

*(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).*

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, November 13, 2024 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

### **I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M. by the Chair.

### **II. ROLL CALL:**

Present: Councilman Robert J. Ferri  
Councilwoman Kristen E. Haroian  
Councilman Richard D. Campopiano  
Councilman Daniel Wall  
Councilman Christopher G. Paplauskas  
Council Vice-President Lammis J. Vargas, Vice-Chair  
Councilman John P. Donegan, Chair  
Council President Jessica M. Marino, Ex-Officio

Also Present: Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli  
Anthony Moretti, Chief of Staff  
John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor  
David DiMaio, City Council Budget Analyst  
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees  
Ron Ronzio, Stenographer

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

#### ***A. Minutes of the October 7, 2024 regular meeting***

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilman Wall, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the October 7, 2024 meeting and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed unanimously.

B. *Approval of the sealed minutes of the October 7, 2024 Executive Session* (Vote may be taken) Council President Marino prepared the minutes and delivered them in sealed envelopes to the Council members present in the executive session. (Cont. from 8/15/2024).

**Council President Marino** stated that this was not continued.

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, it was voted to approve the Executive Session minutes of October 7, 2024. Motion passed unanimously.

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

**12-23-01** *ORDINANCE In Amendment of Title 3 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Revenue and Finance”, Chapter 3.110 – Ten (10) Year Tax Stabilization for Property Located at Oaklawn Avenue (Plat 17-3, Lot 670) (Oaklawn Avenue Tax Stabilization). Sponsored by Council President Marino. (Cont. from 1/8/2024, 2/5/2024, 3/4/2024, 4/1/2024, 5/6/2024, 7/1/2024, 9/9/2024 & 10/7/2024)*

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilman Wall, it was voted to deny this Ordinance.

### Under Discussion:

**Council President Marino** stated that applicant would like to amend their Ordinance this evening and she would entertain a subsequent vote on the motion to deny, a motion to amend the Ordinance and similarly for 12-23-02, a motion to amend this evening.

**Chair** asked Solicitor, there is a motion to deny and there is a desire by the sponsor to make amendments, should we take a motion to amend or vote on a motion to deny first. Solicitor stated that under Robert’s Rules, the way it would normally work is in reverse order. The motion to amend should actually come first and then going back to main motion, which would be the motion to deny.

On motion by Council President Marino, seconded by Council Vice-President Marino, it was voted to amend this Ordinance as follows:

- Line 33, after “property”, add “; and”
- Line 37, change “ten (10) years” to “twelve (12) years”
- Line 38, remove period after “property” and add “; and”
- Line 42, remove period after “Cranston” and add “; and”
- Line 43, add following paragraph:
  - Whereas, the City’s tax revenue will grow tremendously pursuant to the terms of this tax stabilization as the City’s tax revenue in tax year 2024 is \$1,533.85 based on a valuation of \$112,700 for this vacant parcel, but will grow, based on the owner’s projected \$1.8 million valuation to tax revenue of approximately \$11,025 in tax year 2029 and tax revenue of \$36,756 at the completion of the tax stabilization period. Based on the current and projected valuations, if the property remains vacant, the City’s tax revenue would be \$18,400 in total over the next twelve years compared to the tax revenue under this tax stabilization of \$205,225; and”
- Line 70, change “ten (10) years to “twelve (12) years”

