Kenneth J. Hopkins
Mayor

Beth Ashman, MCP, AICP
Planning Director

Steven Frias
President

Robert Coupe
Vice-President

Thomas Barbieri
David Exter
Kathleen Lanphear
Lisa Mancini
John Colasante

Frank Corrao P. E.
Public Works Director

CITY PLAN COMMISSION

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

MINUTES

CITY HALL – 3rd FLOOR, COUNCIL CHAMBER
6:30PM – TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Commission President Frias called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

The following Commissioners were in attendance for the meeting: Commission President Steven Frias, Robert Coupe, David Exter, Kathleen Lanphear, Thomas Barbieri, Lisa Mancini, Frank Corrao, and John Colasante.

The following members of the City Planning Department were in attendance: Beth Ashman, Planning Director; Jonas Bruggemann, Assistant Planning Director; Brianna Valcourt, Senior Planner; and Jamie Ray, Planner Technician. Stephen Marsella, Esq. was present as solicitor for the city.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- September 1, 2026

MOTION: Motion to approve the minutes of September 1, 2026, made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the motion passed unanimously with a *(6-0)* vote.
- Commissioner Barbieri recused himself from this vote
- Commissioner Exter arrived shortly after this vote

SUBDIVISIONS/LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – NEW BUSINESS

- **"Kelly Plat"** **PUBLIC HEARING**
  PRELIMINARY PLAN/Unified Development Review - Minor Subdivision
  Proposal: To subdivide the existing lot into two lots which will contain 12,393 sq. ft. and 5,107 sq. ft. Both lots will front on Butler Street. Parcel B, proposed for single-family development, will require relief to have 53 feet +/- of street frontage and a lot size of 5,107 sq. ft.
  Zoning District: B-1 (Single- and Two-Family Residential)
  AP 11, Lot 559
  17 Butler Street

Attorney Robert Murray, 21 Garden City Drive, appeared on behalf of Patrick and Lauren Gottfried-Kelly, owners of 17 Butler Street. Attorney Murray explained that the applicants propose to subdivide a portion of the existing lot while retaining the existing residence and constructing a new single-family dwelling. Attorney Murray also requested a waiver of the sidewalk requirement. He noted that the area shown as "sidewalk" on the plan is presently grass, that Butler Street does not have established sidewalks in the vicinity, and that the applicants would retain the existing curbing. The waiver requested was therefore limited to the sidewalk requirement; curbing would remain.

Commission President Frias confirmed that the proposed new dwelling would be a single-family dwelling and asked whether there was any intention to convert it to a two-family dwelling. Attorney Murray

confirmed there was not. Commission President Frias also asked about the absence of a traffic review. Attorney Murray stated that Butler Street is a relatively lightly traveled side street and that he did not anticipate that one additional curb cut would create a traffic impact. Staff confirmed that no traffic concerns were identified.

Senior Planner Brianna Valcourt recommended approval of the Unified Development Review.

MOTION: Motion to approve the variances consistent with the staff recommendation for Parcel B to have 53 feet of frontage where 60 feet is required and a lot size of 5,107 sq. ft. where 6,000 sq. ft. is required made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the motion passed with a *(8-0)* vote.

MOTION: Motion to approve the subdivision with a waiver of the sidewalk requirement made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the motion passed with a *(8-0)* vote.

- **"McDonnell Property"** **PUBLIC HEARING**
  PRELIMINARY PLAN/Unified Development Review - Minor Subdivision
  Proposal: To subdivide the existing lot into two lots which will contain 8,000 sq. ft. and 8,120 sq. ft. One lot will front on Hoffman Avenue, and the other lot will front on Melody Lane. The Proposal requires relief from provisions of the Zoning Ordinance including Chapter 17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity Regulation relating to the street frontage requirement of 80 feet. Each lot will have 75 feet +/- of street frontage. The existing dwelling will be removed.
  Zoning District: A-8 (Single-Family Residential, 8,000 sq. ft.)
  AP 16, Lot 169
  32 Hoffman Avenue

Attorney Robert Murray appeared on behalf of Angela and Kyle McDonnell and Michael and Sandra Bert, owners of 32 Hoffman Avenue. Each couple owns one-half interest in the property. Attorney Murray explained that the existing dwelling and shed are proposed to be removed, and the property would be subdivided into two lots for development with single-family dwellings. Both proposed lots would meet the minimum lot-area requirement but would have approximately 75 feet of frontage, requiring approximately five feet of frontage relief on each lot. Attorney Murray noted that the existing frontage has historically consisted of multiple record lots and that the applicants had not altered the frontage since acquiring the property.

