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Mayor

Michael E. Smith  
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Richard Bernardo  
Robert Coupe  
Steven Frias  
Kathleen Lanphear  
Ann Marie Maccarone  
Thomas Zidelis

**CITY PLAN COMMISSION**  
Cranston City Hall  
869 Park Avenue, Cranston, RI 02910

**Draft Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – 6:30PM**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Floor - City Council Chamber, 869 Park Avenue, Cranston RI**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 869 Park Avenue.

The following Commissioners were in attendance for the meeting: Chairman Michael Smith, Richard Bernardo, Robert Coupe, Steven Frias, Kathleen Lanphear, Frank Ritz, and Thomas Zidelis. Commissioners James Donahue and Ann Marie Maccarone were absent.

The following Planning Department members were in attendance: Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP, Planning Director; Douglas McLean, AICP, Principal Planner; Gregory Guertin, Senior Planner; Alexander Berardo, Planning Technician; Amelia Lavallee, Planning Department Intern; and Angelina Coppola, Planning Department Intern.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- 11/15/22 City Plan Commission Meeting (vote taken)

Chairman Smith asked if the Commissioners wished to recommend any edits prior to voting on the minutes. Mr. Frias asked for three minor edits to page 3 of the draft minutes to clarify points he made during the 747 Pontiac Avenue discussion.

Upon motion by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Bernardo, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to accept Mr. Frias' recommended edits to the City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 11/15/22.

Upon motion by Ms. Lanphear, and seconded by Mr. Ritz, the City Plan Commission unanimously (7-0) to **approve** the City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 11/15/22 as amended by Mr. Frias.

**SUBDIVISIONS AND MAJOR LAND DEVELOPMENTS**

- **“Comstock Industrial” PUBLIC HEARING** (vote taken)  
PRELIMINARY PLAN - Major Land Development

Construct 2 new buildings on the 17.31-acre property for the purpose of large-scale industrial, manufacturing, warehousing and trucking activities  
Zoned M-1 (Restricted Industrial)  
AP 36, Lot 46  
Comstock Parkway

Principal Planner Douglas McLean gave the Staff presentation for the Preliminary Plan – Major Land Development application. He summarized the proposal to build two buildings, collectively totaling some 270,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, for a use that will be consistent with uses allowed in an M-1 zone (warehousing/trucking and ancillary office). For the benefit of newer Commissioners, he also noted that the project received Master Plan approval when it came before the Plan Commission about one year ago. Mr. McLean shared several images, including zoning and FLUM maps, aerials showing site conditions, as well as the site plan and landscape plan. Finally, Mr. McLean called attention to the webpage for the meeting, which included reports on Comprehensive Plan consistency and environmental/noise impacts; a traffic study; and a landscape plan, many of which were also peer-reviewed. He concluded by noting Staff made a positive recommendation based on its Findings of Fact as contained in the Memo.

Chairman Smith invited the applicant to present its project. Atty. Robert Murray, representing the applicant (Comstock Industrial LLC), introduced the members of the project team: John Walsh, principal of Comstock Industrial LLC; William Walter, P.E., Benesch Engineering; John Carter, PLA; and Mark Wallace, VP of Tech Environmental, Inc. Atty. Murray also noted Sennotech Environmental LLC was the City's peer-review consultant on sound, and Bradford Associates LLC was the landscape peer reviewer.

Atty. Murray reminded the Commissioners that the 17-acre site is zoned M-1 and would host the largest (and most thoroughly-vetted) industrial project he had ever represented. He compared the project's lack of identified end user to the situation of 20 Goddard Drive, a comparably-sized project, and noted that prospective tenants for facilities of this size do not show interest this early in the permitting process. He did note that all proposed uses are permitted by-right and clarified that manufacturing uses, though also permitted by-right in the M-1 zone, would not be among the uses this project would accommodate. He also observed that the subject parcel's M-1 zone has been constant, while the land on which the adjacent condominium development to the south sites was rezoned from industrial to B-2 in the more recent past.

