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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, APRIL 7, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Commission President Frias called the meeting to order at 6:30 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, Thomas Barbieri, Kathleen Lanphear, Lisa Mancini, and Frank Corrao, Director of Public Works

The following members of the City Planning Department were in attendance: Beth Ashman, City Planning Director; Brianna Valcourt, Senior Planner; and Jamie Ray, Planner Technician.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- March 3, 2026

Commissioner Coupe noted a correction to the March 3, 2026 minutes: on page three, paragraph three, a (4-3) vote listed only six commissioners. Commission President Frias asked Commissioner Coupe to confirm his vote; Commissioner Coupe confirmed he was in the affirmative as he had made the motion. Commissioner Lanphear noted she was not at that meeting and would be abstaining on this vote.

MOTION: Motion to approve the March 3, 2026 minutes as corrected, made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mancini and the motion passed with a (6-0) vote. Commissioner Lanphear abstained.

EXTENSIONS

- **“Knights Corner Development” PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL**
Major Land Development Project- Master Plan, Extension Request: May 2, 2028
Proposal: The redevelopment of the existing church building, and the construction of four (4) large-scale apartment buildings, as well as associated parking, landscaping, and accessory recreational amenities.
Zoning District: C-2
Owner/Applicant: N.E Development Fund, 1 LLC
1388 & 1390 Cranston Street, AP 8, Lots 203 & 2739

Attorney Robert Murray, 21 Garden City Drive, Cranston, appeared on behalf of the developer/applicant. He stated the applicant is requesting its last statutory extension for a two-year extension to May 2, 2028, of the master plan approval originally granted in 2023. Mr. Murray cited economic conditions, construction costs, and tariffs as reasons for the delay, and stated the applicant is actively working with a development partner toward bringing the project forward.

Planning Director Ashman stated that conditions have not changed, and she saw no reason to not grant the extension.

MOTION: Motion to grant the extension as requested to May 2, 2028, made by Commissioner Lanphear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the motion passed unanimously with a (7-0) vote.

Commission President Frias noted that, prior to the meeting commencing, the Commission agreed to reorder the agenda to take the Zoning Board recommendations first due to the number of attendees and the Zoning Board meeting being the following evening.

ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW – PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

PRAISE TABERNACLE CHURCH (OWN/APP) have applied to the Board for permission to construct a youth center structure with less than the required minimum front setback and exceeding the maximum lot coverage at **330 Park Avenue**; A.P. 4-5, Lot 150; area 52,900 sf; zoned A6. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010 – Variance; Section 17.20.120 – Schedule of intensity regulations.

Attorney Robert Murray appeared on behalf of the applicant. William Lavery of Joe Cassali Engineering presented a PowerPoint overview of the project, which proposes a 3,800 square foot, one-story youth center building with a basement for storage. The building would be located in the same plane as the existing church, requiring 4.06 feet of relief from the front setback along Sunset Terrace, and an increase in impervious lot coverage from 30.5% to 37.8%. An underground infiltration chamber system is proposed to offset additional impervious area. Pastor David explained the primary purpose is to move existing Wednesday youth group activities from the sanctuary to a dedicated space with no intent to increase attendance or traffic.

Public Comment:

- Marsha Layden (38 Sunset Terrace) appeared representing neighbors within a 400-foot radius and submitted a petition of 41 signatures opposing the variance. She expressed concerns about parking, neighborhood character, and the church as a neighbor. She requested the Commission adhere to existing setback and lot coverage requirements.
- Bridget Graziano (191 Wentworth Avenue), Ward 1 City Councilmember, expressed concerns about stormwater management standards, requested higher conditions for stormwater handling and management of the entire site. She also cited traffic and pedestrian safety concerns at the Park Avenue intersection and submitted a written letter.
- Faith Chybowski (42 Sunset Terrace) expressed concern about parking, noting cars regularly park on both sides of Sunset Terrace, making it difficult for residents to access driveways. She also raised concerns about lack of neighborhood communication from the church regarding outdoor events.

Planner Technician Jamie Ray presented the staff memorandum. Staff found the application to be consistent with the comprehensive plan and gave a positive recommendation to the zoning board of review.

