

Hon. Kenneth J. Hopkins  
Mayor

Michael E. Smith  
President

Jason M. Pezzullo, MCP, MPA, AICP  
City Planning Director



Robert Coupe  
Vice-President

Thomas Barbieri  
David Exter  
Steven Frias  
Kathleen Lanphear  
Lisa Mancini  
Justin Mateus P.E.  
Thomas Zidelis

## CITY PLAN COMMISSION

City Hall – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Room 309  
869 Park Avenue, Cranston, Rhode Island 02910

### MINUTES

## CITY HALL – 3<sup>rd</sup> FLOOR, COUNCIL CHAMBER 6:30PM – TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024

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### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 869 Park Avenue.

The following Commissioners were in attendance for the meeting: Chairman Michael Smith, David Exter, Steven Frias, Kathleen Lanphear, Justin Mateus, and Thomas Barbieri. Commissioners Coupe, Mancini, and Zidelis were absent.

The following Planning Department members were in attendance: Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP, Planning Director, Kenneth R. Kirkland, Assistant Director/Principal Planner, and Gregory Guertin, Senior Planner.

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

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**(vote taken)**

- 1.2.24 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Lanphear requested a continuance of the approval of the 1.2.24 meeting minutes due to an unresolved clarification of a statement made by Commissioner Coupe. Chairman Smith entertained a motion to continue the approval of the minutes to a subsequent meeting.

Upon motion made by Ms. Lanphear, and seconded by Mr. Frias, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to continue this matter to the following regular CPC meeting.

### SUBDIVISIONS & LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

**(vote taken)**

- **“Pavilion Avenue Plat” PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL**  
PRELIMINARY PLAN – Minor Subdivision  
Two (2) additional lots (13,237 sq. ft. each)  
Zoning District: B-1  
AP 7, Lots 3363, 3368, 3644, & 3814  
Pavilion Avenue

Asst. Director Kenneth Kirkland presented the staff report.

A member of the applicant’s team provided background and context of the site, stating the applicant seeks to fully comply to procedure as follows and conditions of approval as stated.

Chairman Smith opened the discussion to the Commission for comment.

Commissioner Frias inquired if there were concerns about traffic related to this site. Mr. Kirkland stated that comment was not provided by the Traffic Safety Manager or DPW. Mr. Mateus stated that the Public Works Department did not have any specific issues related to traffic on-site.

Mr. Mateus inquired if the Fire Department recommended relocating existing utility poles on-site. Mr. Kirkland stated that the Department inquired about only one utility pole in relation to a technical measurement of the fire code from a physical distance standpoint. Mr. Mateus agreed with the recommendation, stating that the utility pole in question shall be relocated to the property line to avoid vehicular accidents. Mr. Mateus stated that the other utility pole on-site should be coordinated with RI Energy to confirm structural integrity.

Mr. Mateus further inquired about curbing on the northwest side of the property. Mr. Mateus requested that concrete curbing be extended to the proposed driveway. Mr. Mateus inquired if the applicant intends to pave the driveways on-site.

A representative of the applicant's team stated that the proposed driveway would be paved with asphalt.

Mr. Mateus inquired about the southeast property to the left of the plan set, stating that the existing cinderblock retaining wall located within the bounds of the proposed driveway will be discussed during the permitting phase of development.

Mr. Mateus inquired if the electric service to the proposed residence would be established by underground wires or overhead conduit. A representative from the applicant's team deferred to the applicant, stating that electric service will be supplied at the preference of the Commission.

Mr. Mateus requested that the application confers with RI Energy to determine if an additional utility pole would be required on-site. The applicant's team will confer with planning staff.

Chairman Smith opened the discussion to public comment.

- Judith Crum-Fortes, 30 Pavilion Avenue: Stated concerns regarding neglect of the property and automobile storage on-site.
- Sofronio Saguid, 32 Pavilion Avenue: Shared concerns about potential flooding hazards.
- Jorge Martinez, 44 Pavilion Avenue: Stated that an additional driveway would cause safety issues related to pedestrian safety. Reiterated previous statements about automobile storage on-site and inquired about the request to relocate existing utility poles.