Mr. Walter gave a brief overview of the site design, particularly the relationship between the driveway locations and mitigation of both noise and stormwater runoff. Truck traffic will be kept to the northern side of the larger of the two buildings (further from the road) so that the building can function as a sound wall, keeping the noise away from the condos to the south. He reviewed how the design accommodates RIDEM standards for stormwater runoff and discharge into wetland areas through a combination of above-ground and below-ground detention basins to ensure the project does not result in a net increase in stormwater runoff over present conditions. Mr. Frias asked for confirmation of the total number of loading bays for each of the two buildings and that runoff at the site's western edge would not flow onto the street in sufficient quantities to cause flooding. Mr. Walter did not recall the precise number of loading bays off the top of his head, but noted the pitch of the paved areas will ensure water neither flows onto neighboring parcels nor floods the roadway.

Mr. Carter spoke to the development and peer-reviewing of the landscape plan, specifically with regard to the southern property line that is shared with the condominium complex and other residential abutters. He said the design for the site will comply with relevant City code standards for street trees and roadway buffers. He said the automobile parking area on the southern side of the larger building will be either above, at, or below grade for residential abutters given the topography of the site. In any case, it will be screened with a mix of deciduous and evergreen plants to create a natural buffer with a true understory. He also observed the presence of some trees of significant height along the property line, which will form the baseline of the buffer, and said the applicant proposes to build an earthen berm where the subject site

is at-grade with abutters and to construct a 6-foot fence along part of the southern property line for further screening.

Mr. Ritz asked if the berm would contribute to noise reduction; Mr. Carter said it would, and that their noise study consultants had reviewed the relationship between density of material and ability to block sound. Ms. Lanphear asked whether 1-2 layers of trees would be sufficient to block noise and light from the parking lot and whether there was a plan in writing for replacement of the landscaped buffer in case enough plants die in a certain area. Mr. Carter said replacement is usually written into the contract for the landscaper, but typically is attached to a 1-year warranty, although some communities ask for more time. Mr. Frias asked why the applicant did not agree to a minimum 20-foot vegetated buffer as the peer reviewer suggested in one of her letters; Atty. Murray said that was a discretionary DPRC standard, and Mr. McLean added that the Committee decided it would be unnecessary to require it for the entire length due to the content of the existing buffer. (He also noted the peer reviewer was present for the meeting and was satisfied with that outcome.)

Mr. Wallace reviewed his recent history of working on warehouse projects in MA and RI and said he was familiar with the common concerns associated with this type of project. He confirmed that the larger building would act as a sound barrier if truck traffic and loading docks were kept to the northern side as currently proposed. He said he also used 3D modeling to examine various potential sound impacts from trucking, HVAC equipment, and other potential noise sources associated with the facility. He recommended a 6-foot-tall fence (assuming a material density of 1lb per ft<sup>2</sup> and no gaps) to serve as a secondary sound wall that could reduce the noise impact to near-ambient conditions. Mr. Frias asked for confirmation that the study's assumption (not exceeding 50 decibels on the larger building's southern side) could be interpreted as an assurance that trucks would not travel on that side of the building; Mr. Wallace confirmed that to be the case. Mr. Frias also asked about the peer reviewer's statement that the project would be compliant with City code but not necessarily complaint-free, specifically whether Mr. Wallace was aware of noise complaints with comparable projects. Mr. Wallace drew a distinction between the subject nature of complaints and the objective nature of compliance with City code, but said in any case that he was not aware of noise complaints for buildings that followed the basic format proposed in this project.