- Line 71, should read “commencing on December 31 2024 and terminating on December 31, 2036”
- Lines 67 & 68, change “ten (10) years” to “twelve (12) years”
- Section 2.3 line 77, should read “for tax years 2025 and 2026”
- Line 78, should read “December 31, 2024”
- Line 91, delete “4. Windmills”
- Line 121 Section 3.2 add “commencement of performance, construction or rehabilitation shall commence within twelve months and the project owner shall obtain a certificate of occupancy within thirty-six months of the effective date of set agreement. The property owner who fails to meet either of these deadlines will be required to retroactively pay the difference between their actual stabilized tax payment and what they would have paid if ineligible for the specified tax considerations. The owner may, twelve months prior to the applicable deadline, submit a request to the City Council for approval of an extension to such applicable deadline”.
- Line 160, strike line 160 through 163.
- Exhibit “A” will be amended to reflect as follows:
  - Line “1” under the Section of tax payment under stabilization agreement, it will instead read “December 31, 2024 assessment fiscal year 2025 commercial tax rate”
  - Line 2 will state “construction”
  - Next section under “tax payment under stabilization agreement” will instead read “December 31, 2025 assessment fiscal year 2026 commercial tax rate”
  - Subsequently, numerically #3 would be the 10%, 4 would be 20% onward and the years would obviously correlate with that change ending with box 12 with full taxation being 100% of the base assessment at year 12 well under the commercial tax rate.
- Change “ten (10) years” to “twelve (12) years” in the title of the Ordinance.

**Chair** stated that if these are changes that the applicant wishes to be included in what we are going to ultimately make a decision on, then he would be in support of the amendments so that we vote on what they want us to vote on. He asked Solicitor if these amendments were to pass, he asked if they are substantive in nature which we would need to repost and continue. Solicitor stated that there is an amendment being proposed which is extremely significant. It does change the essence and nature of the Ordinance. The best way to proceed, he thinks, is have a discussion on the motion to amend before the Committee. Depending on how the vote goes, we assume that the amendment is voted up, at that point, he would suggest that the matter be continued to the next Finance Committee meeting and the amended Ordinance be readvertised because it is such a significant change. In addition, the Solicitor’s Office has some strong concerns about the procedural aspects of the Ordinance and they would like to communicate that to the members of the Committee in a confidential legal opinion.

**Councilman Paplauskas** stated that he will be voting against these changes. Fundamentally, he disagrees with this Ordinance. If it does pass, he requested, through the Administration, an updated fiscal note from Director Zidelis and would like the Council Auditor to review these changes and confer with Director Zidelis on that fiscal note. He would also like a legal opinion from the Tax Assessor if that is feasible.

**Councilman Campopiano** agreed with Councilman Paplauskas.

**Council President Marino** stated she expected that this evening we would only be able to make the amendments and therefore, would need to continue it due to the depth of the amendments. In addition to that, it is standard operating procedure from all the time she has been on the Council, that we always make sure we comply and get the fiscal note so this would be no different in terms of the feedback from the Administration as to whatever is required.

**Chair** asked that when a red line version is distributed to the Clerk, it be distributed to the City Council as soon as possible for review.

**Councilwoman Renzulli** stated that she has stated this every time this topic has come up, but will state again in regard to the topic in general and adding two more year to this. These two Ordinances are corporate welfare. They are not benefiting the taxpayer, they are benefiting the Carpionato Group. This has been continued eight times without a single meaningful revision until tonight in which it will be continued again. She finds that to be a little strange. She will not be in support of this with the changes, she will not be in support of this without the changes. This does not benefit the residents of Cranston and does not do anything to substantially increase real affordable housing. This is bad business for the City of Cranston and the City of Cranston is not for sale.

**Council President Marino** stated that she has stated previously as well that this is vacant property and since her entire time on the Council and even before, there were projects that this City approved and there isn't a shovel in the ground relative to those projects. Rhode Island is a State that has a bad reputation for not being very conducive to business and for not having adequate housing. Our State has been in the news repeatedly for throwing money on a problem without having a solution. This Ordinance and its sister Ordinance are Ordinances that will bring housing to the City of Cranston that will get shovels in the ground, that can also include affordable housing components. She wants to see that happen and this Ordinance will facilitate that. That land is not generating revenue. The sooner it is built, the sooner the money comes into the City.

Roll call was taken on motion to amend this Ordinance and motion passed on a vote of 6-2. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Vargas, Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Haroian, Councilman Wall and Council President Marino -6. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilmen Campopiano and Paplauskas -2.

**Solicitor** stated that the motion to deny should be withdrawn and motion to continue should be made.

Motion and second to deny were withdrawn.