Attorney Murray explained that the applicants had requested sidewalk waivers along both streets because neither frontage has an established sidewalk. Curbing would be installed on both streets. Attorney Murray further noted that Public Works had indicated that any sewer work within Melody Lane would require curb-to-curb paving, and the applicants agreed to that requirement.

Senior Planner Brianna Valcourt recommended approval of the Unified Development Review.

Public Comment:

- **Jeffrey Goldthwait** (27 Hoffman Avenue) stated that he supported the requested variance and subdivision. He identified himself as a neighbor of the proposed development and asked the commission to approve the application.

MOTION: Motion to approve the variances consistent with staff recommendation to allow Parcel A to have 75 feet of street frontage where 80 feet is required and to allow Parcel B to have 75.12 feet of street frontage where 80 feet is required made by Commissioner Barbieri. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Corrao and the motion passed with a *(8-0)* vote.

MOTION: Motion to approve the subdivision with a waiver of the sidewalk requirement, made by Commissioner Barbieri. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mancini and the motion passed with a *(8-0)* vote.

ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW – PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

PHILLIPE LAFRENAYE (OWN) AND JOVANI TORRES (APP) have applied to the Board for permission to leave an existing three-family dwelling on an undersized lot with reduced frontage and setbacks previously merged by zoning at **118 Maplewood Avenue**, AP 7 Lot 3234; area 5,000 sf, zoned B1. Applicant seeks relief by 17.92.010 - Variance; Section 17.20.120 - Schedule of Intensity Regulations; 17.88.010 Substandard Lots of Record and Lot Mergers; Section 17.20.090 Specific Requirements. Application ZBR-26-43 filed 08/07/2026. Attorney John J. Garrahy, Esq. Continued from September 09, 2026, with amendment.

PHILLIPE LAFRENAYE (OWN) AND JOVANI TORRES (APP) have amended their application to the Board for permission to construct a new single-family dwelling on an undersized lot with reduced frontage and setbacks previously merged by zoning at **0 Maplewood Avenue**, AP 7 Lot 3237; area 5,000 sf, zoned B1. Applicant seeks relief by 17.92.010 - Variance; Section 17.20.120 - Schedule of Intensity Regulations; 17.88.010 Substandard Lots of Record and Lot Mergers; Section 17.20.090 Specific Requirements. Continued from September 09, 2026, with amendment.

Attorney John Garrahy appeared on behalf of the applicants. Attorney Garrahy explained that the application had previously proposed a two-family dwelling on the vacant 5,000-square-foot lot at 0 Maplewood Avenue, adjacent to the existing three-family dwelling at 118 Maplewood Avenue. The application had since been amended to propose a single-family dwelling on the vacant lot.

Staff recommended a positive recommendation to the Zoning Board of Review.

Commissioner Kathleen Lanphear asked about the required lot area for a three-family dwelling in the area and noted that the existing three-family dwelling would remain on a 5,000-square-foot lot. Commission President Frias noted that the density of the proposal at 17.42 units per acre and is above the density of surrouding neighborhood.

MOTION: Motion to accept the positive recommendation for 118 Maplewood made by Commissioner Corrao. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mancini and the motion did not pass with a *(3-5)* vote.

- Commissioners Frank Corrao, Lisa Mancini, and Robert Coupe voted in favor and Commissioners John Colasante, Steven Frias, David Exter, Thomas Barbieri, and Kathleen Lanphear voted against.

MOTION: Motion to make a negative recommendation for 118 Maplewood made by Commissioner Lanphear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Exter and the motion passed with a *(5-3)* vote.

- The negative recommendation passed 5-3, with Commissioners John Colasante, Steven Frias, David Exter, Thomas Barbieri, and Kathleen Lanphear voting in favor and Commissioners Robert Coupe, Lisa Mancini, and Frank Corrao voting against.

MOTION: Motion to make a negative recommendation for 0 Maplewood made by Commissioner Lanphear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Exter and the motion passed with a *(5-3)* vote.

- The negative recommendation passed 5-3, with Commissioners John Colasante, Steven Frias, David Exter, Thomas Barbieri, and Kathleen Lanphear voting in favor and Commissioners Robert Coupe, Lisa Mancini, and Frank Corrao voting against.