Mr. Frias said the proximity of the residential abutters was one of his main concerns and asked several questions to understand whether the noise study had accounted for extended periods of vehicles idling or reversing on-site, what form(s) enforcement or monitoring might take, and how Mr. Wallace would describe certain decibel estimates through examples. Mr. Wallace noted that compliance would probably be most critical during the evening hours, and the process of determining where noises are coming from (on-site vs. elsewhere) would take an extended period of monitoring. Solicitor Marsella said City code allows for people to temporarily exceed decibel limits (i.e. mowing a lawn) but also noted there are state laws preventing trucks from idling for longer than five minutes. Atty. Murray reminded the Commission that it should not assume the applicant will not comply with noise standards and allow that assumption to affect the standard to which they hold this project versus others.

Chairman Smith then invited members of the public to speak.

- Aldo Testa, of 12 Sweet Corn Drive, said the Crossroads Condominium community has given its reasons as to why it doesn't think the development is appropriate for the site (chief among them concerns that the traffic study is underestimating the impacts of this project on circulation in the area). He questioned what the City's plan would be if these traffic concerns prove correct and regretted that many details of the project, including the end user and its overall benefits, remain unknown.
- James Lantini, of 1 Sweet Pea Drive, criticized the traffic study as unrealistic and doubted that the landscaping improvements would mitigate sound impacts.

- Steven Disciullo, of 9 Sweet Pea Drive, echoed Mr. Lantini's comments regarding the likely inadequacy of the landscaping and fence as a buffer, particularly given the building's 35-foot height, and voiced concerns that the size of the facility could enable it to be busier than the traffic study is estimating.
- Bill Duarte, of 18 Sweet Pea Drive, doubted the traffic study's findings and noted Comstock Parkway is a major cut-through for a lot of people in Western Cranston.
- Rep. Barbara Ann Fenton Fung, House District 15, thanked the applicant team for being responsive to questions and relayed that the scale of the project has concerned abutters. She said the lighting aspect on the southern side of the larger building remains a concern, asked if the wall proposed for the southern property line was a sound wall or a retaining wall, and observed Comstock Parkway is narrow enough that there isn't much shoulder space in which to pull over.
- Timothy Ramos, of 1025 Scituate Avenue, expressed concerns about potential traffic impacts and the fact that the project could be approved even before an end user has been identified.
- Jason Barry, of 1039 Scituate Avenue, asked for the following conditions to be placed on the Commission's approval of the project if it chooses to approve: 1) Codifying that the intensity of the industrial zone be limited to warehousing, as currently discussed in the plan, to eliminate the chance that manufacturing, cold storage, or other uses which the noise study does not anticipate could eventually come to the site; and 2) Preserving as much of the existing vegetation as possible during the construction process to ensure that new plantings are not simply recovering "lost ground" from clearing a previously-existing natural buffer.

Atty. Murray took a few minutes to address some of the concerns raised during the public comment period. He said it would be unfair to the applicant, and outside of the Commission's jurisdiction, to impose restrictions on by-right uses in an M-1 zone for this parcel. He said the applicant has been transparent in its statements and in its site/building design about the fact that the project does not involve manufacturing, and he said he understood why some of the abutters weren't comfortable with the fact that the end user is not yet known. As for traffic, he said Director Pezzullo called for a traffic study and a peer review at the very first meeting in which the project was discussed. He recalled that a traffic study was conducted at the Master Plan phase and that it was revisited after the Comstock Crossing (retail/café) project was proposed to ensure its assumptions would still hold. He confirmed that the wall proposed for the southern lot line would be a sound wall, and he noted that lighting was discussed with the DPRC and will be as unobtrusive as possible on the southern side of the building.

Mr. Walsh then expanded on a few of the points Atty. Murray raised. He assured the Commissioners and the public that the traffic study and other studies that were conducted for this project are based on a significant amount of empirical evidence. He said the type of warehouse he's proposing will be served by slow-moving industrial traffic, which does not generate traffic peaks. It would add around 2% to the current level of traffic on Comstock Parkway. Mr. Frias expanded on the concerns some members of the public raised about manufacturing uses coming to the site in the future and asked if the Commission's approval would remain valid in the event the use of the property changes to that extent. Director Pezzullo and Solicitor Marsella said in the event of a change of use from one by-right use to another, the project would not come back before the Commission, but would rather be subject to a more specialized DPR or Building Department review. Mr. Walsh said the site plan that has been submitted to the Commission is specifically intended for a warehouse and could not be used for manufacturing. After asking a few other questions regarding nighttime traffic and vegetated buffers, Mr. Frias asked whether the word "regular" in the first Condition of Approval in the Staff Memo should be removed and the phrase "except in case of emergency" be added at the end, as the sound study seemed to indicate there would be no regular truck movements on the southern side of the building despite the fact that it was designed so that an 18-wheeler could maneuver around that side. Mr. McLean confirmed that was Staff's intended meaning.

Mr. Lantini addressed the Commission again to ask how the traffic load could be known without knowing the end user. Following his additional comment, Chairman Smith asked if any other members of the

public wished to speak. Seeing none, he asked for a motion to close public comment. Upon motion made by Mr. Coupe, and seconded by Mr. Bernardo, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to close public comment.

Briefly addressing Mr. Lantini's comment, Mr. McLean said that the Commission has operated under the assumption that the end user would be unknown for the past year, since the Master Plan application was considered. He said the applicant and peer-reviewer were asked to review traffic impacts assuming the most intense usage possible, so all study findings are predicated on the highest-impact user that would be reasonably expected for the site.

Mr. Frias said he thought this project illustrated why it was a mistake for the City to have rezoned industrial land for condominium usage and allow the two uses to abut one another, but added that the applicant seems to be working in good faith and has a right to enjoy its own (industrial) property as the condominium owners have a right to enjoy their own (residential) properties. He asked whether the commitments that the applicant made regarding sound impacts should be made Conditions of Approval, but Mr. McLean said it would be duplicative to do so, as all submittals from the applicant are considered part of the record and inform the standards to which it is held.

Upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Coupe, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to amend Condition #1 according to Mr. Frias' prior suggestion.

Ms. Lanphear moved to include a comment that Traffic Safety Manager Stephen Mulcahy provided for the Staff Memo, which recommended the applicant be responsible for financing upgrades to the Comstock Parkway/Western Industrial intersection if the project increases traffic levels to the extent that upgrades are warranted, as another Condition. Mr. Bernardo opposed the inclusion of that condition; Mr. Frias seconded for discussion purposes. Mr. Bernardo said the condition would be too restrictive on the project and added that traffic impacts can result from a number of factors that are not the fault of the applicant. Ms. Lanphear asked if the phrase "resulting from" implied that some sort of analysis would have to be undertaken to confirm the applicant was the cause of the traffic issues, but Mr. Bernardo said consulting firms are hired to figure out which impacts can be directly attributable to the project in question.

Chairman Smith asked for a formal vote on Ms. Lanphear's motion to add a Condition based on Mr. Mulcahy's comments, recalling that Mr. Frias had already seconded the motion for discussion purposes. The City Plan Commission voted 1-6 (Ms. Lanphear voted Yes) to add the proposed Condition; therefore, the motion failed.

Finally, upon motion made by Mr. Coupe, and seconded by Mr. Zidelis, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to accept the Findings of Fact in the Staff Memo and recommend approval of the Preliminary Plan – Major Land Development subject to the accepted Conditions.

- **“Orchard Meadows” PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING** (vote taken)  
 MASTER PLAN – Major Subdivision with street extension  
 Nine (9) lot subdivision resulting in four (4) additional single-family homes  
 Zoned A-80  
 AP 28, Lots 31, 45, 86, and 10  
 1489 Pippin Orchard Road

Senior Planner Gregory Guertin gave the Staff presentation. He said he was proposing a 9-lot subdivision of several A-80 zoned parcels through the Residential Planned District (RPD) tool, which would result in 4 new single-family homes. He confirmed the use was allowed by-right and that the resulting density of the proposal (0.24 units/acre) was consistent with the FLUM's recommendation. He reported that RPD development regulations call for at least 25% of the site to be dedicated as deed-restricted open space; this proposal would dedicate 60% of the site, creating a buffer between the

residential lots and the wetlands/power lines further away from Pippin Orchard Road. Mr. Guertin said the applicant has not yet received RIDEM wetland edge verification, and noted the location of the proposed public roadway would trigger a variance for one of the lots, but said that Staff recommended approval subject to the Condition that the applicant must gain full RIDEM approval before submitting its Preliminary Plan application.