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilman Wall, it was voted to continue this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

**Councilman Paplauskas** stated that he will be voting against this continuance. He thinks this should be voted up or down tonight. This has been continued long enough. Both of these properties sit in the Fifth Ward. When they came before this Council for Zone Changes or through permitting processes, tax breaks were never asked. This is a pure bait and switch. This is bad for the taxpayers. We have to put kids in school, we have to provide services and on top of that, it is going to increase traffic. People in Ward 5 do not want more traffic. He would rather the land sit vacant on Atwood Ave. and let the trees come back and grow back in. He would rather have that than have traffic on Scituate Ave. or backup on Phenix Ave.

**Councilman Campopiano** stated that he will also be voting against the continuance. This has been continued quite a few times and no changes. He understands that this land is vacant, but to hold us hostage for a tax break and then add another two years to it, is absolutely ridiculous.

**Councilwoman Renzulli** stated that if this is continued again tonight, it does not change the fact that it is a spot tax break in the same way that you do spot zoning. This is not fair compared to the other tax treaty or tax stabilization laws that we have on the books for commercial and industrial properties. There are ways to do this so that it is fair to developers across the board. The Governor has a ton of money, \$60 million in funding for affordable housing projects through Rhode Island Housing, including \$30 million in newly introduced State Law income housing tax credits. Carpianton Group can go and apply for those credits and start building anytime they want. Why is it that the taxpayer in the City of Cranston has to flip the bill when there is other money out there that could be applied for. This is outrageous whether it is voted up or down.

**Councilman Ferri** stated that he thinks it would be a shame if we allow other people to move into Cranston, wouldn't it? We would have to let other people send their kids to school here. Image that? We are going to turn an empty lot into \$200,000 with a tax revenue and we are going to bankrupt the City. We should not let anyone move into Cranston except for people that already live here and we should not build any more housing. That is ridiculous.

**Councilman Campopiano** stated that he does not think that that is what we are saying here. He knows that every Council Member, when they get a phone call from their constituents, first thing that come out of their mouths is that they pay a lot of money to the City of Cranston. How can he, in good conscience, especially going forward in representing the whole City in January, say he voted for a tax break for one of the largest corporations here in Cranston, but you have to pay your fair share. He just can't do it.

Roll call was taken on motion to continue this Ordinance as amended and motion passed on a vote of 6 -2. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Vargas, Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Haroian, Councilman Wall and Council President Marino -6. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilmen Campopiano and Paplauskas -2.

**12-23-02** ***ORDINANCE In Amendment of Title 3 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Revenue and Finance", Chapter 3.111 – Ten (10) Year Tax Stabilization for Property Located at 320 Scituate Avenue (Scituate Avenue Tax Stabilization). Sponsored by Council President Marino. (Cont. from 1/8/2024, 2/5/2024, 3/4/2024, 5/6/2024, 7/1/2024, 9/9/2024 & 10/7/2024)***

On motion by Council President Marino, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, it was voted to amend this Ordinance as follows:

- Line 38, after "percentage", it should read "of fifteen (15%) percent"
- Line 46 add the following paragraph:
  - Whereas, the City's tax revenues will grow tremendously pursuant to the terms of this tax stabilization as a City's tax revenue in tax year 2024 for the property is \$23,430 based on valuation of \$1,721,500, but will grow, based on the owner's projected \$38,225,700 valuation, to annual tax revenue of \$780,569 at the completion of the tax stabilization; and
- Line 49 change "ten (10)" to "twelve (12)"

