

May 16, 2022

via email: ethanp@ipswich.gov

Carolyn Britt, Chair  
Planning Board  
25 Green Street  
Ipswich, MA 01938

**Re: 55 Waldingfield**  
***Please consider having Ora submit a revised special permit application***

Dear Chair Britt:

Should Ora submit a revised special permit application to the Planning Board?

I ask this question because in its July 2021 special permit application, Ora stated that it was requesting approval for both “business offices” and a “conference center including meeting rooms and overnight lodging.”

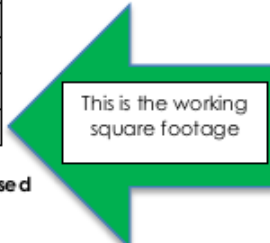
However, the Ipswich Local recently ran letters from Ora advocates admitting that the Ora’s uses continue to shift; and, that despite Ora having applied to use the property for “business offices,” advocates now claim that it is actually “**not** for offices,” but, instead, “to gather employees in smaller and larger groups for overnight stays to facilitate collaboration and wellness in a beautiful, peaceful setting.” Thus, the question arises as to what is being requested under the GEPD special permit application.

In October 2021, Ora submitted a “calculations letter” asserting its intent to build out an office campus, comprised of 29,199 square feet of existing buildings, and 95,000 square feet of proposed buildings (of which 56,000 square feet represents a “new office building” for Phase 2). This proposed buildout is just under the maximum limit of 124,930 square feet, based on lot restriction (*see below snippet from Ora’s letter:*)

**6. IX.H.3.b.iv- Maximum Building Area**

Total allowable floor area shall be limited 8% of the area of the lot.

|  | Calculation Variables |
|--|-----------------------|
| Area of applicant’s land at 55 Waldingfield                | 39.9 Acres            |
| Area of Land in Wetlands or River Protection Act:          | 8.10 Acres            |
| ½ of the Area of Land in Wetlands or River Protection Act: | 4.05 Acres            |
| Lot size minus ½ of the Area above:                        | 35.85 Acres           |
| 8% of Resulting Lot Size above:                            | 2.87 Acres            |
| Resulting Maximum Building SF at 1 Acre = 43,560 SF        | <b>124,930 SF</b>     |



**7. Proposed Floor Area**

Existing      Proposed

Existing Buildings

Yet, having listened to Ora's numerous proposals over these past ten months, Ora is now asking for something significantly different: A buildout of 75,000 square feet (rather than 124,930), for that new limitation to apply to all future users of the site, and for advance approval to be given for construction over three phases that may take a decade or more.

The Planning Board should consider halting all proceedings until Ora makes clear, in a single written document - rather than asking the Planning Board to rely on the ever-changing montage of multiple presentation slides - what Ora is actually asking for under the GEPD.

Following that, the Planning Board and Planning Department should then (1) determine whether or not the GEPD special permit application is even the appropriate mechanism for Ora should it now seek to convert the house, outbuildings, and grounds into a "corporate retreat" - now reportedly void of daily office visits, and limited, instead, to specific non-office uses; and (2) require Ora to submit documentation, plans and studies necessary to reflect any such new, proposed use of the property.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Bryan Townsend