

IPSWICH PLANNING BOARD MEETING
Thursday December 10, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

Pursuant to a meeting notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Ipswich Planning Board was held on Thursday, December 10, 2009 in Room A, 2nd floor of Town Hall. Board members Jim Manzi, Tim Purinton, Bob Weatherall, Brian Hone and Cathy Chadwick, attended as did Associate member Suzanne Benfield. Planning Director Glenn Gibbs and Assistant Planner Kathy Connor also attended.

Jim Manzi called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

CITIZENS' QUERIES: None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Requested: Release of performance bond for Ipswich Shopping Center

Gibbs explained that Ipswich Shopping Center LLC had requested the release of performance bond monies in the amount of \$2,000 held by the Town for possible remediation of a faulty handicap sidewalk ramp located at the northerly end of the southerly truck route curb cut. The ramp was reconstructed during the summer. Gibbs said that he had checked the ramp during a recent rain event and found no problems.

MOTION: Purinton moved to release the \$2,000 performance bond. Chadwick seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 4 to 0.

Requested: Approval for 2 Brewery Place signage

Rob Martin, owner and applicant, and Gary Jernigan of Cape Ann Signs, approached the Board. Martin explained that he would like the Ipswich Brewery signs to be visible from surrounding roads. Gibbs asked how the new sign proposal differed from the plans previously presented in 2008. Martin said that the new proposal does not differ in style and number of signs from the presentation last year. He is asking for relief in the size of the signs only. The Board was shown color images of what the signs would look like at the proposed 57" x 192" (80 square feet) size. Weatherall said he thought the size being proposed was appropriate to the building.

[Purinton arrived at 7:52 p.m.]

MOTION: Weatherall moved to support the application in size and number of signs and further to request that the Planning Director communicate to the Zoning Board of Appeals that the Planning Board supports the application pursuant to section VIII.F. of the Zoning Bylaw. Chadwick seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Major Modification to a Great Estate Preservation District Special Permit: Turner Hill

Manzi read the legal notice. John Gillis, representing Residences on the Hill LLC, Tom Ryan, landscape architect, Jim Vallecoco, architect, and Bill Quinn, attorney, approached the Board.

Manzi recused himself because he will be leaving the Board next month, and designated Associate member, Benfield, to sit for the purpose of acting on the special permit application, pursuant to Section XI H. of the Zoning Bylaw.

Quinn said the new proposal is less dense with many fewer residential units than was originally approved so what they are asking for is approval for a design change in the style and layout of the residences. The affordable housing requirements stipulated in the approved Great Estate Preservation District (GEPD) Special Permit have not yet been met. He gave a brief history of the Turner Hill project, ending with how the recent economic downturn affected the sale of larger higher priced homes, prompting the decision to build more lower-priced units at Turner Hill. He oriented the Board to the site using an ortho image, pointing out the chapel site and the village site to be discussed, as well as the proposed changes to the alley, including the proposed roundabout.

Gillis explained that they are seeking approval for the proposed design of the village site and that the plans being shown for the chapel site are conceptual and will have to be brought before the Board again at a later date. He explained that several Buttonwood Lane residents are not in agreement about the conceptual plan for the chapel site.

Velleco showed an ortho image of the entire property explaining how a large portion of it is open space. There will be no changes to the plans for the area called the Hill which has been approved for 45 units. The area now being referred to as the Village was originally approved for 4-story buildings but the new design proposes townhouses instead. The affordable housing requirements will be met through designating certain of these townhouses as affordable (less than market). Velleco showed the Board a plan illustrating the proposed roundabout, the redesigned primary road and the proposed inner loop road. Many townhouse garages will front the inner loop road while others will face the sides. No garages front the primary road. There will be four different townhouse designs which feature gardens and trellises. There will be 51 units, 3 small parks and 2.8 parking spaces per unit. The Board was shown elevation drawings depicting a 1.5 story proposed townhouse. Velleco indicated that they are willing to explore feasible energy efficiency possibilities.

