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Public Works Director

## CITY PLAN COMMISSION

City Hall – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Room 309  
869 Park Avenue – Cranston, RI 02910

### MINUTES

#### CITY HALL – 3<sup>rd</sup> FLOOR, COUNCIL CHAMBER 6:30PM – TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2026

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#### CALL TO ORDER

Commission President Frias called the meeting to order at 6:40 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, John Colasante, and Frank Corrao, Director of Public Works.

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

Commission President Frias welcomed John Colasante, who was appointed as the newest member of the Planning Commission, replacing Nicole Renzulli who had taken a position with the administration earlier in the year.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- April 7, 2026

**MOTION:** Motion to approve the April 7, 2026 minutes, made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the motion passed unanimously with a (8-0) vote.

#### EXTENSION REQUEST

- **“Champlin Heights”**  
Major Land Development with street extension- Preliminary Plan  
Request: One-year extension to June 30, 2027.  
Proposal: Construction of 152 multifamily units with accessory uses  
Zoning District: B-2  
Owner/Applicant: Champlin Heights II, LLC  
AP 20/4, Lot 2128 and AP 12/6, Lot 3108

Assistant Planning Director, Jonas Bruggemann, confirmed that the applicant had requested a continuance to the next regular meeting.

**MOTION:** Motion to continue the Champlin Heights matter to the June 2, 2026 regular meeting, made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Exter and the motion passed unanimously with a (8-0) vote.

#### REINSTATEMENT REQUEST

- **“20 Goddard Drive”**

PRELIMINARY PLAN – Reinstatement and Extension

Request: Request to reinstate the preliminary plan decision recorded on February 7, 2024, and that the reinstatement be extended to February 7, 2027.

Proposal: 210,000 +/- square foot warehouse development on 16.74-acre site.

Zoning District: M-2 (General Industry)

AP 13, Lot 39

20 Goddard Drive

Attorney Robert Murray, appeared on behalf of the applicant. He explained that during this process the preliminary plan had been allowed to expire without a request for extension and requested that the Commission reinstate the preliminary plan for at least one year until February of 2027. Mr. Murray confirmed that a final plan application submission to the Department is forthcoming, and that while he was not authorized to reveal the end user at that time, an industrial warehouse facility as previously described is planned.

Mr. Bruggeman presented the staff memorandum and walked the Commission through the five conditions for reinstatement. Staff found the proposal generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Staff recommended approval of the reinstatement subject to conditions carried over from the original preliminary plan approval.

Commissioner Lanphear inquired about the status of the DEM RIPTES permit. Mr. Murray confirmed the permit is currently valid through 2027 pursuant to a general extension approval from DEM.

**MOTION:** Motion to reinstate the preliminary plan consistent with the staff's recommendations and the conditions listed in the staff memorandum, made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mancini and the motion passed unanimously with a (8-0) vote.

**SUBDIVISIONS/LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – NEW BUSINESS**

- **“1016 Park Ave Venue”** **PUBLIC HEARING**  
**Request for Continuance**  
Change of use with no extensive construction of improvements.  
Zoning: C-4 (Highway business)  
AP 9, Lot 95  
1016 Park Avenue

Senior Planner Brianna Valcourt confirmed the applicant had requested a continuance. She also noted that the matter had been advertised for May 12.

**MOTION:** Motion to continue the 1016 Park Ave Venue matter to the May 12, 2026 special meeting, made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lanphear and the motion passed unanimously with a (8-0) vote.

**SUBDIVISIONS/LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – OLD BUSINESS**

- **“Vaughn Lane”** **PUBLIC HEARING**  
MASTER PLAN - Residential Planned District  
Proposal: Cluster subdivision with 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

Attorney Tanessa Azar of Moses Ryan LTD, appeared on behalf of the applicant, 777 Main Street LLC. Ms. Azar noted that since the prior application, the project has been redesigned to eliminate access through the Wini Street area and to route primary access through a new street lot 4 on Main Street, with Vaughn Lane retained as secondary access with no proposed improvements. A neighborhood meeting was held in early

April and outreach with neighbors had been conducted.