- After line 49, add the following paragraph:
  - Whereas, the City Council of Crantson after due consideration has determined that it would benefit the City to encourage and assist the owner to use and develop the property; and”
- Line 52 remove the period and add semicolon and add word “and”
- Lines 78 & 79 remove “ten (10)” and add “twelve (12)”
- Line 81 change “ten (10)” to “twelve (12)”
- Line 82 should read commencing on December 31, 2024 and terminating on December 31, 2036”
- Line 83 “2034” should be changed to “2036”
- Section 2.3, line 88 remove “2024” and add “for tax years 2025 and 2026”
- Line 89 should read “December 31, 2024 and December 31, 2025 assessment values with multiplied by the 2025 and 2026 tax year rate, thereafter, the property owner shall make a tax payment equal to the then current assessment value set by the Tax Assessor (base assessment) multiplied by the then current tax rate (hereinafter the base assessment tax rate)”
- Line 106 delete “4. Windmills”
- Line 144, add Section 3.2 to read:
  - Commencement of Performance. Construction or rehabilitation shall commence within twelve (12) months and the project owner shall obtain a certificate of occupancy within thirty-six (36) months of the effective date of said agreement. The property owner who fails to meet either of these deadlines will be required to retroactively pay the difference between their actual stabilized tax payments and what they would have paid if ineligible for the specified tax considerations. The owner may, twelve (12) months prior to the applicable deadline, submit a request to the City Council for approval of an extension to such applicable deadline”
- Line 183 delete in its entirety
- Line 184 delete in its entirety
- Line 185 delete in its entirety
- Lines 192-194 delete in its entirety
- Lines 201-203 delete in its entirety
- Exhibit “A” to read:
  - Year one to read “December 31, 2024” and “FY2025”
  - Year 2 to read “Construction: and “December 31, 2025 Assessment FY2026”
  - Year 3 through 12 changed chronologically
  - Year 12 to read “100%”
- Line 7 change title to “Twelve (12)”

Roll call was taken on motion to amend this Ordinance and motion passed on a vote of 6 -2. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Vargas, Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Haroian, Councilman Wall and Council President Marino -6. The following being recorded as voting “nay”: Councilmen Campopiano and Paplauskas -2.

On motion by Councilman Wall, seconded by Councilman Ferri, it was voted to continue this Ordinance as amended.

Under Discussion:

**Councilwoman Renzulli** asked that if the Council can be provided with amended red line version sooner than regular 48-hours that it needs to be posted for the next meeting.

**Chair** stated that that he asked for previous Ordinance and for this Ordinance, as soon as they are available through the Clerk’s Office, it be forwarded to the City Council as well as updated fiscal note from Director Zidelis as soon as possible.

Roll call was taken on motion to continue this Ordinance as amended and motion passed on a vote of 6-2. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Vargas, Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Haroian, Councilman Wall and Council President Marino -6. The following being recorded as voting “nay”: Councilmen Campopiano and Paplauskas -2.

**6-24-01**        ***ORDINANCE Allocating \$2,500,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act Funds for the Purpose of Supporting School Projects, Upgrading City of Cranston and CLCF Properties and Providing Finance Assistance to Small Businesses. Sponsored by Mayor Kenneth J. Hopkins. (Cont. from 7/1/2024, 9/9/2024 & 10/7/2024)***

**Chair** asked Director Moretti if there is any action that he wishes the Council to take. Director Moretti stated that the ARPA Resolution did pass and given that, the Administration asked that this Ordinance be withdrawn.

Ordinance was withdrawn.

***RESOLUTION Calling for an Independent Investigation relative to Complaint PC 2024-4766, David Broccoli, et al v. Kenneth Hopkins, The City of Cranston, Anthony Moretti, Paul McCauley, David Rodio and Christopher Millea, et al.*** Sponsored by Council President Marino. **(Cont. from 10/7/2024**

**Council President Marino** recommended going into Executive Session first.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

*Upon open call by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members present, the Committee will convene in a closed session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) for pending litigation.*

Executive or closed session pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(2) for pending litigation re:

- ***RESOLUTION Calling for an Independent Investigation relative to Complaint PC 2024-4766, David Broccoli, et al v. Kenneth Hopkins, The City of Cranston, Anthony Moretti, Paul McCauley, David Rodio and Christopher Millea, et al.*** Sponsored by Council President Jessica Marino.

On motion by Councilman Wall, seconded by Council Vice-President Vargas, it was voted to go into Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting went into Executive Session at 8:05 p.m.