Barbara Wolf, 16 Buttonwood Lane, said that she had concerns about the chapel site design because they were told when they purchased their home that the land their property overlooks would remain undeveloped. The chapel site conceptual plan shows several buildings in this area.

Ian Graham, 43 Buttonwood Lane, said that he was supportive of the Village design.

Tim Ford, 5 Booth Court, said that he too, was supportive of the Village design.

Larry Graham explained that as the design goes to the next level, the plans will show the extension of services to each individual unit. He submitted a letter to the Board with suggestions for the initial peer review to be done for the Town by Cammett Engineering.

A subcommittee consisting of Hone and Weatherall was formed for the purpose of reviewing the peer review report before the next Planning Board meeting on January 7th. The subcommittee will meet on Wednesday, Jan. 6th at 4:30 p.m. in Room 115 at Town Hall.

MOTION: Weatherall moved to continue the public hearing to the next Planning Board meeting. Hone seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

[Break]

Manzi called the meeting back to order at 8:45 p.m.

Special Permit and Site Plan Review: 108 Central Street

Manzi read the legal notice and explained the process to those who were there for the public hearing.

Manzi recused himself and designated Associate member, Benfield, to sit for the purpose of acting on the special permit application, pursuant to Section XI H. of the Zoning Bylaw.

Rich Kallman, the applicant's attorney, Mat Cummings, architect and Thomas Manetta, engineer, appeared before the Board. Kallman explained that a new building was being proposed for the site on which a single family residence currently exists. The site is in the IR (Intown Residence) zoning district. The new building would house 2 residential apartments on the second floor and a professional office, (dentist's office), on the first floor. The Historical Commission voted to determine that the demolition bylaw should not be invoked for the building which was built around 1910. There have been two informal reviews and one formal review by the Design Review

Manetta walked the Board through the existing conditions of the site and the plan. The site has two wetlands associated with it. There will be 8 parking spaces for the dentist's office and 4 parking spaces for the residential units located in back of the building.

Cummings explained that he had worked with Design Review Board and held an informal meeting with the neighbors. He showed the Board elevation drawings and a streetscape that depicted the footprints of the various buildings along Central Street.

Tim Goodrich, 100 Central Street, Unit 4, asked how many dental hygienists would be employed. Kenneth Hamilton, the owner and applicant, answered that it would be a 4 chair office with one hygienist. Goodrich expressed concern about the size of the parking lot which currently is a green space that his unit views from across the street.

Toni Mooradd, 106 Central Street, read a letter from Colin Paget of 95 Central Street expressing concern about the proposed building's commercial use.

David Mooradd, 106 Central Street, said that the IR District is primarily residential but inclusion of multi-family uses opens the door to commercial use due to Zoning Bylaw (ZBL) change to the definition of multi-family. Gibbs said that the IR District has allowed office use since 1977. The change in 1999 has no impact on this proposal since its intent was to allow single residential units (since two-family and multi-family uses were already permitted) in the same building as commercial uses in the commercially zoned districts. Mooradd said that this building is more commercial than residential. He said that the building is too large for the lot and too close to the road.

Bill Barney, 103 Central Street, said that traffic is bad already and that the project would change the whole complexity of the neighborhood while setting a precedent that would continue to erode the neighborhood.

Paul McGinley, 26 High Street, said that he opposes this plan. He is disturbed by the proposed destruction of the existing house which is a Second Empire building with significant details still intact. There is an identical house next door which he thinks will not exist much longer itself if the house at 108 Central is destroyed. He was surprised that the Historical Commission did not impose the demolition delay. He said that the proposed design is out of character and scale with the existing houses and character of the neighborhood. He cautioned the Board that this site could well determine what will happen to the character of Central Street going forward.