Atty. Sanford Resnick, of Resnick & Caffrey, PC, addressed the Commission to inform them he represented the applicant before deferring to Dave Russo, P.E. with DiPrete Engineering, to give a presentation of the project.

Mr. Russo said Mr. Guertin's presentation covered most of the points he planned to address. He noted that the wetlands had been flagged by professional biologists and that the site currently includes some farm/field areas. He said the yield plan for the site shows a density of six lots can be achieved by-right, and the applicant is proposing an RPD-style subdivision. Concerning the variance request for one of the existing houses, which would need front setback relief from the proposed 24-foot roadway (whose right-of-way line comes closer than is allowed), Mr. Russo explained that the new roadway's course essentially follows that of the existing driveway, with slight meandering to preserve some landscaping. He said they had spent time examining the driveway in detail and feel this configuration is best. Mr. Russo also reported that the existing houses have septic systems but will want to connect to the sewer line. Houses with frontage on Pippin Orchard Rd will have direct sewer connections, while the other houses will connect via an extension.

Atty. Resnick asked whether the Commission would make a recommendation on the variance request that evening and whether the applicant could reserve the right to move the proposed roadway if they cannot receive ZBR approval for the variance application. Director Pezzullo said the Commission won't make a recommendation until that application is submitted; Solicitor Marsella confirmed they could change the roadway's location at Preliminary Plan if necessary.

Chairman Smith invited members of the public to speak.

Atty. Aram Jarret, of Jarret Law LLC, spoke first. He said he was representing the Estate of William Kearney, the owner of Proposed Lot 6. Atty. Jarret said his client was generally in favor of the proposal but wanted to mention a few of her concerns, among them 1) that the new roadway does not come any closer to her house than the existing driveway does, 2) to memorialize a commitment the applicant made to connect his client's lot to the water line on Pippin Orchard Road, since Lot 6 has a well on an abutting lot, and 3) that further discussions between both sides can take place regarding his client joining a proposed HOA for the water retention basin. Atty. Resnick briefly responded to confirm he had spoken beforehand with Atty. Jarret about those terms and confirmed his client would not have to pay into an HOA.

Chairman Smith asked for a motion to close public comment. Upon motion made by Ms. Lanphear, and seconded by Mr. Coupe, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to close public comment.

Solicitor Marsella asked if Atty. Jarret's requests could be made conditions; Chairman Smith said he thought it made sense to add them. Mr. Guertin then read the positive Staff recommendation and the Staff-generated conditions (securing relevant state permits and zoning relief), and then read the extra proposed conditions (the new road will mirror the existing driveway and not move closer to the home presently located on Lot 6; the developer agrees to connect Lot 6 to City water and disconnect the existing well; and the Lot 6 owner will not be required to join the HOA).

Chairman Smith asked for a motion to add the extra conditions. Upon motion made by Mr. Zidelis, and seconded by Mr. Bernardo, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to add the three extra conditions to the Staff recommendation.

Upon motion made by Mr. Coupe, and seconded by Mr. Ritz, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the Master Plan – Major Subdivision application, subject to the conditions previously discussed.

