

*(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).*

## **ORDINANCE COMMITTEE**

Regular meeting of the Ordinance Committee was held on Thursday, February 17, 2022 via Zoom webinar.

### **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by the Chair.

Present: Council Vice-President Robert J. Ferri  
Councilwoman Lammis J. Vargas  
Councilwoman Aniece Germain  
Councilman Richard D. Campopiano  
Councilman Matthew R. Reilly, Chair  
Council President Christopher G. Paplauskas

Absent: Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli, Vice-Chair

Also Present: Councilman John P. Donegan  
Councilwoman Jessica M. Marino  
Anthony Moretti, Chief of Staff  
John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor  
Rosalba Zanni, Acting City Clerk  
Heather Finger, Stenographer

### **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:**

On motion by Councilwoman Germain, seconded by Council Vice-President Ferri, it was voted to continue with the reading of the minutes last meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

### **I. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER**

**10-21-03** *Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 3.08 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Revenue and Finance – Contracts and Purchases". Sponsored by Councilwomen Vargas, Marino, Councilman Donegan and Council Vice-President Ferri. (Cont. from 11/9/2021 and 12/9/2021).*

On motion by Councilwoman Germain, seconded by Council Vice-President Ferri, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

**Councilwoman Vargas** stated that this Ordinance speaks for itself. It is to make sure that we have inclusivity in terms of bids that are going out, that we have a process in place. Projects that are funded, City funded in general, to companies that are certified MBE and WBE on here. She believes there are people on the call this evening that would like to speak regarding this Ordinance.

Public Speakers:

**Jose Fernandes**, 47 Dekalb St., appeared to speak as a small business owner in Cranston and also as a Registered MBE in Rhode Island and stated that he supports this Ordinance.

**Oscar Mejias**, North Providence, appeared to represent the RI Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and stated that he is a member of the RI Business Coalition for Equity in Construction an active member in RI Business Empowerment Network and stated that he supports this Ordinance.

**Tomas Avila**, 196 Old River Rd., Lincoln, appeared to speak as an Associate Director of the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion of the State of RI and spoke in favor of this Ordinance.

**Luis Torrado**, 65 Brookbridge Dr., Exeter, Chair of RI Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and President of the Latino Contractors Association, in favor of this Ordinance. He stated that, historically, there has been some concern in communities that this is going to add more beaurocracy to the process and it is going to bog down City personnel and it is going to require staff member to be dedicated to this process, but that is not accurate. It becomes a pretty standard part of the construction administration that is carried out by the architect. He also stated that he is in full support of this Ordinance.

**Jose Mercado**, appeared to speak in favor of this Ordinance.

**Council Vice-President Ferri** stated that this is a very important issue and he feels that this Ordinance levels the playing field for MBE and WBE and at the same time, it does not unlevel the playing field for those that are already actively getting business from the City or bidding on business from the City. He thinks that we need to spend the time to let everyone have a seat at the table with City business like this.

**Council President Paplauskas** asked if every bid that comes into the City now have to have that 10% requirement. He also asked if the City has to hire someone to strictly be a coordinator to or can we use someone that is already here inhouse working for the City that is in the process. He also stated that he would also like to hear the Administration's thoughts on this.

**Councilwoman Germain** commended Councilman Donegan, Councilwomen Marino and Vargas and Council Vice-President Ferri for bringing this forward because we need to recognize that we have to have a fair share, we have to have a seat at the table so give those minority people the opportunity to at least be at the table and participate at the discussion.

**Councilman Donegan** thanked Councilwoman Vargas for her work on this. He stated that this is necessary and we need to do something to make sure that the contracts going out, representation in our community is equitable and it levels the playing field.

**Councilwoman Marino** stated that she views this as a win win. It is a win win in the sense of it leveling the playing field and bring about more equality and diversity in the business community. It is also a win in the sense that any time you have more people bidding, the City is going to benefit by getting better prices and she urged passage of this Ordinance.