Carl Gardner, 9 Woods Lane, wanted to reiterate points made by others. He said that the existing building is structurally sound and basically intact. He pointed out that other buildings nearby demonstrate adaptive re-use, and none were torn down, unlike what this project is proposing. Sustainable development implies adaptive reuse. He encouraged the Planning Board to put themselves in the abutters' shoes and help keep the fabric of the community intact.

Toni Mooradd, 106 Central Street, said that the proposed project would forever change Central Street and people's perceptions as they enter the downtown area. She said she had a petition signed by neighbors to give to the Planning Board.

Gina Looby, 1 Belle Street, thinks that the proposed parking is inadequate.

Steve Looby, 1 Belle Street, thinks that doing a traffic study is mandatory.

The Board decided to visit the site on Saturday, December 19th at 9:00 a.m. A subcommittee consisting of Benfield and Purinton was formed for the purpose of reviewing the peer review report.

MOTION: Weatherall moved to continue the public hearing to the next Planning Board meeting. Purinton seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

Heartbreak Farm Definitive Subdivision, 18 Heartbreak Road

Rich Kallman, the applicant's attorney and Larry Graham, engineer, appeared before the Board.

Kallman said that upon reviewing a video recording of the last meeting it appeared that two members of the Planning Board may have misunderstood the AASHTO standards concerning the sight distance waiver. Discussion ensued. It was determined that a revote was not necessary.

Manzi said that a 3-way stop plan had been proposed as mitigation for the sight distance issue. The Chief of Police and the DPW Director had approved the 3-way stop plan. The sight distance issue is taken off the table with this proposal. Purinton asked if the 3-way stop plan requires a waiver. Manzi said that it does, because it is an off-site mitigation. Since only the Selectmen can approve installation of stop signs on a town road, the 3-way stop plan is on the Selectmen's agenda for their Monday, December 14th meeting.

Jonathan Ofilos, attorney for Liz Krafchuk, apologized for lateness of the letter that he handed the Board. The letter stated that the Board made a final decision on the waivers last time and that the Board cannot rescind a waiver, only a decision. He said the Board must show that they do not need the waiver in order to proceed. Purinton said that for the record, it was clearly said at the last Planning Board meeting that the Board could reexamine the issue if the applicant brought mitigation such as traffic light. Discussion ensued concerning the Board's actions at the last meeting.

Keri MacRae, 31 Heartbreak Road, asked when the 3-way stop sign plan had been presented to the DPW Director and the Police Chief. She was told that they had been sent the plan to review after the plan was submitted to the Planning Board.

Dorothy Johnson, 15 Heartbreak Road, asked if because Heartbreak Road is a scenic road, was there anything that would regulate the placement of stop signs? Manzi said no, not under the Scenic Roads Bylaw.

Keri MacRae, 31 Heartbreak Road, asked if the Selectmen do not approve the stop signs, could the applicant bring yet another mitigation plan to the Board. Manzi said that it would be up to the applicant but, yes, they could bring a traffic light plan. Hone said that the other way to mitigate the sight distance waiver would be to cut down on the number of vehicle trips.

MOTION: Weatherall moved to continue the public hearing to the next Planning Board meeting. Purinton seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

Vegetative Management Plan: Sagamore Road, Candlewood Road, Fellows Road and Lakeman's Lane.

The public hearing seeking Scenic Road approval to remove dead or compromised trees within the right of way along the aforementioned roads that may impede utility lines was continued pending further direction from the Utilities Department and the Department of Public Works.

MOTION: Purinton moved to continue the public hearing to the next Planning Board meeting. Hone seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

Vegetative Management Plan: Waldingfield Road.

The public hearing seeking Scenic Road approval to remove dead or compromised trees within the right of way along the aforementioned road that may impede utility lines was continued pending further direction from the Utilities Department and the Department of Public Works.

MOTION: Weatherall moved to continue the public hearing to the next Planning Board meeting. Hone seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Purinton moved to adjourn. Weatherall seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Connor

The Planning Board approved these minutes on January 7, 2010.