Mr. Mateus stated that the utility posts must align with the property line and will not interfere with abutting properties.

A representative from the applicant's team responded to the concerns shared by abutting property owners. The applicant's representative stated that the applicant seeks to comply with requests made by Commissioners and City personnel. In regard to vehicle storage, the applicant is actively working to remove automobiles currently parked on-site.

Steve Marsella, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor, stated that the storage of unregistered vehicles on a residential property is a violation of the zoning code. The Commission may condition the applicant to remove vehicles and garbage debris on the lot.

Asst. Director Kirkland itemized the proposed conditions of approval.

Commissioner Frias inquired about the elimination of a fence on-site as an additional condition of approval.

Mr. Kirkland stated fence removal could be an additional conditional approval associated with the removal of other debris, in accordance with City zoning regulations.

Commissioner Lanphear suggested that the Commission apply a timeline to removal of debris on site, prior to construction.

Director Pezzullo suggested that the proposed condition should be included prior to the recording of the plan. Atty. Marsella assented.

A member of the public with residence at 148 Fountain Avenue inquired about snow and trash removal on-site. A representative of the applicant's team responded, stating that the proposal would allow for optimal space for garbage receptacles without encroachment.

Seeing no further comment in-person or online, Asst. Director Kirkland re-itemized the application's associated conditions of approval.

Chairman Smith entertained a motion.

Upon motion made by Mr. Barbieri, and seconded by Mr. Mateus, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously, (6-0) to approve the application with conditions.

### **ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS**

**(vote taken)**

- **FORT PROPERTIES LLC (OWN/APP)** have applied to seek dimensional and use relief for no changes to existing, two-family residences with reduced frontage, setbacks, and lot coverage at 1579-1581 Elmwood Avenue, AP 18, Lots 221 and 222; Area 16,747 sq. ft., zoned C-5. Applicant seeks relief per Sections 17.92.010 – Variances, Section 17.20.030 – Schedule of Uses, Section 17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity Regulations, and Section 17.20.130 – Modifications.

Due to the findings that this application is generally consistent with the goals and purposes of the Comprehensive Plan and is compatible with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood, upon motion made by Ms. Lanphear, and seconded by Mr. Barbieri, the City Plan Commission voted (6-0) to forward a **positive recommendation** on this application to the Zoning Board of Review.

### **PERFORMANCE GUARANTEES**

**(votes taken on each item)**

- **“Lantern Hill Estates” PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL**  
f/k/a Lippitt Hill Estates  
Phase I: Bond Release Request
- **“The Estates at Camden Woods” PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL**  
Phases I – III: Bond Release Request

Chairman Pezzullo and Mr. Mateus request a 1-month continuance on this matter for the subsequent March City Plan Commission meeting, prior to bond release by the Commission.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Barbieri, and seconded by Ms. Lanphear, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to continue these matters to the March 2024 regular City Plan Commission Meeting.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**(votes taken on both items)**

*(Continued from 1.2.24 Commission Meeting)*

- President

Due to Vice-President Coupe's absence, Commissioner Lanphear solicited nominations for the office of president for the Cranston City Plan Commission.

Commissioner Lanphear entertained a motion.

Commissioner Barbieri nominated incumbent President Michael Smith for re-appointment to the office of president. Mr. Mateus seconds.

Seeing no other nominations, Commissioner Lanphear entertained a motion to close nominations.

Upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Exter, nominations for the office of the president were closed.

Upon motion made by Mr. Barbieri, and seconded by Mr. Mateus, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to re-elect Chairman Michael Smith to the Office of President of the Cranston City Plan Commission.

- Vice-President

Chairman Smith opened nominations for the Office of Vice President of the Cranston City Plan Commission.

Commissioner Lanphear nominated incumbent Vice-President Robert Coupe for re-appointment to the office of vice president. Mr. Barbieri seconds.