Commission President Frias noted the Commission can only require that no new net runoff from the property occur, which the DEM permit will address. He found no basis for requiring a traffic study given the activities are being relocated, not expanded. He acknowledged parking concerns but noted the applicant met code requirements.

MOTION: Motion to forward a positive recommendation to the Zoning Board of Review, made by Director Corrao. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Exter and the motion passed unanimously with a (7-0) vote.

PRAISE TABERNACLE CHURCH (OWN/APP) have applied to the Board for permission to install a freestanding double-sided LED message sign within the corner setback at **330 Park Avenue**; A.P. 4-5, Lot 150; area 52,900 sf; zoned A6. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010 – Variance; Section 17.72.010 – Signs.

Attorney Robert Murray noted he is not involved in this application. Pastor David stated that the sign would help identify the church and communicate its activities to passersby on Park Avenue.

Planner Technician Jamie Ray presented the staff memorandum. Staff found the sign out of character with the surrounding residential neighborhood and gave a negative recommendation to the zoning board of review.

Public Comment:

- Marsha Layden (38 Sunset Terrace) opposed the sign, noting it would be 12 feet tall and a dangerous distraction near a crosswalk used by elderly residents from 315 Park Avenue.
- Faith Chybowski (42 Sunset Terrace) expressed concern about visibility, noting parked cars already make left turns from Sunset Terrace nearly impossible and the sign would further impede sightlines.
- Bridget Graziano (191 Wentworth Avenue) recommended a negative recommendation, citing incompatibility with the Edgewood residential neighborhood, documented traffic accident trends at the intersection, and the precedent that a positive recommendation would set for similar applications citywide.
- Annette Bourne (51 Community Drive, via Zoom) supported neighbors' concerns and referenced a technical report on light pollution prepared by Jonathan Stevens.

Commission President Frias stated he has consistently voted against LED signs in residential areas and noted the staff recommendation should also cite goal LU-6, protecting and stabilizing existing residential neighborhoods. Commissioner Coupe called on the City Council to adopt an ordinance addressing LED signs to provide clearer guidance to residents, businesses, and the commission.

MOTION: Motion to forward a negative recommendation to the Zoning Board of Review, with an amendment adding that the sign is not compatible with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood and does not protect and preserve the existing neighborhood, and that the application would negatively impact pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety, made by Commissioner Lanphear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mancini and the motion passed unanimously with a (7-0) vote.

DALIA P. MERCADO AND ROOSEVELT ASSOCIATES RIGP (OWN) ANTONIO TIMARCHI (APP) have applied to the board for permission to leave an existing two-family dwelling on an undersized lot previously merged by zoning at **3 Fountain Avenue** and to construct a new single-family dwelling on an undersized lot previously merged by zoning at **0 Fountain Avenue**. Applicant seeks relief from 17.92.010 – Variance; Section 17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity Regulations; Section 17.20.090 Specific Requirements; 17.88.010 Substandard lots of record and lot mergers.

The applicant was not present.

Planner Technician Jamie Ray presented the staff memorandum. While comprehensive plan goals support housing development opportunities, staff found the proposal incompatible with the general neighborhood character and gave a negative recommendation.

Public Comment:

- Marie Monti (25 Fountain Avenue) stated she lives one house from the property. She expressed concern that the vacant lot is used for parking by the existing dwelling and that new construction would create too much congestion.

MOTION: Motion to forward a negative recommendation to the Zoning Board of Review, made by Commissioner Lanphear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the motion passed unanimously with a (7-0) vote.

RHODE ISLAND CUSTOM BUILDERS LLC (OWN/APP) have applied to the Board for permission to leave an existing two-family dwelling on an undersized lot with reduced setbacks and to construct a new single-family dwelling on an undersized lot at **0 and 66 Clemence Street**. Applicant seeks relief from 17.92.010 – Variance; Section 17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity Regulations; 17.88.010 Substandard lots of record and lot mergers.

Attorney Dane Ardente appeared on behalf of the applicant. He explained the request is to subdivide an approximately 10,500 square foot combined lot into two lots retaining the existing two-family dwelling on one and constructing a new single-family dwelling on the other. Relief is sought for minimum lot size (5,268 sf and 5,376 sf where 6,000 sf and 8,000 sf are required) and lot merger provisions.