### **RETURN OPEN SESSION**

*\*Upon return to open session, the Committee Chair will report out any motions made in Executive Session, and may call for a motion to seal the minutes of the Executive Session*

On motion by Councilman Wall, seconded by Council Vice-President Vargas, it was voted to come out of Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously

The meeting came out of Executive Session at 8:30 p.m.

**Chair** stated that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

On motion by Council President Marino, seconded by Councilman Ferri, it was voted to seal the minutes of Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.

***RESOLUTION Calling for an Independent Investigation relative to Complaint PC 2024-4766, David Broccoli, et al v. Kenneth Hopkins, The City of Cranston, Anthony Moretti, Paul McCauley, David Rodio and Christopher Millea, et al.*** Sponsored by Council President Marino. **(Cont. from 10/7/2024**

On motion by Council President Marino, seconded by Councilman Wall, it was voted to amend this Resolution as follows:

- Line 45 after “seriously”, add a comma and add “respects the legal process and that these are allegations, including but not limited to the” and delete “and it seeks to initiate the appropriate independent investigation into these allegations, including but not limited to the” on line 45
- Line 48 after “liability” add a comma and “which have yet to be admitted or proven by plaintiff”
- Line 56 after “that” add “should the allegations of the plaintiff be admitted or proven, then”

Under Discussion:

**Council President Marino** stated that despite commentary this evening from the Mayor’s personal attorney that this is partisan, let’s remember that the title of this Resolution and throughout it calls for an independent investigation. This is not partisan. The Mayor has chosen to speak publicly on numerous occasions about this complaint that is pending against him. She has heard from numerous countless members of the public about concern of the potential use of City resources, but we all agreed that we need to let the legal process play itself out. These allegations may not be true. These amendments to this Resolution is such that it is giving the Mayor the benefit of the doubt, but if in fact proven, then it is prudent upon us, it is our fiduciary obligation, it is prudent upon us as representation of the public to have the option to then conduct an independent investigation should there be admission or these allegations be proven true. If it turns out they are not, then there is no need for that independent investigation. This Resolution procedurally is only good until the end of this term, but we think it is important given the situation to have this as an option should there be proven admissions between now and the end of the year due to the serious nature of the allegations.

**Councilman Paplauskas** stated that he will be voting against this Resolution this evening mostly because this is moot point. This is a civil case not a criminal case because he thinks that we have a fiduciary duty to the City on top of the point being moot in six weeks where this Council ends this Resolution falls off the table and a new Council would have to take it up. We are not going to know anything in six weeks. He feels like this Resolution is just an avenue to poke at the Mayor and grab a headline so he won’t take part of it and will be voting against it.

**Chair** stated that prior to this amendment he would have been voting against the Resolution as it was written, however, with the amendments, the Resolution essentially says “if the allegations are true or proven admitted that there should be an independent investigation” and as he sits here he can’t get over the hurdle of telling himself that if the legal system plays out and finds that any member of the City government did something inappropriate within their position that there should be some sort of



investigation into that conduct. Even though this Resolution ceases at the end of this term, something could happen in the next six weeks, probably unlikely. He hopes the allegations are proven false. He served with Mayor Hopkins on the Council. He thinks he is a good man, a good character and he hopes these allegations are proven to be false and that this is a moot point going forward, but at the end of the day, he has to ask himself if someone did something within their office that was improper and was proven in a Court of law, should there be an investigation into that? He thinks his answer is yes and that is why he will be voting the way he is tonight.

**Councilwoman Renzulli** agrees with the statement made by the Chair in regards to someone doing something wrong as a City official and that it should be investigated. As far as this particular Resolution, it is extremely broad in some of the things that are included in it and in regard to the admission.

**Councilman Campopiano** stated that he agrees with the Chair and would want something investigated if it does come true, but as far as the Resolution, he thinks we should wait until due process. Find out what happened and then take the appropriate actions. He will be voting against this this evening.

Roll call was taken on motion to amend the above Resolution and motion passed on a vote of 6-2. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Vargas, Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Haroian, Councilman Wall and Council President Marino -6. The following being recorded as voting “nay”: Councilmen Campopiano and Paplauskas -2.