Jenna Shea, project manager at DiPrete engineering, presented the engineering details. Ms. Shea described existing conditions, noting numerous wetlands scattered throughout the property, an isolated wetland in the northwest section, and wetland areas and an existing pond along the southern and eastern edges. She noted that AP 30 lots 230 and 259, located within the center of the project site, are not part of the proposed subdivision and will retain their existing gravel access easement to Vaughn Lane. Ms. Shea also described the open space calculations, noting the project provides 55.9 acres of open space, including 35.7 acres of land suitable for development, nearly double the required amounts. Water and sewer availability letters have also been received.

The applicant requested two waivers: (1) a minor dimensional waiver of approximately 2 feet from the required 50-foot right-of-way width for the short section in lot 4, with full 50-foot right-of-way resuming beyond that section; and (2) a waiver from the sidewalk requirement under the low impact development standards.

Commission President Frias questioned the necessity of connecting the development to Vaughn Lane given the road's substandard width of 14 to 15 feet and its unusual character. Ms. Azar indicated the applicant would be amenable to installing a gate on Vaughn Lane separating the subdivision from the existing Vaughn Lane, which would prevent day-to-day traffic from the new subdivision while preserving emergency access. Commission President Frias indicated that he would want to hear from the fire department about the situation. Ms. Azar noted the loop design of the development is intended to direct traffic toward road A as the primary access route.

In response to questions from Commission President Frias, Ms. Shea stated they had no objection to soil evaluation for preliminary plan stage. Ms. Azar stated there would be a willingness to study the traffic at preliminary plan stage. Ms. Azar stated they plan to build 7 to 10 houses a year but a formal phasing plan would be at preliminary plan stage. Commission President Frias stated that the Fiskeville is underdeveloped area, and asked about an impact study. Ms. Azar stated the applicant would need information as to what would be addressed in an impact study. Commission President Frias indicated in order to determine the project's phasing he needed information on the impact on schools and other services. Ms. Azar indicated that phasing would involve getting feedback from the departments and this would occur at the preliminary plan stage.

Assistant Planning Director, Jonas Bruggemann, presented the staff memorandum on behalf of the department. Staff noted two applicant-requested waivers and recommended an additional waiver for concrete curbing, consistent with low impact development standards, conditioned on the preliminary plan demonstrating that stormwater can be adequately managed without curbs. Staff recommended the following ten conditions:

1. Approval of the waiver for the frontage/right-of-way width in lot 4.
2. Approval of the waiver for sidewalks and concrete curbing, conditioned on the stormwater management plan demonstrating low impact design standards can properly manage stormwater without curbs.
3. Vaughn Lane to remain unaltered.
4. A general overview of water and sewer main extensions to be provided, to class 4 standards for any extensions along public rights-of-way.
5. A landscape plan to be submitted.
6. Snow storage locations to be shown on the preliminary site plan (requested by public works).
7. An itemized bond estimate for public roadway improvements (requested by public works).
8. Hydrant locations to be approved by the fire department.
9. Stone walls within the limit of disturbance to be mapped and a plan for their treatment submitted.
10. Applicant to determine whether streetlights are proposed and, if so, ensure dark skies compliance; if no streetlights are proposed, a notation on the site plan to that effect.

Commissioner Lanphear noted that staff had recommended approval of the two waivers as part of master plan and asked whether those determinations could be deferred to preliminary plan stage. Assistant Solicitor, Stephen Marsella, advised that the waivers were requested by the applicant and that providing direction at master plan is beneficial to the applicant's plans, though waivers could technically be granted at a later stage.

Public comment:

- Jennifer Sutcliffe (171 Main Street), an abutting property owner adjacent to road A, expressed concerns about: the absence of a definitive boundary survey; the adequacy of the road width and layout for regular traffic, emergency access, and winter maintenance; potential property damage from grading, drainage changes, and ongoing construction impacts; and the proximity of her driveway to the proposed road alignment creating a safety hazard.
- Robert Sansone (145 Main Street), an abutting property owner, submitted a visual exhibit showing a drainage system connecting the proposed development area to his property and ultimately to the Pawtuxet River through municipal infrastructure. Mr. Sansone presented multiple exhibits, including Cranston city GIS maps, the applicant's engineered plan, and a certified existing conditions survey. Mr. Sansone requested that the commission continue or defer the matter.
- Sonia Meysembourg (30 Roberts Avenue) raised two topics: (1) the existence of an approved cesspool on the property associated with road a's access lot that remains two years overdue for conversion to a septic system; and (2) the environmental and deforestation impacts of the development, including removal of old-growth trees, release of carbon, habitat loss for species, and concerns about the adequacy of HOA maintenance of wetland open space.
- Dave Perini (169 Main Street) expressed concern about ledge on and near the site, noting his home vibrates from blasting and hammering in the area, and questioned how his property would be protected during construction. He also argued that the 50-foot right-of-way requirement should not be waived.
- Jan Ragno (1439 Hope Road) raised concerns about traffic on Hope Road, the need for a traffic study, and requested that the Rhode Island Indian Council and Nipmuc nation be engaged regarding potential Native American archaeological sites on the property.
- Mike Klitzner (1410 Hope Road), an abutting property owner, raised concerns about fire and police response times in Western Cranston, arguing that the Hope Jackson station is volunteer-staffed and not manned 24/7, and that mutual aid from surrounding communities cannot be relied upon for day-to-day service. He expressed opposition to the proposed gate concept and urged the Commission to ensure adequate infrastructure is in place before approving the development.
- Drake Patten (684 Natick Avenue) commented on the adequacy of Vaughn Lane as an emergency access route, the lack of a conservation easement for permanent open space protection, the distinction between HOA-managed open space and publicly accessible open space, the turning radius and design of road A's access onto Main Street, and current fire and police response time issues in the neighborhood.
- Jessica Salter (6 Vaughn Lane) spoke on behalf of the Fiskeville neighborhood. She acknowledged the applicant's redesign efforts and expressed that the neighbors were not attempting to block the development but to improve it. Her comments addressed three topics: (1) traffic impacts (2) ledge and construction impacts (3) and fiscal impacts.
- Richard Campopiano, citywide city councilman, stated he was not for or against the project but requested that a fiscal impact statement be prepared to inform the Commission and the city of the projected costs and revenues associated with the development.

Attorney Steven Sypole of Gidley Sarli and Marusak, LLP appeared on behalf of a group of abutting neighbors. Mr. Sypole submitted for the record three memoranda previously authored for the prior Vaughn Lane application. He noted that the neighbors do not concede that a 50-foot easement for Vaughn Lane has been established and urged the Commission to carefully structure any HOA provisions to include personal liability for homeowners and city lien authority in the event of infrastructure failure. He introduced planning expert Brent Wiegand, Director of Planning and Zoning for the Town of North Providence, with approximately 14 years of planning experience and a bachelor's degree in environmental planning from URI.

Commission President Frias indicated he believed Mr. Wiegand was an expert in land use and planning. The applicant's attorney, Thomas Moses, objected to the qualification of Mr. Wiegand as an expert in fields beyond land use and planning, specifically noting that the written report contained engineering, traffic, and geological conclusions outside his expertise. The Commission President Frias noted the objection for the record and stated he would give his report the weight it deserves as an expert in land use and planning only.

**Motion:** motion to qualify Brent Wiegand as an expert in planning and land use and to give his testimony

in those areas the weight of an expert, made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the motion passed unanimously with a (8-0) vote.

Mr. Wiegand summarized his report. His recommendations centered on two primary questions: (1) whether Vaughn Lane secondary access is truly necessary, and noted comparable neighborhoods in western Cranston without only access to one road; and (2) whether the city has adequate infrastructure to accommodate the development. He recommended that a traffic study be completed, and that if Vaughn Lane is deemed unnecessary by the traffic study, the subdivision should not be connected to it. He also identified a potential alternative secondary access route to the east via Lippitt Avenue, which he suggested would better divide traffic and reduce impacts on the Fiskeville neighborhood. Mr. Wiegand provided a list of recommended conditions covering traffic studies, access route analysis, geotechnical investigation, construction hour limitations, soil erosion and sediment control, tree retention, stormwater peer review, and a phasing plan.

Following Mr. Wiegand's testimony, Commission President Frias asked several questions of the applicant regarding issues raised during public comment:

- Leonard Bradley addressed the OWTS concern, and advised that the plan is to connect the development to public sewer and that the referenced OWTS system is either irrelevant or would be relocated or connected to public sewer at that time.
- Mr. Bradley addressed the drainage feature identified by Mr. Sansone, and explained that the feature is a drainage channel rather than a biological wetland. He indicated that RIDEM is the ultimate authority on wetland determinations, and that a culvert will be appropriately sized and designed as part of the stormwater analysis at the preliminary plan stage.
- Mr. Bradley noted that state law requires boundary surveys after master plan approval.
- Mr. Bradley addressed phasing, and suggested a typical phasing sequence beginning with road A and road B, with approximately seven to ten homes per year, and noted that a formal phasing sequence would be proposed at preliminary plan.
- Ms. Azar addressed the need for secondary access, noted the City's subdivision regulations impose maximum dead-end road length requirements and that a cul-de-sac alternative would not meaningfully reduce impervious surface.

Commission President Frias requested that the applicant provide a written response prior to the next hearing indicating which of Mr. Wiegand's recommended conditions the applicant accepts and to which the applicant objects.

Commission President Frias indicated his preference to continue the matter to the June 2, 2026, regular meeting to allow additional time to review the substantial testimony received. Commissioner Lanphear agreed that additional time was needed to properly formulate appropriate conditions.

**Motion:** Motion to continue the Vaughn Lane matter to the June 2, 2026, regular meeting with public comment remaining open, made by Commissioner Lanphear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mancini and the motion passed unanimously with a (8-0) vote.

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

**MARC SPIRITO(OWN) AND CALISE DEVELOPMENT, LLC(APP)** have applied to the Board for permission to leave an existing single-family dwelling on an undersized lot with reduced setbacks previously merged by zoning at **30 Pomham Street**, and to construct two new single-family dwellings on adjacent undersized lots with reduced frontages previously merged by zoning. AP 7 Lot 1264; area 3,200sf, zoned B1. Applicant seeks relief by 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

Planner Technician Jamie Ray presented the staff memorandum. Staff found the application consistent with certain Comprehensive Plan goals and policies but determined it is not compatible with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood, and gave a negative recommendation.

Commission President Frias stated he agreed with the staff recommendation, noting that 3,200 square foot lots are very small, and that the proposed development with its three lots is too intensive given available alternatives. He noted the proposed density of 13.61 units per acre is above the FLUM limit of 10.89 and the existing neighborhood density of 9.66 units per acre.

**MOTION:** Motion to forward a negative recommendation to the Zoning Board based on the following findings: (1) the application is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan because the density of the parcels if approved would be 13.61 units per acre, well in excess of the density of 10.89 units per acre required by the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map; (2) the application is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinances because the size of the resulting lots is 3,200 square feet where 6,000 square feet is required by ordinance and the existing median lot size of the Spectacle Pond neighborhood is 4,500 square feet, making the application inconsistent with the general character of the neighborhood; and (3) the application is inconsistent with Comprehensive Plan LU Goal-6 and LU Policy-12 to protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods because it lessens open space by increasing density beyond what is allowed by the FLUM, does not improve roadway conditions, and does not conform to existing uses, being the median lot size of 4,500 square feet, made by Commissioner Lanphear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the motion passed unanimously with a (8-0) vote.

**GARY FLETCH, LLC (OWN/APP)** has applied to the Board for permission to utilize a vacant lot with restricted frontage for motor vehicle storage at **0 Fletcher Avenue**; A.P. 12, lot 2847; area 10,991 sf; zoned B1. Applicants seek relief per 17.92.010- Variance; Section 7.20.120 Schedule of Intensity; Section 17.20.030 Schedule of Uses Regulations.

Attorney Robert Murray appeared on behalf of the applicant, Gary Fletch LLC. Mr. Murray explained the application seeks to utilize the L-shaped lot fronting on Fletcher Avenue for motor vehicle storage, strictly for surface parking of vehicles associated with the nearby Fletcher Auto Body business. He noted that motor vehicle storage is not currently permitted in any zoning district in the city and therefore requires a use variance from the Zoning Board. Mr. Murray confirmed that if approved, a permanent fence and landscaping would be installed consistent with staff recommendations.

Planner Technician Jamie Ray presented the staff memorandum. Staff noted the subject lot is currently paved with gravel and used for vehicle storage as a driveway in a less intensive use. Staff gave a positive recommendation subject to two conditions: (1) submission of a stormwater management plan, and (2) submission of a landscaping plan.

**MOTION:** Motion to forward a positive recommendation to the Zoning Board of Review with conditions as recommended by staff, made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the motion passed with a (7-1) vote. Commissioner Lanphear voted nay.

Commission President Frias informed the Commission that a meeting will be held next week to discuss one application and comprehensive plan edits.

**MOTION:** Motion to schedule a meeting for May 12 made by Commissioner Coupe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Corrao and the motion passed unanimously with a (8-0) vote.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 PM.