

Hon. Kenneth J. Hopkins
Mayor

Beth E. Ashman, MCP, AICP
Chair / City Planning Director



Armand Niquette
Fire Marshal

Stanley Pikul
Building Official

Frank Corrao, P.E.
Public Works Director

Stephen Mulcahy
DPW: Traffic Safety Division

DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

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

MINUTES CITY HALL – 3rd FLOOR, COUNCIL CHAMBER 9:30AM – WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2026

All interested parties are welcome to participate during the public comments portion for docketed items on this agenda. All materials will be posted to the City's website prior to the meeting at:

<https://www.cranstonri.gov/departments/planning/>

CALL TO ORDER

Beth Ashman – Planning Director and Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m., in the City Council chamber.

The following members were in attendance for the meeting: Frank Corrao - DPW Director, Stephen Mulcahy - Traffic Safety Manager, Scott Weller – Deputy Fire Marshall, and Stanley Pikul – Building Official.

- Armand Niquette – Fire Marshal, could not be present.

Also present: Jonas Bruggemann – Assistant Planning Director, Brianna Valcourt – Senior Planner, and Jamie Ray – Planner Technician.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- May 20, 2026 – Regular Meeting

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Mr. Niquette and seconded by Mr. Pikul, the Committee voted (4-0) to table approval of the May 20, 2026 minutes to the next meeting.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

- **“Dream Big Gymnastics Relocation”** PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL (vote taken)
Waiver of Application
Proposal: Request for waiver from DPR process for a change of use with no extensive construction of improvements for a music and dance studio.
Zoning: M-2 (General Industry)
AP 36, Lots 9 & 95
41 Western Industrial Drive

The Committee reviewed a request for a waiver of Development Plan Review associated with the proposed relocation of Dream Big Gymnastics from 41 Comstock Parkway to 41 Western Industrial Drive. Attorney Amy Goins presented the application on behalf of the applicant, accompanied by Sharon

Cornicelli, owner of Dream Big Gymnastics; Matthew McGeorge, architect; and Christopher Andrade of Insight Engineering.

The applicant explained that the proposal involves the adaptive reuse of an existing industrial building into a gymnastics facility. No changes to the building footprint are proposed, though interior renovations would be completed to accommodate the gymnastics use. The applicant noted that zoning relief for the change of use is scheduled to be heard by the Zoning Board on June 10, 2026.

The primary focus of the discussion involved parking layout, site circulation, and child safety. The applicant explained that several revisions to the parking configuration had been made following discussions with the City Traffic Engineer. The revised plan sought to maximize safety while maintaining the existing paved parking area and minimizing disturbance to existing trees and green space. The applicant proposed utilizing an existing grassed area as a supervised outdoor play area for children participating in summer camps and gymnastics programs. The applicant stated that the outdoor area would include recreational equipment such as inflatable play structures and would be enclosed with bollards and safety barriers.

Mr. Andrade presented the revised parking configuration and explained that the updated layout relocates most parking spaces adjacent to the building to improve pedestrian safety and direct accessibility. He stated that several parking spaces were removed to provide adequate turning radii and safer circulation. Sharon Cornicelli explained that the existing Comstock Parkway facility experiences significant parking constraints, with only approximately 15 to 18 usable parking spaces remaining due to neighboring business activity. She stated that overflow parking currently occurs on surrounding streets and that the proposed relocation would substantially improve operations. Ms. Cornicelli advised that the business currently serves approximately 600 to 650 students and maintains extensive waitlists. She explained that the new facility would allow expansion of programming, additional classes, and increased enrollment capacity. She further stated that class schedules are staggered to minimize traffic congestion and parking demand. The applicant described the operational structure of the facility, including coach-to-student ratios, staggered class transitions, and drop-off procedures intended to reduce on-site congestion. The Committee was informed that many advanced gymnasts are dropped off rather than accompanied by parents during practices. Ms. Cornicelli also discussed the organization's role in Rhode Island high school gymnastics and stated that the facility regularly hosts high school competitions and trains collegiate gymnasts during off-seasons.

The applicant expressed concern regarding a potential alternate layout that would relocate the outdoor play area closer to Western Industrial Drive. Ms. Cornicelli stated that the proposed front-yard location would negatively impact aesthetics and student privacy, particularly during summer camp activities.

Committee Discussion

Stephen Mulcahy stated that his primary concern was not the total parking count, but rather safe circulation within the site. He noted that the site configuration lacks full internal circulation and that vehicles must enter and exit through the same access points. He expressed concern about potential vehicle conflicts near the play area and requested additional protection measures for pedestrian crossings and parking field boundaries. Mr. Mulcahy further recommended physical barriers, curb extensions, and enhanced pedestrian protections to discourage unsafe vehicle maneuvering and improve site organization.

Committee members discussed potential improvements including raised pedestrian crossings, elevated crosswalks functioning as traffic calming devices, painted pedestrian zones, speed reduction measures, signage, and berm protection. Beth Ashman stated that the revised parking layout represented a substantial improvement over the original configuration. She specifically supported narrowing the driveway opening and orienting parking toward the building to improve safety. Ms. Ashman agreed that locating the play area away from Western Industrial Drive created a safer environment for children.

The Committee discussed the need to preserve adequate fire access around the building. Fire Department representatives advised that access requirements would be needed to comply with current

Rhode Island Fire Code standards during plan review. Matthew McGeorge reviewed anticipated building code compliance issues associated with the change of occupancy, including egress calculations, occupant load determinations, plumbing fixture counts, accessibility requirements, and fire code upgrades. He explained that no significant changes to the building envelope are proposed and that most renovations would consist of interior cosmetic improvements and selective demolition.

Committee members also discussed ADA accessibility upgrades, including the installation of an ADA lift and related accessibility improvements. The Committee raised questions regarding potential food service operations within the facility. The applicant confirmed that no commercial kitchen or food preparation facilities are proposed.

Mr. Corrao asked whether modifications to the existing loading dock area could improve parking circulation. The applicant and project engineer responded that while technically feasible, the work would be cost prohibitive and would not materially improve the site layout.

Committee Action

Following discussion, the Committee determined that the requested waiver of Development Plan Review could be granted subject to conditions.

The Committee required that revised plans be submitted administratively showing:

- Enhanced pedestrian crossing improvements;
- Additional curb and parking edge protections; and
- Finalized circulation and striping details.

The applicant also acknowledged the need to complete required municipal industrial pretreatment application materials as part of the sewer review process.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Stanley Pikul and seconded by Scott Weller, the Committee voted (4-0) to approve the waiver of Development Plan Review subject to the conditions discussed.

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| <p>▪ “Crave Cafe”
Waiver of Application
Proposal: Request for waiver from DPR process for a change of use with no extensive construction of improvements for a new café.
Zoning: C-4, A-6
AP 6, Lots 747, 758, 748, and 749
599 Reservoir Avenue</p> | <p>PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL</p> | <p>(vote taken)</p> |
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The Committee reviewed a proposal involving a change of use for an existing commercial building to establish a café and lounge concept.

The applicant, Sandeep Jaiswal, explained that the proposal would expand upon an existing café concept currently operating within a local fitness facility. The proposed business would include smoothies, acai bowls, flatbreads, and similar offerings with no commercial frying or grease-producing cooking operations. The applicant stated that no major exterior building modifications were proposed and that the building had previously been occupied as a pharmacy and later as an auto parts store. The proposal included indoor and outdoor seating areas and modifications to site circulation intended to improve traffic flow and site aesthetics.

Committee Discussion

Fire Department representatives stated that the proposal generally appeared acceptable from an emergency access standpoint, provided that all final plans comply with current fire code requirements during formal plan review.

The Committee discussed several concerns regarding the submitted site plan, including:

- Parking calculations and total seating counts;
- Outdoor seating layout and protection;
- One-way traffic circulation patterns;
- Parking aisle widths;
- Lack of a surveyed and professionally prepared site plan;
- Undefined curb and landscaping treatments;
- Sidewalk and pedestrian protection details; and
- Compliance with current curb cut standards.

Stephen Mulcahy expressed concern regarding circulation patterns and stated that angled parking would better support the proposed one-way traffic flow and improve overall site function. The Committee discussed the need for curbing, hard berm protection between sidewalk and parking, landscaping buffers, and clearer separation between parking areas and outdoor seating spaces.

Stan Pikul stated that the submitted plan lacked sufficient detail and expressed concern about granting a waiver without a properly surveyed and scaled site plan. She noted that additional seating or site modifications added after approval could create future enforcement complications. Committee members nevertheless expressed support for the overall concept and acknowledged that redevelopment of the currently underutilized site would benefit the surrounding area.

The applicant explained that the project is personally significant to the applicant's family due to the building's historic association with a former neighborhood pharmacy frequented by family members. Committee members discussed the prior "Mass Kitchen" proposal previously associated with the property and clarified that earlier approvals and conditions did not automatically apply to the current application. The Committee also discussed the possibility of a drive-through component.

Staff advised that the site likely does not meet minimum lot size requirements for a drive-through use and that such a proposal would create additional parking, circulation, stacking, and Rhode Island Department of Transportation review requirements. The applicant expressed concern regarding the financial burden and potential delay.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Frank Corrao and seconded by Stanley Pikul, the Committee voted (4-0) to continue the matter to the next meeting.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Stanley Pikul and seconded by Frank Corrao, the Committee voted (4-0) to adjourn.

Adjournment (Next Meeting | June 3, 2026)