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilman Wall, it was voted to recommend approval of this Resolution as amended and motion passed on a vote of 6-2. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Vargas, Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Haroian, Councilman Wall and Council President Marino -6. The following being recorded as voting “nay”: Councilmen Campopiano and Paplauskas -2.

## **V. CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS**

- *CliftonLarsonAllen LLP*

No discussion was held.

## **VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Heidi Levine**, 22 West Hill Dr., appeared to speak in favor of “Resolution Calling for an Independent Investigation relative to Complaint PC 2024-4766, David Broccoli, et al v. Kenneth Hopkins, The City of Cranston, Anthony Moretti, Paul McCauley, David Rodio and Christopher Millea, et al.” and stated that she is deeply troubled by these allegations as they paint a picture of coercion, a total disregard for the law and an abuse of power. Accusations are truly stunning. The accusations are that an antique sports car, a 1975 MG was stolen by the Mayor who later refused to return it, proceeding to affix a City issued government plate reading 30,000 to it, engage City employees in a pressure campaign to obtain the car’s title from Mr. Broccoli and then proceeded to drive the car around town unregistered and still without the title and then finally took down the photographic evidence to this effect off of Facebook. What a stunning abuse of power if even one single part of her prior sentence is true. The statements made by the Mayor’s campaign spokesperson, Mr. Murray, only highlight the need for further clarification and discrepancies of the account. The public deserves to know whether any laws violated or if the Mayor misused his position for personal gain. She urged the City Council to

support an independent investigation into these allegations fully. The taxpayers deserve their leadership to be held accountable for their actions and anything less than this would be a great disservice to the city of Cranston. It would set a dangerous precedent that we cannot afford for our community.

**Lauren Pergoni**, 72 Dean St., appeared to speak in favor of “Resolution Calling for an Independent Investigation relative to Complaint PC 2024-4766, David Broccoli, et al v. Kenneth Hopkins, The City of Cranston, Anthony Moretti, Paul McCauley, David Rodio and Christopher Millea, et al.” and stated that the fact that the Mayor took an antique sports car from a local businessman and political supporter without payment, placed city issued plates on it and later had it restored under questionable circumstances, raised serious questions about ethics, transparency and a potential abuse of power. These allegations are not only disturbing but suggest a potential misuse of City resources and authority. The reported pressure campaign against Mr. Broccoli coercing him to hand over the car’s title points a picture of intimidation and harassment by officials sworn to serve and protect our community not exploit it for personal gain. Such behavior undermines public trust and calls into question the integrity of our city’s leadership. The explanation provided by the Mayor’s campaign spokesperson only further highlighted the need for clarity. The public deserves to know whether laws were broken or if there was abuse of power. She asked City Council to support a full and independent investigation into these allegations. The people of this City deserve transparency and accountability from their elected officials.

**Robert Murray**, 75 Debbie Dr., appeared to speak and stated that he did not plan to speak but the thing more outrageous than this lawsuit is the comments that were just offered by the two previous speakers. This matter has been a political operation from day one. It started on August 28<sup>th</sup> when this lawsuit was filed in Superior Court. It is not worthy of an independent investigation by a Committee of a Council whose members are all partisans both Republican and Democrat or who supported the Mayor’s opponent, the majority who supported the Mayor’s opponent. This started with a Republican Primary opponent, it transcended into the General Election. This matter is a private matter to the extent it involves Mr. Broccoli and the Mayor, it is being handled in a lawsuit that is filed, that is now in the Federal District Court. The allegations involving the actions of other City officials is being handled in that same lawsuit represented by different legal Counsel. That is the forum under which this matter should be handled. For the City Council to somehow form an independent investigation on this, he thinks is untimely, inappropriate and smacks of politics. The allegations from Mr. Broccoli are outrageous. He went to the US Attorney, he went to the RI Attorney Generally and they chose not to get involved with this yet this Council at the urging of the Council President, feel compelled to do so. This should be stopped tonight. You should allow the legal process to conclude and when it is concluded, he is confident the City will prevail against the claims against the City officials and the Mayor. The story will come out. He does not represent the Mayor in the lawsuit, but that lawsuit is in the appropriate form right now in the Federal District Court and it should be allowed to play out.

