

*(The following is not a verbatim transcript of comments or discussion that occurred during the meeting, but rather a summarization intended for general informational purposes. All motions and votes are the official records).*

## **REGULAR MEETING – CITY COUNCIL**

**-OCTOBER 26, 2020-**

Regular meeting of the City Council was held on Monday, October 26, 2020 via Zoom Webinar.

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 P.M. by the Council Vice-President.

Roll call showed the following members present: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins (appeared at 8:43 p.m.), Vargas, Germain (appeared at 8:00 p.m.), Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

Absent: Council President Farina -1.

Also Present: Daniel Parrillo, Director of Administration; John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor; Evan Kirshenbaum, City Council Legal Counsel; David DiMaio, City Council Budget Analyst.

**City Clerk** stated that Councilmembers Hopkins and Germain are having trouble logging into the meeting and she has instructed them to call in.

### **I. PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND COMMENDATIONS**

None.

### **II. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

### **III. RESOLUTIONS**

#### **RESOLUTION URGING THE ADMINISTRATION TO ENACT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING LAWS AND EXPANDING THE AUTHORITY OF THE PLANNING OFFICE TO APPROVE IN-FILL ZONING FOR PARCELS OF LAND WHICH CONFORM TO THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD OUTSIDE THE VARIANCE PROCEDURE**

Gavel was passed to Councilmember Paplauskas.

Councilmember Brady motioned to adopt the above Resolution. Councilmember Vargas seconded the motion for discussion.

#### **Under Discussion:**

**Council Vice-President Favicchio** stated that this is one area that he has been exploring for most of the year with the Planning Department. He stated that he thinks this is something that may be a partial solution to the affordable housing issues and he thinks this is a very direct and simple way of introducing some more affordable housing into the City.

## -OCTOBER 26, 2020-

**Jason Pezzullo**, City Planner, appeared to speak and stated that this idea has been discussed over the years not just this year. The idea of in-fill development is something we see in to the Office practically every single month. He thinks the issue with this is this is not going to be an Ordinance. This is going to be a package of Ordinances and this will be Comprehensive Plan amendments. This is not going to be an easy lift for the City or for the City Council to make significant amendments to the Zoning Code and Comprehensive Plan to allow developments in areas that you are changing the existing zoning that has been in existence since the 60's.

**Pauline DeRosa**, 97 Cypress Dr., appeared to speak and asked if there is going to be an external oversight or input in addition to the Planning Department choosing which parcels might be up for selection and the potential zone change. She also asked if the City will be targeting parcels that might be located in lower income neighborhoods or parcels closest to railways or highways. She also asked who chooses what type of housing is going to be suitable for these vacant parcels and if there will be community meetings or input prior to any development taking place. She stated that she thinks this Resolution is packed with more questions than answers at this time.

**Councilmember Vargas** stated that if this is passed today, she asked if this is for the current Mayor or is this to be in effect where it would be encouraging the Mayor in January to work with the Planning Department and will the Planning Department be working on an Ordinance on something along this line.

**Council Vice-President Favicchio** stated that this is not forcing anyone to do anything. It is a suggestion for the next session.

**Councilmember Donegan** stated that he realizes that this is just a Resolution, but he would want further data on the impact this would have on certain parts of the City and the entire City where we would see further developments. He will vote against this because of that.

Councilmember Stycos motioned to amend line #32, after "Cranston", add "requests" and delete "exiting" and add "existing". Council Vice-President Favicchio seconded the motion for discussion.  
Under Discussion:

**Councilmember Stycos** stated that this seems to be a good idea to look at this and it is something the Planning Department should do. Unfortunately, the record of the Planning Department has been that the lawyers for the developers write Ordinances and the Planning Department kind of fronts for them. We saw that many years ago and more recently with the Ordinance that was proposed that had to do with dimensional variances. He is going to vote for this, but he asked the Planning Department that the developer's opinion should be considered, but it should be done like every other member of the public has to do. If they have something to add, there should be a hearing and they should stand up and speak and give everyone the benefit of their opinion. It should not be done secretly in the Office with Mr. Bolton or Mr. Murray and then the City Council has to drag it out of the Planning Department where these ideas came from. The ideas that are good should be proposed in the public setting where people can react to them, support them or oppose to them. He hopes the Planning Department takes that kind of process and not a process where people get to the Mayor. It has not been public and it should be.

**Director Parrillo** stated that nothing has been secret. He believes that the Planning Department revealed at the last meeting that Mr. Murray prepared the last Ordinance. Councilmember Stycos stated that that was not the original explanation. He asked that a forum be held and if these ideas are so good, let's hear them in an open forum and not a private meeting. Director Parrillo stated that he agrees. That is the role of the Planning Commission, the role of the Committee meetings and the role of the City Council. He stated that Director Pezzullo is present at every meeting to answer questions and give his opinions and he does not think the Administration has hidden anything whatsoever. He thinks the Administration is very transparent. Councilmember Stycos stated that that did not happen on the solar Ordinance.