DARAVICHET CHEY (OWN/APP) has applied to the Board for permission to convert the first floor of a legal, non-conforming mixed-use building into a beauty salon at **88 Gansett Avenue**, AP 7 Lot 2034 & 2035; area 6,637 sf, zoned B1. Applicant seeks relief by 17.92.010 - Variance; Section 17.20.030 Schedule of Uses.

Planner Technician, Jamie Ray, presented a use variance application to convert the first floor of a legal nonconforming building to a salon. Mr. Ray explained that the property had historically been used for mixed-use purposes before being converted to residential use and, prior to that, had been used as office space beginning in 1968. Mr. Ray also noted that Gansett Avenue is an established commercial corridor with neighborhood-serving businesses, restaurants, cafés, and other compatible uses. Staff found that a small salon would be consistent with the character of the area and that parking requirements for the

proposed salon and remaining residential use would be satisfied. Staff recommended a positive recommendation to the Zoning Board of Review.

Commissioner Lanphear asked whether the prior office use had been a legal nonconforming use and whether the subsequent discontinuance of that use caused the property to revert to the underlying residential zoning. Staff and the Solicitor confirmed that the cessation of the nonconforming office use resulted in the need for a use variance to establish the proposed commercial use.

Commission President Frias stated that he generally opposes use variances because changes in use should ordinarily be addressed through zoning amendments. However, he stated that this application represented a return to a use that had historically existed at the property and therefore fell within an exception to his general position.

MOTION: Motion to accept the positive recommendation made by Commissioner Corrao. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Colasante and the motion passed with a *(7-1)* vote.

- Commissioner Lanphear voted against the positive recomendation motion.

ERIC COX (OWN/APP) has filed an application to request permission to construct a fence exceeding the maximum allowed height at **26 Herod Street**, A.P. 19, Lot 160; area 8,022; zoned A12. Applicant sees relief per 17.92.010 – Variance; Sections 17.124.010 Fences and walls.

Planner Technician, Jamie Ray, presented the application, which seeks approval of an eight-foot-high fence where the maximum permitted height is six feet. He recommended a positive recommendation to the zoning board of review.

Commissioner Thomas Barbieri asked what type of fence was proposed. Staff stated that the application focused on the requested height variance and did not clearly identify the specific fence type.

Commissioner Kathleen Lanphear referenced a previous fence-height application and asked whether there were additional circumstances explaining why a six-foot fence would not adequately address the applicant's privacy concerns. Staff stated that privacy was the justification stated in the application.

Public Comment:

- **Kimberly Boghossian** (45 Mount View Drive) stated that she opposes the proposed fence. She suggested that the applicant could consider planting additional trees instead of installing a taller fence. She noted the environmental benefits of trees and referenced the existing trees in the backyard.

Commission President Frias stated that he was inclined to support the application because the proposed fence appeared to be intended as a replacement for privacy previously provided by the existing arborvitae trees. He noted that the Zoning Board of Review hearing would provide an opportunity for neighboring property owners to receive notice and raise any concerns.

MOTION: Motion to accept the positive recommendation made by Commissioner Corrao. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mancini and the motion passed with a *(5-3)* vote.

- The positive recommendation passed 5-3, with Commissioners John Colasante, Frank Corrao, Lisa Mancini, Robert Coupe, and Steven Frias voting in favor and Commissioners David Exter, Kathleen Lanphear, and Thomas Barbieri voting against.

ORDINANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **2026 State Legislation** **PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL**
  The City Plan Commission will consider and possibly vote to forward an amendment of the Cranston Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 17 of the Cranston Code of Ordinances) to the City Council. This ordinance proposes various changes to the Zoning Ordinance in response to legislation passed during the 2026

legislative session of the Rhode Island General Assembly.

Assistant Planning Director, Jonas Bruggemann, presented proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance intended primarily to incorporate recent changes in Rhode Island state law. Mr. Bruggemann identified several principal changes, including updates to definitions such as buildable lot area and family daycare home; creation of a transit hub overlay district; changes relating to neighborhood-character-based dimensional modifications; technical amendments concerning lots of record; changes to conditions on zoning variances; and amendments concerning critical facilities and critical infrastructure.

Mr. Bruggemann explained that recent state legislation limits municipalities from imposing parking requirements exceeding one space per dwelling unit for multifamily development located within specified distances of regional mobility hubs and frequent transit stops. Staff stated that the principal affected area is along Elmwood Avenue, with another area near the Brewery Parkade that currently does not contain multifamily zoning.

The Commission discussed the timing for transmitting the proposed ordinance to the City Council, particularly because the current City Council term was nearing its conclusion. The Commission and Solicitor discussed the importance of allowing sufficient time for advertising, ordinance committee review, public hearing, and Council action.

MOTION: Motion to forward the proposed zoning code to the city council made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mancini and the motion passed with a *(8-0)* vote.

DISCUSSION OF AMENDMENTS TO SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

- **2026 State Legislation Amendments** **PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL**
  Discussion of proposed amendments to the Cranston Subdivision and Land Development Regulations in response to legislation passed during the 2026 legislative session of the Rhode Island General Assembly. The City Plan Commission may vote to hold a public hearing at a future date where the amendments will be considered for adoption.

Planning staff presented proposed amendments to the City's subdivision regulations. Staff explained that the amendments were largely intended to bring the regulations into conformity with recent state law changes, with only minor discretionary or cleanup amendments.

Commission President Frias explained that the Commission was not being asked to adopt the regulations at this meeting. Rather, the purpose of the discussion was to determine whether the Commission was comfortable moving forward with public notice and a formal public hearing.

Staff proposed holding the public hearing at the Commission's November 10, 2026 meeting.

Stephen Marsella, Assistant City Solicitor, recommended that, if adopted, the revised subdivision regulations have an effective date of January 1, 2027, to provide applicants with time to become familiar with the changes.

The Commission indicated that staff could proceed with preparation and posting of the proposed regulations for the November 10 public hearing, with an anticipated effective date of January 1, 2027.

MIXED-USE CENTERS AND CORRIDORS PROJECT PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL

Draft zoning language for the “Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors Project” was presented for discussion. The City Plan Commission may consider and provide direction to the consultant team.

Planning Director Beth Ashman introduced the Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors project by discussing the characteristics of successful Main Streets, including a mix of uses, buildings located in close relationship to the street, and a high-quality pedestrian environment.

Director Ashman connected the zoning proposal to previous streetscape work and Main Street revitalization principles, noting that the proposed zoning would encourage buildings to be located near the street with

parking toward the rear, permit compatible residential and commercial uses in closer proximity, and promote context-sensitive building design. The proposed areas include Rolfe Square/Park Avenue, Broad Street, and the Elmwood Avenue/Wellington Avenue corridor. Director Ashman explained that the Elmwood/Wellington area differs from the other two established Main Street areas because of its industrial history and greater redevelopment potential.

Megan Mello, Senior Planner with Kittelson & Associates, presented the proposed overlay zoning. Juliet Walker, Principal Planner with Kittelson & Associates, participated remotely. Ms. Mello explained that Kittelson had been working with the City through a Rhode Island Housing grant.

Ms. Mello explained that the draft overlay was intended as a standalone section of the zoning code that would supplement the underlying zoning. Where a conflict exists between the overlay and underlying zoning, the overlay would control.

Ms. Mello explained that the overlay is intended to:

- support a range of housing types;
- encourage commercial and mixed-use development;
- improve pedestrian accessibility and walkability;
- connect housing, commercial uses, and transit;
- increase housing supply;
- encourage high-quality development; and
- reflect the character and context of each area.

Dimensional and Use Regulations

The proposed overlay would permit a range of active street-level commercial uses and housing types. Additional ground-floor requirements were proposed for Rolfe Square to encourage active storefronts and pedestrian access to upper-floor residential uses.

The draft also proposed allowing one accessory dwelling unit by right on residential lots of at least 5,000 square feet.

The proposed intensity standards would reduce minimum lot areas, lot widths, and frontages and eliminate minimum front setbacks in the overlay districts. A maximum building height of 48 feet was proposed for the Elmwood Avenue subdistrict, compared with generally 30- to 35-foot underlying limits. Buildings exceeding 35 feet would be required to step back from the lot line.

Incentive Zoning

The draft proposed allowing the Planning Commission to grant incentives including:

- up to a 10-foot increase in maximum building height; and/or
- a five-percent increase in building coverage.

Eligibility would require public-realm and streetscape improvements and either affordable housing or publicly accessible open space.

Potential public-realm improvements included street furniture, wider sidewalks, and transit shelters. Publicly accessible open space could include parks, plazas, playgrounds, or recreational fields.

Building and Site Design

The draft also proposed guidelines and requirements concerning building orientation, façade transparency, entrances, massing, pedestrian access, sidewalks, street trees and furnishings, lighting, landscaping, stormwater management, parking-area design, and circulation.