- **“Ridgewood – Section 9” PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING** (vote taken)  
 MASTER PLAN – Major Subdivision with street extension  
 Eight (8) lot subdivision resulting in seven (7) additional single-family homes  
 Zoned A-80  
 AP 29, Lot 5  
 341 Laten Knight Road

Planning Technician Alexander Berardo gave the Staff presentation. He said the applicant proposed to subdivide an existing 23-acre lot into eight conforming A-80 lots to yield seven new single-family house lots. He shared zoning maps, aerial imagery, and the site plan associated with the proposal. Mr. Berardo said the applicant proposed to service the lots with private wells and public sewer via a connection at Laten Knight Road. The lots would be accessed by an extension of the Crest Drive cul-de-sac (which presently ends at the parcel's northern lot line) about two-thirds of the way down into the parcel towards Laten Knight Road. Crest Drive would remain a cul-de-sac under this proposed extension. Mr. Berardo noted the applicant has not yet shown where it intends to locate a stormwater retention basin and would need to do so with its Preliminary Plan submittal, along with providing full RIDEM wetland permitting.

Chairman Smith invited the applicant to speak to the proposal.

Richard Byzdyra, PLS, President of Ocean State Planners, Inc., spoke on behalf of the applicant, Lee Beausoleil, who was also present for the meeting. Mr. Byzdyra reminded the Commission that the project had come before them for a pre-application discussion in September and briefly summarized the proposal in broad terms. Speaking specifically to the wetland verification matter, Mr. Byzdyra said the edges had been flagged before, but are being re-flagged now, so the official wetland edge verification is still in progress.

Chairman Smith then invited members of the public to comment.

- Nancy Castagliuolo, of 45 Crest Drive (direct abutter to the north on the left side of Crest Drive), said she was not necessarily opposed to the proposal but did have concerns, as one of the reasons she purchased her property was its location at the end of a cul-de-sac. She asked if any sort of impact study had been done for that portion of Crest Drive; what would happen to the barn that the current owner had improved if it were going to be left on a separate lot from the existing house; whether the current owner would develop the lots and build the houses himself; and why the applicant sought to extend Crest Drive southward instead of building a new cul-de-sac northward off of Laten Knight Rd.
- Lesly Pineyro, of 50 Crest Drive (direct abutter to the north on the right side of Crest Drive), echoed Ms. Castagliuolo's comment that the appeal for her property was the privacy that came with being located at the end of the street. She asked that new houses not be built so close to hers that she would lose significant privacy.

Addressing some of the concerns that were raised, Mr. Byzdyra said the application was prepared in accordance with the City's official checklist, which did not call for any particular impact study to be conducted. He said that Crest Drive has already been extended before, and the way the last two houses are positioned (off to the sides of the street, not standing in the path of the roadway) indicates an intentional decision to leave open the possibility of a future extension. Mr. Byzdyra said the applicant hadn't yet decided what to do with the barn. As for the choice to extend Crest Drive, he explained if the new roadway came north from Laten Knight Road, the dimensions of the parcel are such that there would be one fewer buildable lot. He added that the applicant wanted to build houses in the same style as those found on Crest Drive and felt the connection would be more natural if they all stood on the same street.

Solicitor Marsella said there would need to be a Condition of Approval addressing the barn because City code did not allow for an ancillary structure to stand without a primary structure on its own lot. He said the barn would have to be demolished, moved, converted into a house, or made accessory to a new house. Mr. Byzdyra said that condition would be acceptable.

Mr. Coupe asked if the applicant had considered keeping the existing driveway connection to Laten Knight Road open temporarily (during construction) for heavy vehicle access. Mr. Byzdyra said he would check with Mr. Beausoleil but imagined it would work; Ms. Castagliuolo asked if that idea could also be made a Condition of Approval.

Chairman Smith asked for a motion to close public comment. Upon motion made by Mr. Bernardo, and seconded by Mr. Coupe, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to close public comment.

Mr. Berardo then read the Staff recommendation, which was to approve the Master Plan application subject to several conditions, among them a requirement that the applicant ultimately remove those sections of the existing cul-de-sac bulb that are located on private property and replace the pavement with loam/plantings.

