and not for what it *could* have been. This timeline has been tirelessly extended to accommodate the Friends of Waldingfield, rather than voted on for what Ora plans to bring to our amazing community and infrastructure. The people of Ipswich have spoken, and it is now the Planning Board's turn to approve this project.

**Ora, Inc. is "Saving Waldingfield"**

Longtime Ipswich residents,

Chuck Hulbert  
Marlene Hulbert  
39 Town Farm Road  
Ipswich, MA 01938