**Drake Patten**, 684 Natick Ave., appeared to speak in favor of “Resolution Calling for an Independent Investigation relative to Complaint PC 2024-4766, David Broccoli, et al v. Kenneth Hopkins, The City of Cranston, Anthony Moretti, Paul McCauley, David Rodio and Christopher Millea, et al.” and stated that while she appreciates that perhaps Mr. Murray thinks that this is not something that is appropriate for you, the City Council, she actually thinks it is highly appropriate for you. You represent us, the citizens and it is her belief and others’ beliefs that the citizens deserve to know what happened, if the City resources were used in any way, if there was an inappropriate use of a City license plate. These are things that no one in this room, Council included, would be allowed to do and get away with. We would be in trouble, a lot of trouble. The Courts can do what they need to do, but the citizens have asked for and deserve answers in this and so many other things that have gone on in the City, but this one, you can do something about.

**Karen Rosenberg**, 46 Bow St., appeared to speak in favor of “Resolution Calling for an Independent Investigation relative to Complaint PC 2024-4766, David Broccoli, et al v. Kenneth Hopkins, The City of Cranston, Anthony Moretti, Paul McCauley, David Rodio and Christopher Millea, et al.” and stated that she is offended at the comments by Mayor Hopkins personal attorney dismissing citizens of our City who are expressing legitimate concerns about what has transpired and about the right of the public to hear about it. She pointed out that it is our tax dollars that are being spent on the defense of the Mayor and other City officials and that along with the concerns about ethics, to her, merit an explanation and what she finds so concerning to warrant an explanation is the tinge of corruption that she finds in the fact that the Mayor cannot seem to explain what would be a simple matter and would not need to wait for an explanation to this civil suit if there was a decent explanation, but what it looks for is all the world like is that there was some kind of quid pro co promised to someone who had a lot of disputes and a lot of businesses before the City and for whatever reason that person did not get what he expected out of the deal and that has produced this legal action. The taxpayers deserve not to have to wait for however many years to grind to the Courts. They deserve to know why our tax dollars are being used for a defense of something that the Mayor can’t just explain to the public. She urged the City Council to pass this Resolution and conduct an investigation.

**Tom Wojick**, 11 Hall Place, appeared to speak via Zoom in favor of “Resolution Calling for an Independent Investigation relative to Complaint PC 2024-4766, David Broccoli, et al v. Kenneth Hopkins, The City of Cranston, Anthony Moretti, Paul McCauley, David Rodio and Christopher Millea, et al.” and stated that he supports this Resolution not only for the importance of the Resolution itself, but he thinks this also conveys a pattern that he has experienced, that is the Budlong Pool, where a lot of things transpired behind closed door and this is another example of trying to close the doors on the public from knowing. He is tired of this Administration functioning in the back room.

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

### A. Ordinances

*None.*

### B. Resolutions

***RESOLUTION Designating the entire available, unexpended and unencumbered balance of the American Rescue Act (“ARPA”) Restricted Receipt Account for expenditure.*** Sponsored by Council President Marino and Mayor Hopkins.

On motion by councilman Wall, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, it was voted to recommend approval of this Resolution. Motion passed unanimously.

### C. *Real Estate Tax Abatements*

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Abatements as recommended by the City Assessor. Motion passed unanimously.

### D. *Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements*

*None.*

**E. *Tangible Tax Abatements***

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilman Wall, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Abatements as recommended by the City Assessor. Motion passed unanimously.

**F. *Tax Assessment Board of Review assessed December 31, 2023.***  
*(Informational Only – No Vote will be taken)*

*None.*

**G. *Tax Interest Waiver Approvals***

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilman Wall, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Interest Waiver Approvals. Motion passed unanimously.

**H. *Tax Interest Waiver Denials***

*None.*

**VIII. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS**

*None.*

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Rosalba Zanni  
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees