

(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, March 13, 2025 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by the Chair.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Councilman Richard D. Campopiano
Councilman Christopher E. Buonanno
Councilwoman Bridget R. Graziano
Councilwoman Kristen E. Haroian
Council Vice-President Daniel Wall, Vice-Chair
Councilman Andy Andujar, Chair
Council President Jessica M. Marino, Ex-Officio

Also Present: Councilman Frank J. Ritz, Jr.
John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
Heather Finger, Stenographer

III. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

- **Approval of minutes of the February 13, 2025 regular meeting**

On motion by Council Vice-President Wall, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the February 13, 2025 regular meeting and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER

None

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Denise Robillard and George Robillard, 78 Preston Dr., appeared to speak regarding proposed Ordinances 2-25-03 and 2-25-04 and stated that they are in support of modification of traffic control at the intersection of Elsie St. and Preston Dr. Ms. Robillard stated that there was a traffic study done, which they do not know the results of that study, but they are in favor of adding an additional stop sign or switching the 'deaf child' sign with the existing stop sign. Mr. Robillard stated that the biggest

concern on Preston Dr. is the flow of traffic and total disregard for some of the traffic signs on Preston Dr. That coupled with the lack of additional traffic signs on adjoining and intersecting streets, he thinks creates an unsafe condition.

Chantry and Alien Nhar-Kue, 82 Preston Dr., appeared to speak regarding proposed Ordinances 2-25-03 and 2-25-04. Ms. Nhar-Kue stated that there are a lot of children in the neighborhood and they are afraid there will be a tragic accident. Cars just do not stop at that intersection at all. Mr. Nhar-Kue stated that cars cut through from Pontiac Ave. through Reservoir Ave. and they fly down the street without stopping. This is a safety concern especially for the kids.

Robert Santurri, 27 Riverfarm Rd., appeared to speak regarding proposed Ordinances 2-25-03 and 2-25-04 and stated that at the intersection of North Vale at Riverfarm Rd. there is one stop sign that is on Riverfarm Rd. He has a video of cars just flying through there. There was one accident where someone got t-boned. He asked if one of the videos can be shown. Chair asked Mr. Lima, media technician, to show the video on the screen.

Robert Murray, Esq., 21 Garden City Dr., appeared to represent Michele Lombardi, petitioner for proposed Ordinances 2-25-01 and 2-25-02. He provided handouts of photos and radius map for the Committee to view. He stated that Ms. Lombardi has owned this property since 2022. This building was built in 1948 and was initially a residence. Approximately 45 years ago, a prior owner obtained approval from the Zoning Board to convert this to a professional office building and this was done in 1980. At the time Ms. Lombardi acquired the property, it was a mixed-used tenancy office. There was a person there doing hair and nails and Ms. Lombardi thought everything was fine. Last fall, one of her tenants had to go to the Building Official since it was time to renew their shop license at the Department of Health and the Zoning Official, in reviewing the matter, ascertained that the property was not properly Zoned for the shop license and could not provide the Zoning Certificate needed for the Health Department to approve the license. The Planning Department recommended to his client to seek from the City Council a Change of Zone. The property at this time is Zoned B-1, which is a Residential Zone. The Planning Commission reviewed both Ordinances and gave a positive recommendation to the Ordinance Committee for both Ordinances.

VI. NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

ORDINANCE 02-25-01 In Amendment of Chapter 17 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, Entitled "Zoning" (135 Atwood Ave, Plat 12 / Lots 176 & 177). Petitioner/Owner: Michele Lombardi.

Councilman Campopiano stated that he will be recusing from this Ordinance and Ordinance 2-25-02 since he is an abutter.

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded by Council Vice-President Wall, it was voted to recommend approval of the above Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Council President Marino stated that she is assuming that notice was in fact required and just wants to confirm that notice was in fact sent. She asked Attorney Murray to confirm whether or not notice was provided to the abutters and if whether or not there were any objections. Attorney Murray stated that those notices are sent through the Clerk's Office, whom he provided abutters list within 400' radius. Those notices go out certified mail. Chair asked Clerk if notices were sent out. Clerk stated that they were sent out the week of February 25th.

Councilwoman Graziano asked Attorney Murray what is happening with the businesses there today. Attorney Murray stated that there is a barber there, there is a healthcare agency and a cleaning company that uses one of the offices occasionally for their business. Councilwoman Graziano asked Solicitor if those businesses are consistent with this request for C-2. Solicitor stated that he would have to have a list of the businesses and what they are defined as and then look at the table. Attorney Murray provided a copy of the Schedule of Uses and all the C-2 uses that are allowed are highlighted. He stated that the uses that are in the building right now are permitted under the C-2 only classification. Solicitor stated that it would appear that based on the representations, he has no reason to doubt Mr. Murray's representations and accepts Mr. Murray's representations and the permissible uses are highlighted on the table of uses and appears to him that they are all appropriate uses for C-2 Zone.

Roll call was taken on motion to recommend approval of the above Ordinance and motion passed on a vote of 6-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilman Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Council Vice-President Wall, Councilman Andujar and Council President Marino -6. Councilman Campopiano recused.