The intent was to create a more pedestrian-oriented environment with buildings oriented toward the street, parking located away from primary street frontage, pedestrian-scale lighting, landscaping,

accessible sidewalks, and context-sensitive building design.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Lanphear asked about maximum building heights. Staff explained that the proposed baseline maximum would be 35 feet in Rolfe Square and Broad Street and 48 feet in Elmwood Avenue, with a potential additional 10-foot height incentive. Staff clarified that the step-back requirement would make taller buildings more difficult on smaller lots because the taller portion would need to be set farther back from the street.

Commissioner Lanphear emphasized that the visual materials should make it possible to identify individual lots and understand how the regulations would apply to them.

Commissioner Robert Coupe asked whether the overlay was intended primarily to facilitate large-scale redevelopment or whether it would also function as a tool for incremental development on individual lots.

Director Ashman explained that the proposal serves different purposes in different areas. Rolfe Square, Park Avenue, and Broad Street are intended primarily as a “back-to-the-future” approach to allow existing Main Street areas to function more like traditional mixed-use centers. Elmwood Avenue and Wellington Avenue present greater redevelopment opportunities, including potential larger-scale residential development on larger parcels and underutilized industrial properties.

Commissioner Coupe expressed concern that large-scale housing had become the predominant focus of many planning discussions. He stated that the objective should instead be to create strong mixed-use economic centers where small-scale businesses, such as a hardware store, bakery, or neighborhood grocery store, could operate alongside or beneath residential uses.

Commission President Frias agreed and stated that Rolfe Square and potentially Broad Street should be approached primarily as mixed-use revitalization areas, while Elmwood Avenue could have a greater emphasis on housing production.

Commission President Frias expressed substantial concerns about applying essentially the same overlay regulations to three substantially different areas. Commission President Frias also expressed concern that the proposal did not establish a clear density limit. He stated that Cranston's zoning generally establishes density limits and that he was uncomfortable creating an overlay without a clearly stated maximum density. He noted that if higher densities were appropriate, the regulations could establish a base limit and provide a mechanism for additional relief.

Commission President Frias also cautioned against relying too heavily on examples from communities served by MBTA rail service, noting that Cranston's transit system is primarily RIPTA and operates differently, and does not generate the same market demand.

He questioned the need for the proposed by-right ADU provision for 5,000-square-foot lots and stated that he did not believe the ADU provisions were necessary to accomplish the mixed-use corridor objectives.

He expressed support for exploring the proposed shared-parking methodology, particularly in Rolfe Square, but stated that the City should evaluate how it performs before applying it broadly.

Commissioner Barbieri stated that the three proposed areas are distinctly different neighborhoods and that applying identical improvements and regulations to all three would be difficult. He encouraged staff and the consultants to be sensitive to the different characteristics and needs of each area.

Director Ashman acknowledged that the City had engaged extensively with residents and business owners in Rolfe Square and had communicated with property owners along Elmwood Avenue but had not yet developed a specific outreach strategy for Broad Street. Staff discussed using detailed maps, direct letters, organizational outreach, and potentially walking the affected areas to distribute informational materials.

Commissioner Lanphear further suggested modifying the proposed Broad Street boundaries. She explained that the Warwick Avenue area contains more storefronts and multifamily housing and would benefit more from the proposed changes. In contrast, the Broad Street area north of Norwood Avenue includes uses such as CVS, a church, a large apartment complex, William Hall Library, and a funeral home, which she believed presented less redevelopment opportunity or need for the proposed regulations. She indicated that the former Walgreens/Dollar Tree property could be an appropriate

inclusion because of its underutilization.

Solicitor's Comments

The Solicitor raised legal concerns regarding the proposed incentive provisions. He noted that recent changes to state law governing special use permits may prevent the Commission from conditioning a special use permit. Because the proposed incentive zoning relies on special use permits, the Solicitor cautioned that the mechanism should be reviewed carefully to ensure that the incentives can legally be administered.

Public Comment:

- **Jared Vassella-Smith** (91 Bartlett Avenue) spoke extensively in support of providing greater flexibility through the proposed zoning changes. Mr. Vassella-Smith stated that he had lived in Cranston for approximately 31 years and that his family had longstanding ties to the City, including relatives in Garden City and Knightsville. He stated that he had been following the project since the public forum at William Hall Library and appreciated the public engagement that had occurred there. Mr. Vassella-Smith encouraged the Commission to consider the overlay not simply as applying one set of zoning rules to different neighborhoods, but as providing neighborhoods with greater flexibility to evolve according to what residents want. He stated that he had chosen to live in the Broad Street area in part because of its potential for walkability and because it allowed him to bicycle to work in Providence.