Chairman Smith asked if the condition related to use of the driveway off Laten Knight Road during construction should be added now or at a later phase. Director Pezzullo said it won't be relevant until Final Plan, but it wouldn't hurt to include it. Solicitor Marsella also reiterated the need for a condition to anticipate the potential issue with the barn.

Upon motion made by Mr. Coupe, and seconded by Mr. Zidelis, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to incorporate those two conditions into the Staff recommendation.

Mr. Bernardo asked for confirmation that the applicant envisioned a planted island in the bulb of the proposed cul-de-sac extension, to which Mr. Byzdyra said yes. Mr. Bernardo said DPW would strongly recommend against it because it would present unnecessary maintenance issues, for example with snow plowing.

Upon motion made by Mr. Bernardo, and seconded by Ms. Lanphear, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the Master Plan – Major Subdivision application subject to the conditions included in the Staff Memo as amended.

- **“Gladstone Elementary School”** **INFORMATIONAL** (no vote taken)  
 PRE-APPLICATION – Major Land Development  
 Demolish and construct new elementary school complex on 8 acre +/-existing lot  
 Zoned B-1  
 AP 7, Lot 2357  
 Property has frontage on Lawrence, Gladstone, Dover, Asia, Oxford and Elwyn Streets

Mr. McLean gave a brief introduction to the proposal by explaining that the new school project had been envisioned in a manner that was consistent with the Rhode Island Department of Education's "newer and fewer" school consolidation objectives. He then turned the discussion over to the applicant team, comprised of Mike Zavalía, a Civil Engineer with Commonwealth Engineering; Christopher Lane, project architect of record with Finegold Alexander Architects; and Inga Knox, Senior Project Manager with Jacobs Engineering.

Mr. Zavalía said the proposal involved demolishing the existing Gladstone elementary school and replacing it with a new building. He noted the abutting streets dead-end near the school and that the site has unique topography, most notably a 60-foot drop from the northwest to southeast corners, which gives the school building a five-story reveal on one side. He said access is currently possible from a driveway off Lawrence, Gladstone, and two other roads. An existing driveway, which is used by buses and connects to the service entrance on the building's lower side, traverses the property on its eastern side. He said the paved parking and play areas, as well as the existing playground in the northwest corner (which technically belongs to the City, not the school), would remain in place.

Turning to the proposal, Mr. Zavalía said the new school building would be located more towards the interior of the site. The front (northwestern) side would be three stories tall, while the rear would be five stories tall. There would be a new driveway entrance exclusively for buses as well as some visitor



parking. Stormwater management will be accounted for, and they are looking to add more exterior play areas. Mr. Zavalia said the building would need to seek a variance for height (proposing 53 feet vs. a maximum by-right of 35 feet). He acknowledged the ask was significant but said they would demonstrate it is comparable to existing conditions and necessary for the school's ideal configuration. Finally, he said RIDE suggested a driveway connection from the upper parking lot to Lawrence Street, which the project team will evaluate but is not sure it will endorse.

Mr. Lynn briefly addressed the Commission to speak in more detail to the building's height and footprint, saying the design was responding to challenging topography. It would include 32 classrooms across the uppermost three floors, which will accommodate a projected 700 students, with non-public spaces (i.e. mechanical rooms) as well as the gymnasium on the two floors below. Chairman Smith asked if the consolidation aspect meant students would come into the school from other districts; Ms. Knox said a portion of the students currently attending Waterman Elementary School would move to the expanded Gladstone (the remainder would attend the Garden City school).

Mr. Zavalia said they would aim to come back before the Commission with Master Plan and Zoning Variance applications in February 2023.

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

(votes taken for all items)

- **ROBERTO PICCOLINO (OWN/APP)** has filed an application to grant relief on an existing single family dwelling encroaching into the side setback on an under-sized lot merged by zoning at **85 Randall Street**, A.P. 12, lot 16; area 5,000 s.f.; zoned B1. Applicants seek relief per Section 17.92.010- Variances; Sections 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity Regulations, 17.88.010- Substandard lots of record.