Planner Technician Jamie Ray presented the staff memorandum. Staff gave a positive recommendation, citing goals H-2, H-3, H-5, and H-6.

Commission President Frias stated he would not support a positive recommendation, as the resulting density exceeds both the FLUM designation (10.89) and the existing neighborhood density by more than

one unit per acre.

No public comment was received in person or online.

MOTION: Motion to forward a positive recommendation to the Zoning Board of Review, made by Director Corrao. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Coupe and the motion passed with a (4-3) vote. Commissioners Barbieri, Mancini, Coupe, and Corrao voted yes. Commission President Frias, Commissioners Exter, and Lanphear voted nay.

ROSE MARLEY (OWN/APP) have applied to the Board for permission to install two wall signs exceeding the allowable total sign area at **529 Reservoir Avenue**; A.P. 3, Lot 107; zoned C4. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010 – Variances; Section 17.72.010 – Signs.

Attorney Robert Murray appeared for the applicant (Rhode Island Wine and Spirits, under new ownership). Two wall signs on the east and south elevations are proposed at approximately 106 square feet each. He noted a typographical error in the staff report incorrectly describing the signs as freestanding. Commissioners raised concern about an existing freestanding LED sign at the property being operated in violation of its approval conditions (displaying motion video). Director Ashman confirmed the original permit prohibits motion and the applicant has been in consistent violation. Assistant Solicitor Steven Marsella advised the variance runs with the property and conditions on the wall sign application could be recommended, but enforcement of the LED sign violation is a separate matter for the building official.

Planner Technician Jamie Ray presented the staff memorandum. He gave a positive recommendation.

Public Comment:

- Katie King (1389 Hope Road) questioned the absence of enforcement action on the LED sign violation prior to acceptance of a new sign application.

MOTION: Motion to forward a positive recommendation to the Zoning Board of Review on the wall sign application, made by Director Corrao. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Exter and the motion passed with a (5-2) vote. Commissioners Coupe, Corrao Exter, Lanphear, and Mancini voted yes. Commission President Frias and Commissioner Barbieri voted nay.

Subdivisions/land development projects – OLD BUSINESS

- **“Lake Street Villa” PUBLIC HEARING**
PRELIMINARY PLAN – Minor Subdivision with UDR
Proposal: The subdivision of 3 existing 3,200 square foot lots into 2 new 4,800 square foot lots. The proposal will be serviced by public water and sewer. The proposal requires zoning relief for minimum lot size requirements.
AP 7-5, Lots 1478, 1479, & 1480
35 Lake Street

- Commissioner Mancini recused herself.

This matter was continued from the February 2026 meeting with conditions that the applicant submit a stormwater management plan and satisfy checklist items D1 and D20. Commissioner Coupe confirmed he watched the video of the prior hearing. The applicant, Sadiq Davies, was present.

Senior Planner Brianna Valcourt presented the updated staff memorandum. The submitted stormwater management plan and house plans were stamped by a registered engineer. Checklist items D1 and D20 were satisfied. The proposed subdivision is consistent with the Spectacle neighborhood character and the 2024 Comprehensive Plan (LU-6, LU-18). The proposed density of 13.64 units per acre is above the FLUM limit of 10.89 for this parcel but does not push surrounding area densities above the FLUM. Staff recommended approval with conditions.

Public Comment:

- Michelle Komar (Warwick, representing abutter Ralph Bozzi, who was released from the hospital that afternoon) read written comments by Mr. Bozzi opposing the application. Concerns raised included: the proposed dwelling being three stories and not in character with the neighborhood; the building appearing to function as a duplex rather than a single family with ADU; inadequate stormwater management calculations; and density inconsistency with the FLUM.

- Paula Bozzi (49 Lake Street) submitted photographs of site elevations and existing water conditions in the area.
- Ralph Bozzi (Former resident at 49 Lake Street) reiterated his concerns about stormwater and once again objected to the proposal.

Brianna Valcourt confirmed the ADU is compliant under state law (under 1,200 sf cap), all plans are stamped by a licensed engineer, and two parking spaces are provided as required for a single family with ADU. Solicitor Marsella stated, consistent with prior commission precedent regarding new lot creation, the applicant would not benefit from the sliding scale for setbacks.

Commission President Frias stated he would not support the application due to density exceeding the FLUM and of the surrounding neighborhood, the three-story structure being out of character for the neighborhood, and the existing flooding conditions in the area. Commissioner Coupe argued the overall neighborhood density would remain below the FLUM and that flooding in the area results from regional drainage issues far beyond the scope of this parcel.

MOTION: Upon a motion to grant zoning relief as noted by the planning staff made by Commissioner Corrao, and seconded by Commissioner Coupe, the motion did not pass with a (3-3) vote. Commissioners Corrao, Coupe, and Barbieri voted yay. Commissioner President Frias, Commissioner Exter, and Commissioner Lanphear voted nay. Commissioner Mancini recused. As the motion did not receive a majority vote, the application was denied.

Subdivisions/land development projects – NEW BUSINESS

- **“Vaughn Lane”** **PUBLIC HEARING**
 MASTER PLAN - Residential Planned District
Proposal: Cluster subdivision into forty-four (44) lots for residential single-family including new street creation and street extension.
 Zoning District: C-4 (Highway business), A-80 & A-20 (Residential with 80,000 & 20,000 sf lots)
 AP 30, Lots 4, 83, 84, 85, & 258
 0 & 538 Main Street, 0 & 99 Vaughn Lane

Commission President Frias advised all parties present for Vaughn Lane that due to the late hour the matter would not be heard today. After agreement from the applicant's attorney (Tanessa Aar, Moses Ryan) and abutters' counsel, the Commission voted to continue the matter to the May 5, 2026 meeting as first item of old business, with the possibility of scheduling a special meeting in May if needed.

MOTION: Motion to continue the Vaughn Lane matter to May 5, 2026, made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Exter and the motion passed unanimously with a (7-0) vote.

- **“Narragansett Blvd Condos”** **PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL**
 PRE-APPLICATION - Major Land Development
 Construction of a 19-unit townhouse development.
 Zoning: B-2 (Residential Multifamily), EI (Educational Institution)
 AP 2, Lots 680, 1966, 2949, 3368
 1128 Narragansett Boulevard, Pierce Place

Attorney Robert Murray introduced a pre-application presentation for a proposed 19-unit market-rate condominium development on Narragansett Boulevard, adjacent to Johnson and Wales. William Lavery of Joe Cassali Engineering and architect Julie Bartlett of ZDS presented the proposal. The proposal is below the 24 by-right units; parking of 52 spaces exceeds the 38 required. Four unit types are proposed, including units in the flood zone to be constructed on pilings per FEMA requirements.

Commissioners asked about stormwater management, guest parking, fire access staging, easement agreements for Pierce Place, Phase 1 environmental assessment, the possibility that the development would have an affordable government subsidized housing component, and the need for a site visit. The applicant indicated it will next meet with CRMC and file a preliminary determination before submitting a formal master plan application.

Public Comment:

- Bridget Graziano (191 Wentworth Avenue) expressed concern about the flood zone designation and the proposal to locate a pool and pool pavilion within that zone, noting that her regulatory experience suggests this may not be permissible under state and federal requirements. She stated she would research this further before the master plan hearing.

No action was taken. This was an informational pre-application presentation only.

▪ **“Replat of Auburn Plateau” PUBLIC HEARING**

PRELIMINARY PLAN – Minor Subdivision with UDR

Proposal: The applicant is proposing to subdivide an existing 8,000 square foot lot into two (2) 4,000 square foot lots, proposing to leave an existing single-family residence on proposed Parcel A and allow the construction of a new single-family residence on proposed Parcel B. The proposal requires zoning relief for minimum lot size requirements.

AP 9, Lot 227
40 Norfolk Street

- Commissioner Exter recused himself.

Attorney Dane Ardente appeared on behalf of the applicant, Rhode Island Custom Builders LLC. Harry Miller, Professional Land Surveyor with Alpha Associates (licensed since 1999), was qualified as an expert witness on a motion by Director Corrao, seconded by Commissioner Mancini, which passed unanimously (7-0).