## -OCTOBER 26, 2020-

**Robert Murray, Esq.**, 21 Garden City Dr., appeared to speak and stated that he would like to underscore that he had nothing to do with this Resolution. He learned about it when he saw it on the docket. He also stated that he does not appreciate the suggestion that somehow this Resolution came forward with some nefarious suggestions. He did disclose at the time of the last dimensional Ordinance, that he did assist in drafting it and asked the Mayor to introduce it. It was not just for the Cranston Country Club, it had a more general purpose. He also stated that he does not appreciate some type of slight on him. He had nothing to do with this Resolution. Councilmember Stycos stated to Mr. Murray that he did not state anything about this Resolution. He was speaking of the solar Ordinance.

**Councilmember Paplauskas** thanked Council Vice-President Favicchio for putting this Resolution in. This is just a Resolution and it is non-binding. He will vote in favor of this Resolution and it gives the Planning Department an opportunity to have those workshops and have those meetings in open forum to discuss the possibility to do something with this.

Roll call was taken on motion to amend the above Resolution as stated and motion passed on a vote of 6-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmembers Stycos, Vargas, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -6. Councilmembers Germain and Hopkins were not present for roll call vote.

Roll call was taken on motion to adopt the above Resolution as amended and motion passed on a vote of 5-1. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmembers Stycos, Vargas, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -5. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilmember Donegan -1. Councilmembers Germain and Hopkins were not present for roll call vote.

### **IV. REPORT OF COMMITTEES**

#### **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE (Councilmember Kenneth J. Hopkins, Chair)**

**9-20-04      ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 12.12 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED 'STREETS AND SIDEWALK USE REGULATIONS' (Steel Plate Use)**

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Council Vice-President Favicchio, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 6-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmembers Stycos, Vargas, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -6. Councilmembers Germain and Hopkins were not present for roll call vote.

Gavel was handed back to Council Vice-President Favicchio.

#### **ORDINANCE COMMITTEE (Council Vice-President Michael W. Favicchio, Chair)**

**8-20-03      ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 15-04.120 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED 'BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION' (Complaints)**

On motion by Councilmember Paplauskas, seconded by Councilmember Donegan, it was voted to adopt the above Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

**Director Parrillo** suggested deleting the last sentence in line #26.

## **-OCTOBER 26, 2020-**

On motion by Councilmember Donegan, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to delete the last sentence in line #26. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -7. Councilmember Hopkins was not present for roll call vote.

Roll call was taken on motion to adopt the above Ordinance as amended and motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -7. Councilmember Hopkins was not present for roll call vote.

**9-20-01            ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF TITLE 10.32 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC’ (Removal of No Parking on Invernia Rd.)**

On motion by Councilmember Paplauskas, seconded by Council Vice-President Favicchio, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**9-20-02            ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 10.32 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC’ (Grace Street at Pond Street Stop)**

On motion by Councilmember Stycos, seconded by Councilmember Donegan, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**9-20-03            ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 10.32 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC’ (Browne and Dunedin)**

On motion by Councilmember Donegan, seconded by Councilmember Vargas, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**9-20-09            ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 10.32 OF TITLE 10 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC’ (Fountain and Puritan)**

On motion by Councilmember Donegan, seconded by Councilmember Vargas, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE  
(Council Vice-President Michael W. Favicchio, Chair)**

**5-20-03            ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF TITLE 3 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘REVENUE AND FINANCE’ (Bid Discounts for Local Businesses, Minority Business Enterprises and Women Business Enterprises)**

**Council Vice-President Favicchio** stated that this Ordinance was continued in Committee and no action is needed at this time.

**-OCTOBER 26, 2020-**

**8-20-02            ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 3.08 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘CONTRACTS AND PURCHASES’ (Creating the Minority Owned Business Enterprise, Women Minority Owned Business Enterprise and Veteran Owned Business Enterprises)**

**Council Vice-President Favicchio** stated that this Ordinance was withdrawn in Committee.

**9-20-07            ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF TITLE 3.16 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘PROPERTY TAX CLASSIFICATION’ (Change of Tax Value for Commercial Renewable Energy Systems)**

**Council Vice-President Favicchio** stated that this Ordinance was continued in Committee and no action is needed at this time.

**9-20-08            ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF TITLE 3 OF CHAPTER 3.16 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION’ (Tangible Property Exemption)**

**Council Vice-President Favicchio** stated that this Ordinance was continued in Committee and no action is needed at this time.