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. Ritz, the City Plan Commission voted 6-1 (Ms. Lanphear voted No) to forward a **positive recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review.

- **ROBERTO PICCOLINO (OWN/APP)** has applied to the Board to allow a new single-family dwelling to be constructed on an under-sized lot merged by zoning at **0 Randall Street**, A.P. 12, lot 15; area 5,000 s.f.; zoned B1. Applicants seek relief per Section 17.92.010- Variances; Sections 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity Regulations, 17.88.010- Substandard lots of record.

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. Ritz, and seconded by Mr. Zidelis, the City Plan Commission voted 6-1 (Ms. Lanphear voted No) to forward a **positive recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review.

- **GARFIELD AVE FOODS, LLC. (OWN) and LAMAR CENTRAL OUTDOOR, LLC (APP)** have applied to the Board to convert an existing over-sized billboard sign to a digital LED billboard display of same size at **110 Garfield Avenue**, A.P. 7, lots 2561-62, 2593-97, and 3768, area 29,091 s.f. zoned M2. Applicants seek relief per Section 17.92.010- Variances; Table 17.72.010 (7)- Signs.

*This item was continued at the request of the applicant.*

- **295 INDUSTRIAL PARK, LLC (OWN) and WASTEXPRESS LLC (APP)** have filed an application to request approval of a motor vehicle and container storage use to be allowed at

**60 Amflex Drive**, A.P. 36, lot 114, area 60,000 s.f., zoned M2. Applicants seek relief per Section 17.92.020- Special Use Permit.

Due to the finding that the application is consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Map, and due to the fact that the applicant has demonstrated compliance with all required sections of zoning, including the Special Use Permit criteria, upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Coupe, the City Plan Commission voted 7-0 to forward a **positive recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review.

- **MATTHEW B NELSON 50 BLACKAMORE AVENUE CRANSTON RI 02920 (OWN/APP)** has filed an application for permission to convert an existing detached 2 story garage with new addition into a residential dwelling unit with restricted rear and corner side yard setback at **50 Blackamore Avenue**. AP 9/3, Lot 724, 723, area 8000+/- SF; zoned B-1. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010 Variance, Sections 17.20.120 Schedule of Intensity; 17.20.070 More than one dwelling structure on any lot prohibited.

Due to the finding that the applicant's proposal is generally inconsistent with Land Use Principle 4 and Land Use Policy 9.3 of the Comprehensive Plan, upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Zidelis, the City Plan Commission voted 7-0 to forward a **negative recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review.

- **SOKHENG RITHY (OWN/APP)** has applied to the Board to construct a new two-family dwelling on an under-sized lot and exceeding allowable lot coverage at 0 Narragansett Street, A.P. 2, lot 672; area 6,450 s.f.; zoned B2. Applicants seek relief per Section 17.92.010- Variances; Sections 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity Regulations.

Upon motion made by Ms. Lanphear, and seconded by Mr. Frias, the City Plan Commission voted 7-0 to forward a **negative recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review.

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

(no vote taken)

- Comprehensive Plan – 10-Year Update
- 2023 Work Plan – Long range planning topics, schedule workshop(s)

Director Pezzullo said he hoped to schedule a workshop for early next year to discuss Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). He said the City Council and the Housing Commission are both discussing the topic now; he added that the language the City has in its Code regarding in-law apartments will have to be replaced with an updated ADU-focused discussion.

Director Pezzullo also reported the Commission will eventually need to consider how it wants to handle recreational marijuana sales and that he is continuing to work with the Finance department on the Comprehensive Plan RFP.

#### **ADJOURNMENT / NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

(vote taken)

- Tuesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 — City Hall Council Chambers, 869 Park Avenue

Upon motion made by Mr. Bernardo, and seconded by Mr. Coupe, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to adjourn the meeting at 11:26pm.