Seeing no other nominations, Chairman Smith entertained a motion to close nominations.

Upon motion made by Ms. Lanphear, and seconded by Mr. Mateus, nominations for the office of vice president were closed.

Upon motion made by Ms. Lanphear, and seconded by Mr. Barbieri, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to re-elect Vice-President Robert Coupe to the Office of Vice President of the Cranston City Plan Commission.

### **CITY PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**(no votes taken)**

- Capital Budget & Improvement Program FY24-29

Director Pezzullo stated that all submissions for the capital budget were received, pending submittal by the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Pezzullo stated that a compilation of all requests will be sent out to the Commission directly.

Mr. Pezzullo shared that the annual capital budget hearing is slated to be held sometime in March with notice to come.

- Open positions / ongoing hiring process

Director Pezzullo shared that Gregory Guertin, Senior Planner will be departing from the Cranston Planning Department. Mr. Pezzullo stated that a third round of solicitation for the two (2) open Senior Planner positions is to come in the coming weeks as the department is depleted of personnel.

- Comprehensive Plan Update / Rescheduling of Public Workshop

Director Pezzullo announced that the public forum for the comprehensive plan must be rescheduled following an issue the previous month regarding virtual participation. Mr. Pezzullo confirmed that the public workshop will be held with a virtual component for participation.

Mr. Pezzullo suggested that the charrette for the comprehensive plan update be held at a previously agreed upon location, the Cranston Senior Center, on 2/22/24 at 6:00 p.m., in-person with an online component.

Commissioner Frias inquired about the format of a charrette-style public forum.

Director Pezzullo stated that the format of a charrette includes moderated tables with discussion of participants identifying various aspects of the community, as prompted by the facilitator. Mr. Pezzullo clarified that virtual participation will be moderated by a facilitator via Zoom.

Commissioner Frias stated that the charrette is not a requirement under the local city ordinance. Mr. Frias stated his preferences in relation to the format of the charrette.

Director Pezzullo stated that the purpose of the public workshop is to solicit responses and feedback from community members in discussion with their neighbors, not to inform the public on their community. This feedback is to be compiled and synthesized into a report for distribution. Mr. Pezzullo stated a charrette style public workshop is standard in comprehensive planning processes.

Mr. Frias reiterated previous statements regarding public participation.

Mr. Pezzullo stated that the charette-style workshop will comply with the spirit and intent of the ordinance.

Chairman Smith shared that the public will be adequately served through the charrette format, as presented.

Mr. Pezzullo reiterated that there will be plenty of opportunities for the public to engage, at the charette or otherwise.

Chairman Smith confirmed the date of the public workshop for 2.22.24. No further discussion ensued.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**(votes taken)**

- TBD – **SPECIAL MEETING – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC WORKSHOP**
- Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 6:30PM – **Regular Meeting**  
City Hall – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Council Chamber – 869 Park Avenue

Chairman Smith noted that the regular City Plan Commission meeting schedule for 4.5.24 coincides with an election day in Rhode Island. A potential rescheduling of the meeting date will be addressed at the following meeting in March.

Mr. Frias inquired about the comprehensive plan update timeline. Mr. Frias inquired about the distribution of plan chapters to the Commission.

Director Pezzullo stated that the draft chapter of the plan update may potentially be posted in the upcoming week. Mr. Pezzullo confirmed that the comprehensive plan is set to expire, per state law, in September. The timeframe to complete the plan update is slated for June or July of 2024. The draft plan must be sent to the City Council to be docketed for new business at the end of July. Mr. Pezzullo stated that associated hearings would be scheduled for September.

Mr. Frias asked when the first chapter of the plan is to be expected for review by the Commission. Mr. Pezzullo stated that staff will work to distribute draft chapters as received by the consultant.

Chairman Smith congratulated Mr. Guertin on his new position and thanked him for his service to the City.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**(votes taken)**

Upon motion made by Mr. Barbieri, and seconded by Mr. Mateus, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m.