ORDINANCE 02-25-02 In Amendment of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Cranston (135 Atwood Ave, Plat 12 / Lots 176 & 177. Petitioner/Owner: Michele Lombardi.

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded b Council Vice-President Wall, it was voted to recommend approval of the above Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Council President Marino indicated to the Solicitor that this Ordinance asks to amend the Comprehensive Plan and raises a flag for her because under State Law, we only get four bites at that a year to amend the Comprehensive Plan. Her only pause this evening is it is a small property to use one of those four. It is the first one of this year which makes her more inclined to approve it, but on a go forward basis, she cautioned everyone to take that into consideration when we have these before us.

Solicitor stated that the Council President is correct. The actual law is RIGL45-22.2-8 and there is a limitation of four changes to the Comprehensive Plan per calendar year.

Councilwoman Graziano asked if it is possible to put these all together possibly quarterly and then just take up the amendments quarterly. Solicitor stated that that would be at the discretion of the Committee and the Chair as to how you want to schedule them. It seems to be a scheduling issue more than anything. He does not see anything forbidding it. The only issue he sees with that is if the Committee waits until third or fourth quarter, what happens if we get six applications, how would you decide the order for them to be heard? That might be the difficult process for the Committee and it could lead to some disgruntled applicants. Councilwoman Graziano stated that that is what she is trying to avoid.

Council President Marino stated that she believes what Councilwoman Graziano is asking is if there are, for example, six applicants, all those would be in an Ordinance with an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan outlining those six separate applications as one giant amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Solicitor stated that that is a creative approach. That answer would sort of depend. If there were a grouping of Zone Change requests that were filed in a particular area, it might be easier to sell that if we were talking three or four applications, as an example, towards Pippin Orchard and Alpine Estates, but if they were spread out all over the City, he is not quite sure how you could make that fly by saying this is one amendment. He does not know how that would play out, but it is a creative way of thinking, but the risk with that is in theory, a Town or a City could, if they employed

that method, could actually change the Zone on 20-25 different parcels, which would be essentially a major change to the Comprehensive Plan and he does not think the State would look favorably on that. That is his opinion.

Roll call was taken on motion to recommend approval of the above Ordinance and motion passed on a vote of 6-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Council Vice-President Wall, Councilman Andujar and Council President Marino -6. Councilman Campopiano recused.

ORDINANCE 02-25-03 In Amendment of Section 10.32.030 of the City of Cranston, 2005, Entitled ‘Multi-Way Stop Intersections – Enumerated’. Sponsored by Councilwoman Haroian.

Councilwoman Haroian stated that the request is for stop sign to be added and the reason is right now cars are speeding through the streets and there is a concern with the safety of the residents and children in the area. There is a ‘deaf child’ sign on a pole that replaced a stop sign and request is to have that stop sign location back and move the ‘deaf child’ one. She asked if Traffic Engineer report has been provided. Clerk stated that the Clerk’s Office has not received any Traffic Report. Chair asked for approval subject to the Traffic Engineer’s report being received.

Council President Marino thanked Councilwoman Haroian for her attention to this matter and then with the next Ordinance coming up as well. She thinks that this is something that will encourage safety and would definitely be in support of it. She asked to be added as co-sponsor.

Councilwoman Haroian asked if laminated signs that light up could be installed. Solicitor stated that State Law gives three or four options for stop signs. It could be reflective material, it could be a fixed light shining upon it, or it could be the stop sign itself could be illuminated. It is the Committee’s discretion how bright or how illuminated you want the stop sign to be. Councilwoman Haroian stated that her request will stay with the reflective one for now because there are a lot of homes in the area and she would not want to disturb anyone and take it from there.

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded b Council Vice-President Wall, it was voted to recommend approval of the above Ordinance subject to Traffic Engineer report. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Council Vice-President Wall, Councilman Andujar and Council President Marino -7.

ORDINANCE 02-25-04 In Amendment of Section 10.32.020 of the City of Cranston, 2005, Entitled ‘Stop Intersections – Enumerated’. Sponsored by Councilwoman Haroian.

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded b Council Vice-President Wall, it was voted to recommend approval of the above Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Councilwoman Haroian stated that she is requesting a stop sign at the corner of Vale and Riverfarm. Cars are speeding through there. There have been serious accidents on that street. She also has a video Mr. Santurri provided showing cars speeding down the street. Also, there are a lot of kids that play on the street riding their bikes. It is a big safety hazard.

Councilman Campopiano stated that he will support this, but he warned against a false sense of security because any stop sign that goes up, even with a four-way, some people assume that the other person is going to stop and a lot of people do not pay attention. It does not slow people down and it does not stop them from going through stop signs.

Chair stated that he believes Councilwoman Haroian requested the Police monitor the area. He asked if the Solicitor could relay that to the Mayor's Office of this request. Solicitor stated that he will relay that message.

Roll call was taken on motion to recommend approval of this Ordinance and motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Council Vice-President Wall, Councilman Andujar and Council President Marino -7.

VII. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Council Vice-President Wall, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, it was voted to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees