

From: Contact form at newburyportma <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 9, 2022 12:21 PM
To: Richard Jones <RJones@CityofNewburyport.com>
Subject: [newburyportma] Corrected letter for Council packet (Sent by Claire Papanastasiou, claire.p.claire@gmail.com)

Hello rjones,

Claire Papanastasiou (claire.p.claire@gmail.com) has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.cityofnewburyport.com/users/rjones/contact>) at newburyportma.

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Message:

Apologies for the duplication though I realized after sending the previous email, I sent an older version. Please use the below. Thank you!

Claire Papanastasiou
3 Orange St., Newburyport

Dear Councilors,

I attended the June 1 Planning Board meeting on the proposed settlement concerning the Institution for Savings' expansion plan to its State Street headquarters. Councilor Bruce Vogel attended, and I much appreciated his attendance and comments opposing the proposed settlement. I would like to take this opportunity to share information from the public hearing in the event that you have not reviewed the recording.

During his opening remarks, the bank's attorney noted that as a pre-settlement concession, the City's negotiation team agreed to not discuss the square footage in mediation talks with bank officials, essentially taking any prospect of reducing the size of the 16,000-square-foot, 2-story addition off the table. The expansion's size has been and still is the main reason why the IFS was denied its special permit under the Downtown Overlay District, yet our City's negotiation team agreed to keep the size the same before mediation talks began -- even though the previous Council voted against it in November, supporting the Planning Board March 2021 rejection. I am still trying to absorb this, though I'm not writing to you today to speculate as to why the City conceded to the main issue before entering into negotiations. Instead, I am here to relay that during the June 1 public hearing it was apparent that there was significant confusion among Planning Board members regarding why the Council sent the proposed settlement back. Specifically, certain Planning Board members mistakenly believed that the Council sent the proposed settlement back because it supported it and wanted the Board to approve it, even though the City Council order had been rewritten. There was also confusion about the process in terms of what would happen if the Board rejected the proposed settlement. I was profoundly disappointed when the City's outside counsel from KP Law remained silent and neglected to take the opportunity to explain to the Board that if the proposed settlement is rejected it would continue onto the Massachusetts Appeal Court to be heard by a new judicial panel.

This matter has been debated since January 2020 with more than 14 months of deliberations by City volunteer boards, specifically the Historical Commission and the Planning Board. As you know, like this Council, there are new members on the Planning Board, and they have had limited time to review this

matter, though it is my hope that they will trust the wisdom of the legacy Planning Board's decision (and that of the November 2021 City Council's) and not succumb to political pressure.

Unless you as our City Councilors support the current IFS expansion and proposed settlement, I am asking you all today to contact the Planning Board members and underscore to them when this City Council remanded the proposed settlement back to the Planning Board, it did so without endorsing the settlement but rather asking the Board to apply its expertise fairly.

Thank you.

Claire