  He pointed to existing neighborhood businesses, including Seven Stars and a yoga studio, as examples of the type of walkable development that could strengthen the area. He also identified an undeveloped, overgrown parcel near Bartlett Avenue that he said was constrained by its C-2 zoning and could potentially be activated under more flexible zoning. Mr. Vassella-Smith stated that greater flexibility could help vacant or underutilized properties attract businesses and prevent commercial buildings from remaining vacant after businesses close.

  He also emphasized aging in place. He explained that although he is 31, his parents are approximately 70, and his father does not drive. He characterized the Broad Street area as effectively a food desert because residents without automobiles have limited access to grocery stores and medical services. Mr. Vassella-Smith argued that greater zoning flexibility could help create a neighborhood where older residents can remain in place, younger families can remain nearby, and residents can reach daily needs within a reasonable walking or biking distance. He specifically cited the potential for ADUs to allow families to accommodate aging parents. He concluded by offering to provide additional information or answer questions as someone who lives within the proposed Broad Street area.

  Commission President Frias thanked Mr. Vassella-Smith for attending and emphasized that the Commission should hear directly from residents who live in the affected neighborhoods before making significant zoning changes.

- **Robert Murray** (21 Garden City Drive) spoke in his personal capacity and stated that he was not representing a client on this issue. He expressed appreciation for the work of the Planning Department and consultants and acknowledged the value of generating new ideas and encouraging discussion.

  Mr. Murray cautioned the Commission to distinguish between planning concepts and real-world market conditions. He described his concern as the difference between “urban utopia” and “public reality” and urged the Commission to proceed slowly. He stated that requirements involving street furniture, landscaping, lighting, and other improvements could potentially shift costs onto property owners. He questioned whether property owners would realistically be able to absorb those costs while simultaneously undertaking redevelopment or adding residential uses. Mr. Murray also discussed the realities of commercial leasing. He cited his representation of Dollar Tree and stated that when a 14,000- or 15,000-square-foot commercial building is difficult to lease, a tenant such as Dollar Tree can provide a practical and economically viable reuse. He noted that Dollar Tree's occupancy of a former Benny's location had been viewed positively in practice.

  Mr. Murray cautioned against attempting to recreate a highly idealized Main Street environment without considering market demand, property taxes, sewer costs, financing, and the ability of property owners to attract tenants.

He reiterated his support for continued discussion but urged the Commission to “go slow” and incorporate practical economic realities into the zoning proposal.

- **Jared Vassella-Smith** (Additional Comment) Mr. Vassella-Smith returned to the microphone and suggested that future public presentations include a heat map of gross tax revenue per acre. He said the map could compare the economic productivity of mixed-use and lower-intensity areas, help property owners understand redevelopment’s potential value, and encourage investment. Staff indicated that the information could be posted on the City’s website.

Further Commission Discussion

Commissioner Robert Coupe stated that zoning often functions as a list of things that property owners cannot do and that the Commission should therefore consider whether greater flexibility could produce better outcomes. He emphasized that the goal should be vibrant mixed-use districts, not simply increased housing. He envisioned areas such as Rolfe Square containing a combination of small businesses and residential uses, for example, a hardware store, or bakery with apartments above or nearby. Commissioner Coupe stated that while he supports housing production, the city should not lose sight of creating strong economic centers and a diversified mix of uses.

Commission President Frias agreed and stated that the three areas should be treated differently. He expressed support for greater mixed-use flexibility in Rolfe Square and potentially Broad Street, while viewing Elmwood as the area with greater potential for housing production.

The Commission agreed that the proposal should continue to be refined through additional staff and consultant discussion and public engagement rather than being rushed to adoption.

The consultant indicated that the project was expected to require additional discussion, engagement, and potentially public hearings and that the process could extend beyond the expiration of the current grant at the end of 2026.

Commission President Frias stated that additional input from the City Council, particularly Council members representing Wards 1 and 2, would also be important given the areas potentially affected by the proposal.

CITY PLANNING DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Planning Director Beth Ashman provided the Director's report. The Commission was also advised of a forthcoming kickoff concerning the nomination of the Garden City neighborhood to the National Register of Historic Places.

ADJOURNMENT

Next Regular Meeting | November 10, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.– **Regular Meeting**
City Council Chamber, City Hall, 869 Park Avenue

MOTION: Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lanphear and the motion passed unanimously with a *(8-0)* vote.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:00 p.m.