**RESOLUTION URGING MAYOR FUNG TO FUND \$4.1 MILLION FROM CRANSTON’S CUMULATIVE SURPLUS TO THE CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Council Vice-President Favicchio** stated that this Resolution was continued in Committee and no action is needed at this time.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REAL ESTATE TAX ABATEMENTS**

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Vargas, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING MOTOR VEHICLE TAX ABATEMENTS**

On motion by Councilmember Paplauskas, seconded by Councilmember Hopkins, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TANGIBLE TAX ABATEMENTS**

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Vargas, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**TAX INTEREST WAIVER APPROVALS**

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to approve the above Tax Interest Waiver Approvals. Motion passed on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**V.            PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

**VI. ELECTION OF CITY OFFICIALS**

**JUVENILE HEARING BOARD:**

- **Re-Appointment of Nancy Riley as Alternate #1 for term ending December 1, 2021. (Councilmember Stycos)**

On motion by Councilmember Hopkins, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to re-appoint Nancy Riley as Alternate #1 of the Juvenile Hearing Board. Motion passed on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**BUILDING APPEAL BOARD:**

- **Re-Appointment of Steven Guglielmo for term ending October 26, 2025. (Councilmember Brady)**

On motion by Councilmember Hopkins, seconded by Councilmember Vargas, it was voted to re-appoint Steven Guglielmo as a member of the Building Appeal Board. Motion passed on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW:**

- **Appointment of Thomas Barbieri as alternate for term to expire on October 26, 2021 (Councilmember Brady)**

On motion by Councilmember Hopkins, seconded by Councilmember Vargas, it was voted to appoint Thomas Barbieri as Fourth Alternate member of the Zoning Board of Review. Motion passed on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**VII. REPORT OF CITY OFFICERS**

None.

**III. EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

**REPORT ON HIRING OF SPECIAL COUNSEL, CONSULTANTS, ETC., PURSUANT TO CHARTER SECTION 15.05.**

None.

**REQUEST TO CONTINUE IN SERVICE FOR ONE YEAR, DEPUTY CHIEF RICHARD MANCINI, CRANSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**Director Parrillo** appeared to speak.

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to approve the above request. Motion passed on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**IV. COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**-OCTOBER 26, 2020-**

**V. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS**

***COUNCILMEMBER VARGAS:***

- **Broad St Cemetery (Oakland Cemetery)**

**Councilmember Vargas** asked Administration what the last update is on the cemetery. She has received complaints from family members how have people buried at this cemetery in regards to overgrown grass and items dumped in the cemetery. She asked if there is anything, as a City, that we are able to do. She also stated that she reached out to the Cemetery Commission and, apparently, they tried to help and the owner was unappreciative and the Commission themselves are very limited.

**Councilmember Hopkins** stated to Councilmember Vargas that he would be more than happy to work with her on this issue.

**Director Parrillo** stated that the City did take the owner to Court for violations and the Inspections Department has been very active in dealing with the property. In August, we did get a Court Order to go on the property and clean it all up, which we intend on doing very shortly between the Parks and Recreation Department and the Highway Department and will do an asset cleanup of the property per the Court Order and the Court Order also makes the owner either demolish or reconstruct the structure. Once this is cleaned up, the City will report back to the Court.

**Councilmember Vargas** asked that this item be continued to next month's meeting for update.

***COUNCILMEMBER BRADY:***

- **Stop Signs**

**Councilmember Brady** stated that an Ordinance will be introduced next month.

***COUNCILMEMBER HOPKINS:***

- **Homeless issue**

**Councilmember Hopkins** stated that constituents have complained of issues on Pontiac Ave. where the homeless people are being let out of Harrington Hall. Some have been sleeping in a building on Pontiac Ave. He called Representative Millea to try to work on this on the State level. Councilmember Hopkins suggested looking at the bus stop where these people come out. Maybe RIPTA can move that bus stop further down where it is an Industrial area. He asked if the Administration, through the State, can look at this. He has had complaints from residents for the last twenty-four hours regarding this.

**Director Parrillo** stated that he will follow up on this.

***COUNCILMEMBER PAPLAUSKAS:***

- **Former Council President John Lanni**

**Councilmember Paplauskas** acknowledged the passing of former Council President John Lanni and for everything he did for the City. He did a lot of work for the City and thanked him for that and extended condolences to his family.

**XI. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**-OCTOBER 26, 2020-**

**XII. INTRODUCTION OF NEW BUSINESS**

**10-20-01      ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 2.40.020 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘MUNICIPAL COURT’ (Municipal Court Judges). Sponsored by Councilmember Stycos. Referred to Ordinance Committee November 12, 2020.**

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to refer the above new business to the respective Committee. Motion passed on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -8.

**XIII. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS ON CLERK’S DESK**

**Councilmember Hopkins** questioned if there is any chance of getting back into the Council Chambers. He stated that the School Committee has been meeting in the Cranston High School East Library through Zoom for the public.

**Council Vice-President Favicchio** asked Administration to look into this to accommodate the public and in-person for next month’s meeting and possibly look at what technology the School Committee is using.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

/s/ Leanne Zarrella, JD  
City Clerk

/s/ Rosalba Zanni  
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees

(See Stenographic Notes of Ron Ronzio, Stenotypist)