**Councilman Reilly** stated that this is a great program. Minority Enterprise Zones are necessary that make the community more diverse and it does level that playing field Councilwoman Germain spoke about. He also stated that the proposed Ordinance requires a new hire, but he did hear Luis speak earlier and he stated that it was not a requirement in other Cities he has seen and worked with. He questioned what the necessity is of the board if we have someone already in the Administration doing that. He also asked if there is any budget-related issue that this would bring up and are we going to have to hire someone new. He stated that he thinks this certainly is something that could be worked into the Economic Development Office and this could be put on their plate and we have Director Paulino there now and he is bilingual and he may be able to help us implement this.

**Councilwoman Vargas** addressed Council President Paplauskas's question of whether every bid has to have the 10% requirement and she stated that we are not out to force any business at all whether it is minority-owned or women-owned to go to seek a certification by the State of Rhode Island. It is free and she encouraged minority-owned businesses and women-owned businesses to reach out to the Office of Diversity Equity and Opportunity to seek any questions of opportunities on that end.

**Director Moretti** stated that the day before yesterday, Councilwoman Vargas met with the Mayor, himself, Solicitor and Purchasing Agent Marchesi to discuss this and he believes that Councilwoman Vargas would agree that this Ordinance could be amended and improved upon. Some points made were regarding MBE's shall be included in all requests for procurement. He also stated that with one person in the Department of Purchasing, we felt that it would be a bit impractical to truly enact this. He thinks the language is a bit difficult and can be modified and he believes the Councilwoman agreed with that. He also stated that he believes that in the language regarding predicate study, that would be removed from this proposal also. He indicated that a concern is adding more overhead, perhaps the Purchasing Agent can handle it. Also, as far as sanctions, to say that the BOCAP shall have the power to impose sanctions, we do not believe that board has powers to impose sanctions. He stated that the Ordinance in the current form may be able to be improved.

**Councilwoman Vargas** stated that based on the conversation she had with the Administration and the conversation this evening, she would be in favor of considering to continue and updating the current Ordinance.

Motion and second to recommend approval of this Ordinance were withdrawn.

On motion by Councilwoman Germain, seconded by Councilman Campopiano, it was voted to continue this Ordinance. Motion passed unanimously.

**11-21-01** *Ordinance in amendment of Title 6 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Animals Generally”. Sponsored by Councilwoman Marino. (Cont. from 12/9/2021 and 1/13/2022.*

**Councilwoman Marino** stated that since last month’s meeting, she has had discussions with the Administration. This issue is not a simple issue to come up with a solution. She, the Administration and Director McAuley will continue to work on this and she will be withdrawing this Ordinance at this time and come up with something that is amiable to all.

Ordinance was withdrawn.

## **II. PUBLIC HEARINGS\* and/ or NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE**

None.

### **A. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **B. NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE**

**1-22-02** *Ordinance in amendment of Title 10 Chapter 04 Section 140 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Motor Vehicles and Traffic” (General Provisions, Administration and Enforcement – One Way Highways). Sponsored by Councilwomen Marino and Vargas.*

On motion by Council Vice-President Ferri, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance.

#### Under Discussion:

**Councilwoman Marino** stated that this Ordinance, as proposed, is amending a current Ordinance dealing with one-way highways. This Ordinance would provide notices to owners of properties on streets that twill be changed from one-way streets to two-way streets or two-way streets to one-way street.

Roll call was taken on motion to recommend approval of this Ordinance and motion passed unanimously.

**1-22-03** *Ordinance in amendment of Title 10, Chapter 12 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Motor Vehicles and Traffic – Traffic Regulations for Specific Streets” (Shaw Ave.). Sponsored by Councilwoman Vargas.*

On motion by Council Vice-President Ferri, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Adjournment** (*Vote will be taken*)

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Rosalba Zanni  
Acting City Clerk