Senior Planner Brianna Valcourt presented the staff memorandum. The Auburn neighborhood median lot size in the B1 zone is approximately 5,000 square feet, and 49% of lots within 200 feet are equal to or smaller than the proposed 4,000 square foot lots. The proposed project density of 10.89 units per acre is consistent with the FLUM. Staff recommended approval, citing goals LU-6, LU-18, and the proposed conditions of curb restoration and impact fee payment.

Commission President Frias stated he would support the application because the proposed project density of 10.89 units per acre matches the FLUM and is below the existing 200-foot neighborhood density of 12.03.

No public comment was received in person or online.

MOTION: Motion to grant zoning relief consistent with the staff recommendation, made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Director Corrao and the motion passed with a (5-1) vote. Commission President Frias, Commissioners Coupe, Barbieri, Corrao and Mancini voted yes. Commissioner Lanphier voted nay.

MOTION: Motion to approve the subdivision consistent with the staff recommendation, made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Director Corrao and the motion passed with a (5-1) vote. President Frias, Commissioners Coupe, Barbieri, Corrao and Mancini voted yes. Commissioner Lanphear voted nay.

▪ **“The Cipriano Plat” PUBLIC HEARING**

PRELIMINARY PLAN – Minor Subdivision with UDR

Proposal: The proposal is to subdivide the parcel into two (2) lots, leaving the two-family structure on one lot and permitting a single-family to be constructed on the other lot. The lot is to be accessed from Warwick Avenue. The parcel is zoned A-6 Residential. The lots will be serviced by public water and sewer. The proposal requires zoning relief for minimum lot size and frontage requirements.

AP 2, Lot 1324
118 Warwick Avenue

Applicant Trudy Cipriano, owner of 118 Warwick Avenue, appeared and briefly stated the project would keep construction and tax revenue in Cranston and suit the area.

During questioning by Commissioner Lanphear, Ms. Cipriano disclosed that the existing dwelling contains three units (first floor, second floor, and basement), though it is registered with the assessor as a two-family. Director Ashman presented the staff memorandum. The proposed density of 13.76 units per acre significantly exceeds both the 200-foot area density (9.68) and the FLUM designation (7.26). The lot proposed for development is currently used for parking by the existing dwelling.

Public Comment:

- Christine Athaide (37 Henry Street) opposed the application on behalf of neighbors, citing inadequate parking for a three-family home. The proposed 12-by-20-foot single-lane driveway cannot accommodate parking needs. Henry Street is a narrow dead-end already experiencing parking overflow from nearby multi-family homes. She stated tenants crossing Warwick Avenue would face serious safety risks at a location with no crosswalk or lighting.
- Ashley Denver (114 Warwick Avenue, via Zoom) echoed these concerns, noting she has observed three to five cars parked at the property daily for ten years. She expressed concern about fire safety given the proximity of the proposed structure to her home.

Solicitor Marsella advised that given the record establishing the property is a three-family home, a parking variance would be required that was not included in the application; the Commission could not approve the application as submitted.

MOTION: Motion to deny the application on the grounds that the record establishes the property is a three-family home and the commission lacks the ability to grant the necessary parking variance, which was not requested in the application, made by Commissioner Lanphear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mancini and the motion passed unanimously with a (7-0) vote.

City Planning Director's Report

Planning Director Ashman reported no major updates. She noted the Comprehensive Plan and housing element would be discussed at the May 5, 2026 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Motion to adjourn made by Director Corrao. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Coupe and the motion passed with a (7-0) vote.

Meeting materials will be posted to the City's website and can be found on the City Planning Department's webpage at <https://www.cranstonri.com/departments/planning/>. If you are unable to access the internet, you can contact the City Planning Department directly at 780-3138 for access to meeting materials. The application may be reviewed prior to the meeting in the City Planning Department, Room 309, Cranston City Hall, during regular office hours, 8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday.

Pursuant to the Cranston Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the proposed plan may be revised by the City Plan Commission as a result of further study or because of views expressed at this meeting. Individuals requesting interpreter services for the hearing impaired should contact the Planning Department at 780-3138, seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting date.