

Kenneth J. Hopkins
Mayor

Michael E. Smith
President

Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP
Planning Director



CITY PLAN COMMISSION

Cranston City Hall
869 Park Avenue, Cranston, RI 02910

Vacant
Vacant
Kathleen Lanphear
Frank Ritz
Ann Marie Maccarone
James Donahue
Robert Coupe
Steven Frias

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 8th, 2022 – 6:30PM

Teleconference Meeting (Zoom)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Michael Smith called the City Plan Commission Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. He reminded the Commission that the agenda items for the meeting were continued from last week's meeting, which had to conclude by 8:00 p.m. since the venue closed at that time.

The following Commissioners were in attendance for the meeting: Chairman Michael Smith, Robert Coupe, James Donahue, Steven Frias, Ann Marie Maccarone, Ken Mason, Kathleen Lanphear, Frank Ritz, and Robert Strom.

The following Planning Department members were in attendance: Jason M. Pezzullo, Planning Director; Doug McLean, Principal Planner; Joshua Berry, Senior Planner; and Alexander Berardo, Planning Technician.

Also attending: Steve Marsella, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 3/1/22 Regular Meeting (vote taken)

Mr. Frias asked for three edits to the draft minutes. Two were modifications to the language relaying his requested edits for the 2/1/22 Regular Meeting as provided on p.2, namely the addition of the word "of" and the removal of the word "meeting." He also asked that the word "symbolic" be removed on p.5 in reference to Solicitor Marsella's comment regarding the removal of the budget item for woodchips from the Parks and Recreation budget request, which he made during the 3/1/22 regular meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Ritz, the City Plan Commission voted 7 to 0 (with Mr. Donahue and Ms. Maccarone abstaining due to their absence at the 3/1/22 meeting) to accept Mr. Frias' recommended edits to the regular City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 3/1/22.

Mr. Coupe then suggested an additional edit on p.5, namely the re-attribution of a comment regarding the potential use of ARPA funds toward the construction of a new shooting range to Mr. Mason.

Upon motion by Mr. Coupe, and seconded by Ms. Lanphear, the City Plan Commission voted 7 to 0 (with Mr. Donahue and Ms. Maccarone abstaining) to accept Mr. Coupe's recommended edits to the regular City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 3/1/22.

Finally, upon motion by Mr. Strom, and seconded by Ms. Lanphear, the City Plan Commission voted 7 to 0 (Mr. Donahue and Ms. Maccarone abstained) to **approve** the regular City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 2/1/22 as amended by Mr. Frias and Mr. Coupe.

ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW - RECOMMENDATIONS

- DEVON DOW (OWN) and WAYNE MEDEIROS (APP) have applied to operate a retail sales business from an existing building used as a barber shop hair salon use granted by previous variance without off-street parking at 1561-1563 Cranston Street A.P. 8, lot 2763, area 10,000 s.f. zoned B1. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010-Variance; Sections 17.20.030-Schedule of Uses, 17.64.010- Off Street Parking.

Due to the findings that the application is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that it does not alter the character of the neighborhood, upon motion made by Mr. Coupe, and seconded by Mr. Donahue, the City Plan Commission unanimously voted (9-0) to forward a **positive recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.

- BRIDGE GROUP, LLC (OWN/APP) has filed an application to construct an addition to convert an existing two unit building into a three-unit residential use at 5 Aborn Street, A.P. 1, lot 30, area 5,278 s.f. zoned C3. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010-Variance; Sections 17.20.030- Schedule of Uses, Sections 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity Regulations.

Due to the findings that the application is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that it does not alter the character of the surrounding neighborhood, upon motion made by Mr. Donahue, and seconded by Mr. Mason, the City Plan Commission unanimously voted (9-0) to forward a **positive recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.

- BRIDGE GROUP, LLC (OWN/APP) has applied to allow a temporary outdoor seating area established by executive order to remain permanently after Covid restrictions are lifted, eliminating off street parking at 2190 Broad Street, A.P. 1, lot 33&34, area 14,646 s.f. zoned C3. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010-Variance; 17.64.010- Off Street Parking.

Due to the finding that the relief would be consistent with the character of Pawtuxet Village, and with the condition that applicant obtain site plan approval from the City of Cranston Bureau of Traffic & Safety or obtain approval from Governor's Commission on Disability, upon motion made by Mr. Strom and seconded by Mr. Donahue, the City Plan Commission unanimously voted (9-0) to forward a **positive recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Comprehensive Plan Update
- Affordable Housing

Mr. Pezzullo said that he would like the Commission to discuss the matter of affordable housing during next month's meeting. He hoped that the discussion would give the Commission an opportunity to

determine which strategies it could support to increase the City's affordable housing supply, even if only incrementally. He added that the conversation begins and ends with a frank acknowledgement of whether the will exists to take meaningful steps to increase affordable housing in the City.

Mr. Frias called the Commission's attention to legislation in the State House that proposes to ban single-family zoning statewide and thought the issue also merited a discussion at next month's meeting. Mr. Coupe concurred and said he viewed the legislation as a direct attack on municipal authority over zoning and density regulations; he further stated that he felt it was an overly-dramatic response to the housing issue and hoped more moderate solutions could be found. Chairman Smith said if the legislation is still active by next month's meeting, he believed it would merit inclusion on the agenda.

Mr. Berry noted that he has been tracking the bill's progress with the APA Legislative Committee and that the Committee has reached out to the sponsors of the House bill with their concerns. He added the Committee is sympathetic to the need for solutions to housing in the state and has been looking at initiatives underway in Minneapolis and Connecticut. Ms. Lanphear asked Mr. Berry to forward the Commissioners any correspondence he's seen from other communities regarding the legislation through the APA Legislative Committee; Chairman Smith agreed but asked if Mr. Berry could also send along a PDF copy of the proposed bill itself. Mr. Berry said he could forward the documents via email.

Mr. Pezzullo clarified that the bill proposing to ban single-family housing is not strictly an affordable housing bill, so there would be two separate discussions listed on next month's agenda. He noted that Staff is more concerned with the affordable housing issue in the City because the single-family zoning bill is unlikely to pass. Mr. Frias noted he is more concerned with the single-family zoning bill, so it will be important to entertain both discussions separately during the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT / NEXT REGULAR MEETING

- Tuesday, April 5th, 2022 — Time and Location TBD

Mr. Coupe acknowledged that it was Mr. Strom and Mr. Mason's final City Plan Commission meeting. Chairman Smith wished both Commissioners all the best and thanked them for their many years of service on the Commission.

Upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Coupe, the City Plan Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m.