

Kenneth J. Hopkins
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Michael E. Smith
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Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP
Planning Director



Ken Mason, P.E.
Robert Strom
Frederick Vincent
Kathleen Lanphear
Ann Marie Maccarone
Joseph Morales
Robert DiStefano
Robert Coupe

CITY PLAN COMMISSION

Cranston City Hall
869 Park Avenue, Cranston, RI 02910

October 5th, City Plan Commission Meeting

MINUTES

Chairman Smith called the City Plan Commission Meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 869 Park Avenue.

The following Commissioners were in attendance for the meeting: Chairman Smith, Ken Mason, Ann Marie Maccarone, Robert Strom, Robert Coupe, Kathleen Lanphear, Frederick Vincent, Joseph Morales and Robert Coupe. Robert DiStefano was absent.

The following Planning Department members were in attendance: Jason M. Pezzullo, Planning Director, Doug McLean, Principal Planner and Joshua Berry, Senior Planner.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion made by Commissioner Vincent, and seconded by Commissioner Lanphear, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously to **approve** the regular City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 9/7/21.

SUBDIVISIONS & LAND DEVELOPMENTS

"Trolley Barn Plaza" (vote taken)

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Master Plan - Major Land Development
Proposed bank with drive-thru, gas station / mini mart with drive-thru, drive-thru restaurant, retail auto parts / warehouse distribution on 6.91-acre site
Zoned M-2 (General Industry), (Comp Plan amendment & conditional C-5 zone proposed as separate ordinances to be considered in November)
777 Cranston Street – AP 7, Lot 1

Senior Planner Joshua Berry briefly presented the proposal to the Commission as a Major Land Development / Master Plan. He explained to the Commission that both ordinances both for the amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code will not be considered at this time as the advertising requirements would push these matters to the November meeting at the earliest. He reiterated that the proposal is not a by-right project and requires significant amendments to these documents.

Nicholas Goodier, attorney for the applicant, gave a brief explanation of how the application has advanced since the Pre-Application meeting. He discussed how the western property line will be supplemented beyond

the existing vegetation. He also stated that they have been working with an expert in ground penetrating equipment to try and locate the "mystery tunnel" that might have led directly under Cranston Street and into the former location of the Narragansett Brewery. In discussing the demand on parking, he stated that the final tenant mix will dictate parking and not the other way around. Also, in responding to comments about the site being over parked, this would also be determined by the final tenant mix.

Mrs. Dana Nisbut P.E. of DiPrete Engineering presented site plan details for the Commission. She stated that the Phase II environmental studies have been initiated and that this information will be presented and incorporated in the Preliminary Plan phase. She discussed how the three proposed curb cuts will be aligned with existing street light and street pattern on Garfield Avenue.

Commissioner Vincent questioned if the western vegetated buffer will be adequate and be maintained by the developer. Mrs. Nisbit explained they will not rely on the State for the maintenance of this landscaping strip.

Mr. Paul Bannon P.E. of BETA Engineering presented his report on expected traffic impacts. He stated that traffic generally flows freely until the PM Peak time between 4-6 PM. He stated that Niantic Avenue experiences blockages and that future conditions should function better post construction. He detailed how 60-65% of the traffic generated by the convenience store is passerby traffic (cars otherwise already on the road). He stated that during peak hours, the site will generate 500 trips per hour, and most of that would be passerby traffic. There are improvements proposed to the existing intersections that would mitigate some of this additional traffic flow. Some of these improvements will be protected left turns and also right-in and right-out turning movements only. Mr. Bannon has responded to the City's per review by stating that this proposed development is vehicle-centric and that the developer will work to incorporate pedestrians into the final design. Finally, Mr. Bannon stated the AutoZone proposal will not include auto repair and will be used for warehousing and fulfillment of auto parts to regional retail locations.

Chairman Smith stated that October 26-28 are suitable dates for a joint site walk with the City Council for this proposal. The applicant concluded their presentation at which point Chairman Smith opened the public comments portion of the meeting. No comments were offered and therefore Chairman Smith moved to the staff recommendation.

Senior Planner Joshua Berry stated that the proposal before the Plan Commission is a by-right and discussed several elements he expects the applicant to discuss at the next meeting. Mr. Berry stated that gas might not be the best land use to front on Cranston Street across from multi-family residential development. Commission Mason stated this concern was overblown with the adoption of newest technology which mitigates most of the escaping fumes from the newest pumps. Commission Vincent stated that the applicant should have an approved remediation plan prior to any final approval by the City.

Upon motion by Commissioner Strom and seconded by Commission Mason, the Plan Commission voted unanimously to be the Master Plan to the November 2nd regular meeting.

ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW - RECOMMENDATIONS

- **MANUEL A. VENTURA (OWN/APP)** has filed an application to enclose a second story exterior porch encroaching into the required front yard setback at **212 Terrace Ave.** A.P. 7, lot 429; area 4,170 s.f.; zoned B1. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010-Variance; Section 17.20.120-Schedule of Intensity Regulations; 17.20.110- Residential yard exceptions.

Due to the finding that the application is generally consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan and finding that relief would not significantly impair the visual character of the area, upon a motion by Mr. Vincent, seconded by Mr. Strom, the Plan Commission voted (8-0) to forward a **positive recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.

- **PATRICIA and KELLEY McLAUGHLIN (OWN/APP)** have filed an application to raze an existing non-conforming garage and to construct a new garage with reduced front and side

setbacks on a corner lot at **42 Bluff Ave**, A.P. 2, lot 932; area 27,209 s.f; zoned A12. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010-Variance; Sections 17.20.120-Schedule of Intensity Regulations.

Due to the finding that relief would reduce existing nonconformities, and finding that the proposal is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, upon a motion by Ms. Lanphear, seconded by Mr. Mason, the Plan Commission voted (8-0) to forward a **positive recommendation** on this application to the Zoning Board of Review.

- **CARTER HOLDINGS, LLC (OWN) and PALUMBO LAW (APP)** have filed an application to install signage greater than which is allowed and with electronic message center at **481 Atwood Ave**, A.P.12, lot 3117, area 30,000 s.f; zoned M1. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010-Variance; Sections 17.72.010(7)-Signs.

Due to the findings that the proposed application is generally inconsistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan, and that there are safety concerns with the sign's massing and location as it relates to vehicle sightlines, upon a motion by Mr. Vincent, seconded by Mr. Strom, the Plan Commission voted (8-0) to forward a **negative recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.

- **UNIVERSAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, LLC (OWN) and FIRST HARTFORD REALTY CORP.** have filed an application to construct a new drive through car wash with a restricted front setback and increased allowable signage at **250 Warwick Ave**, A.P. 2 lots 1049- 1052, 1054-1055, 1096-1103, 1105-1113, and 3984; area 115,854+- s.f.; zoned C5. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010-Variance; Sections 17.20.120-Schedule of Intensity; 17.72.010(6)-signs.

Due to the findings that the proposed variance requests are generally consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan, and that relief would not detract from the character of the surrounding area or create potential safety concerns, upon a motion by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Vincent, the Plan Commission voted (8-0) to forward a **positive recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Mr. Pezzullo briefly discussed the ongoing process for the search to fill the new Planner Technician position.

ADJOURNMENT / NEXT REGULAR MEETING – Tuesday, November 2nd – 6:30 PM – 869 Park Avenue, City Hall Council Chamber

Upon motion made by Commissioner Mason and Seconded by Commission Vincent, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8PM.