

MINUTES

EXTRORDINARY PLANNING COMMITTEE held at **THAXTED GUILDHALL** on **THURSDAY 11TH JANUARY 2018 AT 8:00pm**

PRESENT: Cllr. V. Knight, (Chairman) Cllr. T. Frostick (Vice Chairman), Cllr. W Brazier, Cllr. A. Frater, Cllr. I. Stewart, Cllr. A. Wattebot, Cllr R. Williams. Cllr J Spencer, Cllr J Miller. Cllr D Morgan

Also Present: Clerk, Dena Ludford & 47 (approximate number taken at start of meeting) members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr A Howells

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

None

Cllr V Knight opens by explaining how the Council's planning meeting will be held as there are many residents who may not have a Parish Council meeting and also corrected a number inaccuracies being shared on social media.

The Parish Council have been working with the surgery for a number of years and has been in discussion with them regarding a number of sites and land owners. Over the past month the Council have been in dialogue with the surgery in relation to parking solutions and the design. The previous comments made at the last Council meeting were made based on the information that the council had at that time and at that point the parking survey was not available to us. As such, the Council weren't aware of the implications, recommendation & conclusion within said report. Tonight's meetings is to review the Parish Council's response to Uttlesford. The Chairman reads the Parish Council's response, which is available online and within the previous minutes. Taking all of that in to account, the Council are here tonight to review our decision.

The floor is opened to Sara Carruthers (Practice Manager, Thaxted Surgery). "As a surgery we are under considerable stress regarding space, including increasing complexities within patient needs, wishing to take on longer reviews and physio. However we are struggling to provide these and we feel we've a window of opportunity and have secured NHS funding, which has been a long time in the making. That money must be spent by March 2019 and the reality is that if we don't go ahead now, we will have to go back to the beginning and there is no guarantee that we will get the opportunity of funding again. I must apologise to the Parish Council as we did take them by surprise with our planning application and as Victoria said, we have talked to the Parish Council regularly over the past four years or so and had planned to have a period of consultation between August – September 2017. However due to technical issues, we had to redesign things and re-present this to the NHS and whilst they understood, did not permit us more time.

The Parish Council have been working with us over the past month to try and address some of the issues that were raised, in particular the aesthetics and the parking. We are looking locally for what alternatives there are for permit based parking and I know that the Parish Council have also been thinking about CCTV and the introduction of parking charges. My second apology to the Parish Council is that we did undertake a parking survey. We did this on a Friday in August and thought this might represent a busy time but for whatever reason this document didn't go to the Parish Council when they met. We've come up with alternatives to overcome some of the design issues with the aesthetics of the building, a hip roof at one end and frosted glass which does overcome some of the light and privacy issues also."

Cllr Knight explains that the Parish Council are looking at introducing parking charges but not for income generation but to stop those who park there and catch the bus to Stansted airport, those who park works vehicles there for months on end and to give the Council measures to address vehicles that aren't taxed or insured. If it were to ahead, it would be discussed at full Council under an agenda item but , could be one of the measures that could alleviate parking concerns going forward.

3. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

Chairman's Initials:

The Chairman asks if people's concerns regarding the grounds under which the Council objected had been fully explained and understood as the Council have been trying to mitigate concerns raised on behalf of Parishioners and finishes by reiterating that the Parish Council is not opposed to the surgery's growth.

The Chair then opens the floor for public comment.

A speaker didn't know what the Council's previous issues were and so Cllr Knight read out, once more, what the Council's previous response was. The public speaker felt that staff parking would be a minimal concern. Cllr Knight again reported that the Parish Council did not have sight of the parking survey at the time of the previous meeting and will be discussing the content under agenda item 4.

A speaker asks if the Council are in favor of keeping Thaxted surgery and felt that this meeting was discriminatory to persons who were unable to climb the stairs. The Chair explained that the Council had less than a week for preparation but noted the comment and thanked the public speaker.

A speaker asks what the Council's concerns around traffic. The Chairman responded that there is a pinch point at junction of Weaverhead Lane and Margaret Street. In addition, there is currently a hedge which projects out in to the highway and vehicles do, whilst they are being encouraged not to, park directly outside the surgery on the road at the junction. There are issues with lines of sight between Margaret Street and Weaverhead Lane that UDC's highways panel are seeking to remedy and now there is additional concern over the additional traffic and parking that will be generated by increased patient numbers and additional patient appointments. The speaker comments that there are a number of housing developments which Essex highways always say that the road networks are not a problem. The Chairman responds, stating that the Council address these as they are presented to us.

Cllr Brazier adds, that it's the potential growth of the surgery, the fact is their patient list could increase by an additional 2000 patients and because of the size of the site, coupled with the loss of parking and the increased services which the Surgery are looking to offer which will mean that there will be a future interest to employ more staff. Where are these additional cars going to park? As a proactive Council, we've spoken to all parties to try and find a solution.

A speaker (Dr Taylor - formerly of Thaxted Surgery) addresses Cllr Braziers comments stating that the aim for the surgery is to continue to meet the very high standards of medical care that it provides and that it's not the surgery intention to expand to compete with other town or other areas it's about meeting the needs of this town. If the (Parish Council and) the District Council permit many more developments in Thaxted, this will prove problematic. The key to the surgery's success is that it's in the middle of the town and access is key. The speaker also feels very strongly about what Sara said regarding recruitment. It is incredibly difficult to recruit in rural area. The speaker having worked previously at the Surgery talks of the population increase and patient numbers associated with this since 1986. It's likely to become a satellite to Saffron Walden or Dunmow should the application not be agreed. He feels sorry for those who live close to the development and know that the Surgery are trying hard to accommodate any changes needed. He disagrees that parking is a problem for the Parish Council. The Chairman thanks the speaker for their comments.

A Speaker is concerned about the surgery. Should it relocate, they feel that this would cause elderly and disabled more stress.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

To agree the Council's observations on the following applications:

I. APPLICATION NO. UTT/17/3412/FUL (revised Plans and additional documentation for consideration)

PROPOSAL: Erection of two storey extension and basement to existing doctors surgery. New access ramp and entrance canopy

LOCATION: The Surgery Margaret Street

Chairman's Initials

Thaxted Parish Council – REVISED DECISION

RESOLVED to **UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORT** the Application – Proposed by Cllr Brazier seconded by Cllr Williams.

The new designs have addressed the Council's concerns over loss of light, overshadowing, visual amenity by a number of factors, which include, removal of the balcony, introduction of a hip roof and introduction of a frosted glass window.

The Parish Council are currently looking at CCTV at the Recreation ground which could accommodate staff parking and assist eliminate any anti-social behaviour. The Surgery are also introducing cycle racks and showers in a bid to encourage staff to cycle to work. It is agreed that the Council will continue to work towards long term parking solutions as this application progresses.

Chairman's Signature

Date: