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**CRANSTON BOARD OF CANVASSERS
869 PARK AVE
CRANSTON, RI 02910-2786**

May 30, 2025

Cranston City Plan Commission

869 Park Ave.

Cranston, RI 02910-2786

RE: Vaughn Lane RPD – USPS Mail Delivery to Fiskeville Residents

Dear President Frias and Members of the City Plan Commission:

I am writing on behalf of the Cranston Board of Canvassers to inform you of an ongoing mail delivery issue that pertains to the Fiskeville neighborhood that straddles the Cranston and Scituate boundary, which is caused by the United States Postal Service's (USPS) refusal to consider operational changes to mail delivery in this small neighborhood to establish regular, household mail delivery for residents.

The Vaughn Lane residential development proposal, and its accompanying street extension, present an opportunity to revisit this serious quality of life issue for current residents with USPS.

Furthermore, should new residential housing units be constructed in this neighborhood, the city should undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure USPS establishes normal, household mail delivery for those new units, rather than requiring them to utilize Post Office Boxes (PO Boxes) to receive mail, as is the current situation for all Fiskeville residents.

The Fiskeville neighborhood, which includes Cranston residents of Hall Ln, Roberts Ave, and Vaughn Ln, as well as Cranston and Scituate residents of Main St, has historically not received mail delivery from the United States Postal Service (USPS), which has caused myriad problems both for the residents and for numerous city departments in carrying out their official duties, as explained further below and in the referenced exhibits.

In recognition of these problems, which stem from USPS's arbitrary – and to date unexplained – designation of Fiskeville as a “non-delivery” zone, the Cranston City Council voted unanimously on April 22, 2024 to adopt Resolution 2024-16, “REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE ESTABLISH NORMAL RESIDENTIAL MAIL DELIVERY TO THE RESIDENTS OF FISKEVILLE.” Since transmission of that resolution to USPS following its adoption by the City Council over one year ago, USPS has not provided the City Council a response of any kind.

Upon multiple requests from the city over the last several two decades, particularly from the Canvassing Authority, USPS has refused to establish regular mail delivery, and instead only provides post office box service at no charge, but with limited operating hours, for Fiskeville

residents. This has directly resulted in quality of life issues for residents, including significant delays in receipt of mail, rerouting of mail around the country, higher percentages of undeliverable mail, difficulty for residents to pay utility bills or sign up for commercial accounts, because their actual street addresses are unrecognized by USPS data, errors in commonly used services like Google Maps (which also are based on USPS data), E911 response time concerns and confusion about similar addresses on nearby Main Street in Hope/Scituate, address coding issues for city departments, difficulty for residents in receiving packages and deliveries, and other concerns that have been expressed by residents on countless occasions to city officials.

Of important note is that the city's abutters' notice list of 65 owner addresses includes at least 14 street addresses in Fiskeville with no PO Box listed. Since Fiskeville is a non-delivery area, USPS will not delivery mail to these addresses, causing those abutters' notices to be returned as undeliverable – meaning these residents cannot, or will not, receive notice because USPS will not delivery said notice to their residence. This is the problem faced by numerous city departments – including elections – in that, for such residents, there is no viable way to contact these residents to provide them with important information aside from physically knocking on their doors.

The Cranston Board of Canvassers has taken specific note of these concerns because of the higher volume of undeliverable mail and voter registration issues for Fiskeville residents that have persisted for decades, which the Board as noted regularly, as well as voter disenfranchisement concerns and undeliverable or delayed mail ballots. For eight years, we have communicated these concerns to USPS at the local, administrative, regional, and national levels, with no resolution. Previous iterations of the Board and prior City Registrars, in the early and mid-2000s, undertook similar efforts. USPS has consistently ignored these concerns, and offered no remedy whatsoever to address them, in part because they refuse to acknowledge these concerns exist or are legitimate.

The total number of residents impacted is relatively small – but will grow substantially upon the completion of new housing units in the Fiskeville area. Despite USPS routinely being able to establish new or expanded delivery routes when new housing developments in other nearby Western Cranston neighborhoods are built, USPS claims it is incapable of establishing such delivery for the small number of current residents of Fiskeville.

Throughout the rest of the city, residential mail delivery is a routine and expected part of daily life, with the residents of Fiskeville seemingly being the only residents of Cranston who live on public roads who cannot benefit from regular USPS residential mail delivery. A century ago, the Fiskeville neighborhood may have been a more rural and difficult to access place, where household mail delivery may have been more difficult for USPS to establish. However, it has in the ensuing decades grown – and ostensibly it continues to grow via this very project – along with the rest of the city, into a denser, more suburban area with an increased population that most certainly has modern road access. Fiskeville is not in a rural, out-of-reach area, where USPS “PO Box-only” mail delivery zones are typically to be found for practical reasons.

USPS has claimed that there is a cost to establish normal mail delivery for Fiskeville residents, yet USPS is apparently operating, staffing, paying utilities for, and renting the Fiskeville Post Office building at 206 Main St, and providing post office boxes to residents without collecting revenue or

fees for them, **despite the fact that the larger Hope Post Office is located right around the corner, only a half-mile away at 134 Jackson Flat Rd.**

USPS claims Fiskeville residents are ineligible to receive normal mail delivery due to their proximity to the Fiskeville Post Office, but the Fiskeville Post Office seemingly only *exists* because the residents do not receive normal mail delivery. This is the definition of circular logic, and an inadequate explanation for why mail was set up this way originally – a question that has been posed to USPS numerous times, which they admit they have no historical or operational answer for.

The ostensible question that poses is: do Fiskeville residents not receive mail because the Fiskeville Post Office exists, or does the Fiskeville Post Office exist because Fiskeville residents do not receive mail? It would seem logical that USPS expends far more resources operating the Fiskeville Post Office – in such close proximity to the Hope Post Office – then it would by simply establishing or modifying existing carrier routes for the handful of Fiskeville residents who don't currently receive mail. Yet, USPS has refused to acknowledge or address this question, or even consider the idea.

Frustratingly, USPS provides regular mail delivery to all other residents of the city who *do* live nearby to post offices, and USPS also provides regular mail delivery to the immediate next-door neighbors of the nearby Hope Post Office, including some Scituate residents who live in far closer proximity to the Fiskeville Post Office than do most residents of Fiskeville. Inexplicably, USPS provides regular mail delivery to Main St residents of Scituate who live **directly** across the road from Cranston Main St residents, who are inequitably disallowed mail service. This has resulted in some of those Cranston residents placing their physical mail boxes across the road, on their Scituate neighbors' property.

This means that some Cranston residents have a house in “Fiskeville” that does not receive USPS mail delivery, but a mail box in “Hope” – in the Town of Scituate, across the street – which USPS **will** deliver to, using the exact same residential street number. It is a truly absurd arrangement, and defies common sense for USPS to deliver mail to one side of the street, in Scituate, but deny that service to the opposite side of the same street, in Cranston, based upon USPS's arbitrary delineation of what constitutes “Fiskeville” (does not receive mail) and “Hope” (receives mail) on Main St.

To remedy this absurd situation, which over the years as prompted numerous complaints from residents – including documented testimony from residents when this matter was heard by the Cranston City Council – the Canvassing Authority has undertaken a number of official actions:

- The Canvassing Authority Registrar, acting on behalf of the Board of Canvassers, and after years of being provided incomplete and unsatisfactory rationale from USPS dating back to Sept. 5, 2017, formally requested in a letter dated Aug. 11, 2022, **for USPS to establish normal delivery**, to which no response was received from USPS until the RI-MA District Manager sent a denial letter that was received on April 17, 2023, eight months later.
- The Registrar filed an appeal to this denial one week later on April 24, 2023, to the USPS Director of Delivery Strategy and Policy in Washington, D.C., questioning the rationale used in the denial and the apparent misapplication of postal regulations, reiterating

numerous concerns that were wholly unaddressed by USPS in their denial letter. USPS responded to this appeal by sending a final denial letter that was received two months later, on June 26, 2023, and again did not address any of the voter registration, voting, quality of life, mail delivery, or other concerns raised by city officials and residents.

- As a result, the very next day the Registrar enlisted the assistance of U.S. Senator Jack Reed's office, on June 27, 2023, which initiated contact with USPS and repeatedly requested a response, which was delayed by nearly seven more months. The USPS Postmaster General's Government Liaison Director provided a denial response letter to Sen. Reed dated Jan. 24, 2024, which provided a recap of correspondence to date, reiterated unspecified and apparently uncalculated cost concerns, and again made no reference to any of the other concerns raised by city officials and residents, nor did it address any concerns related to the non-delivery of Official Election Mail, and again offered no solution to remedy them.
- On June 3, 2024, the Hon. Secretary of State of Rhode Island, Gregg M. Amore, sent a letter to USPS detailing the ongoing voter registration and election administration concerns caused by the Fiskeville non-delivery zone, supporting the Canvassing Authority's and City Council's prior denied requests. USPS responded to the Secretary nearly three months later, on Aug. 28, 2024, reiterating its prior denials while again ignoring the issues raised by the city and residents.

Given the fact that the issue remains substantially unaddressed, and has persisted for decades, it is clear that additional public and political pressure must be placed upon USPS to recognize the disservice and harm to quality of life they are causing for Fiskeville residents by refusing to modernize mail delivery in this area – pressure the City Plan Commission should consider applying by any means available as part of its consideration of the Vaughn Lane proposal.

To date, the city has apparently exhausted all avenues of attempting to work with USPS officials, at seemingly every level of the Postal Service, from locally, to regionally, to AMS address management, to the U.S. Postmaster General's Office, and have been met only with obstruction, extensive delays in communications, and unsatisfactory and wholly incomplete answers. While this disregard for the city's and residents' concerns is unfortunate, it reinforces our responsibility to continue this effort by all avenues available to us on behalf of residents (and in this case, prospective future residents) who are affected.

Critically for the Canvassing Authority, we once again will be heading into an important federal election year in 2026, where the continued address coding issues, higher undeliverable mail rates, and undeliverable mail ballots for Fiskeville residents compromises their sacred right to vote, inflates their rate of disenfranchisement, and runs in stark contrast to USPS's supposed commitment to providing Official Election Mail service to our voters for a wide array of mailings that are fundamentally required by state and federal law. These issues would be entirely mitigated, if not eliminated, if the residents of Fiskeville simply received mail delivery in the same manner as nearly every other resident of the city. However, if the city fails to apply pressure on USPS to change the status quo – particularly as it relates to new housing developments in the neighborhood – those problems will only be exacerbated.

It is therefore appropriate and requested for the City Plan Commission to weigh in on this matter in order to exert additional pressure on USPS. The Fiskeville residents who continue to be harmed by USPS policies in this area have requested such action through repeated communications and contact with both this office and numerous other city officials. It is deeply unfortunate that USPS has declined to recognize the extent of this issue for so many years, but the proposed development of new houses in the area once again requires the city to make the case to USPS for the current and future residents of Fiskeville to enjoy the same quality of life as nearly all other Cranston residents.

Of chief concern to the Board of Canvassers is the likelihood that USPS would apply the same non-delivery policy to these new housing units once built, adding significantly to the voter disenfranchisement and quality of life concerns our office, the City Council, the Secretary of State, Senator Reed, and many residents have repeatedly brought to USPS's attention. Accordingly, we ask the City Plan Commission to consider this issue, and any mitigations the Commission may have authority to enforce or suggest, as it relates to this development.

In doing so, our office and the Board recognizes that as election officials, we are not city planners – and have no expertise in this process, nor do we have direct suggestions of how or under what mechanisms the Commission may use to affect these goals, if it agrees they are important or relevant to incorporate into the process at some level. We simply request the Commission consider the Fiskeville residential mail delivery issue as part of its larger consideration of the project, and incorporate whatever remedies the Commission may see fit, if any may be available, for the benefit of all Fiskeville residents.

Thank you, sincerely, for your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,



Nicholas J. Lima
Registrar / Director of Elections

Cc: Steven Frias, President, City Plan Commission
Beth Ashman, City Planning Director
Kirk McDonough, Chairperson, Cranston Board of Canvassers
Rob Rock, R.I. Deputy Secretary of State

Encl.: Exhibit A – Referenced Correspondence with USPS, RI Secretary of State, Sen. Reed, et. al