

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, AUGUST 4, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Commission President Frias called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

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

- Robert Coupe was not present

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. Beth Ashman, Planning Director, attended the meeting virtually via video call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- July 7, 2026 Minutes

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

SUBDIVISIONS/LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – NEW BUSINESS

- **“30 Pomham Street”** **PUBLIC HEARING** **REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE**
Administrative Subdivision with UDR
Proposal: Applicant seeks to reconfigure three existing lots, each of which has 3,200 sf, into two lots. The proposed lots will both contain 4,800 sf. An existing single-family dwelling will remain on proposed Parcel B and a new single-family dwelling is proposed for the currently vacant Parcel A.
Zoning District: B-1 (Single/Two-Family Residential)
AP 7, Lots 1263, 1264, and 1262
30 Pomham Street

Senior Planner Brianna Valcourt informed the Commission that mandatory abutter notice requirements were not fulfilled prior to the meeting date due to an administrative notice error. Therefore, the meeting requires a formal continuance to the next regular meeting. Commission President Frias confirmed that continuing the application to September 1, 2026 would allow the applicant sufficient time to satisfy all statutory abutter notice requirements.

MOTION: Motion to continue the application to the September 1, 2026 meeting made by Commissioner Mancini. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lanphear and the motion passed unanimously with a (7-0) vote.

▪ **“30 & 40 Cindy Lane**

PUBLIC HEARING

PRELIMINARY PLAN – Minor Subdivision with UDR – Waiver Requested

Proposal: To reconfigure the two existing lots into three lots requiring a waiver from Section VII(e) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to permit two of the three proposed lots to have less than 80,000 sf of area suitable for development.

Zoning District: A-80 (Single Family Residential)

AP 28, Lots 125, 127

30 & 40 Cindy Lane

Attorney Sanford J. Resnick spoke as the applicant’s representative. He outlined the proposal and summarized the history of the lot. He stated that the proposal functions as a family estate plan allowing the property owner to construct a single-family home on Parcel A adjacent to family members.

Joe Casali, PE, presented site layout plans. He noted that while all three proposed lots significantly exceed the 80,000 sq. ft. gross area requirement of the A-80 district, extensive freshwater wetlands—including an intermittent stream flowing toward Furnace Brook, a 75-foot DEM buffer, and a 100-foot jurisdictional boundary—leave Lot 125 and Parcel A with less than the required 80,000 sq. ft. of "land suitable for development". Consequently, waivers from Section 5.3 of the Subdivision Regulations are required.

Commissioner Lanphear inquired whether deferring stormwater and erosion control plans to the final plan stage would bypass Planning Commission review. Mr. Casali and Legal Counsel Stephen Marsella confirmed that as a minor subdivision, final plan approval is executed administratively once mandated RIDEM wetland and Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) permits are secured.

Commissioner Corrao expressed concern regarding local groundwater drawdown, private well depth, and reports of well failures in Western Cranston (specifically near Pippin Orchard Road). Mr. Casale clarified that modern private wells are deep drilled into bedrock aquifers and utilize storage tanks to manage volume, affirming that RIDEM and the Department of Health strictly regulate domestic water minimum yields before building permits are issued.

Commission President Frias explained that the rationale behind buildable lot area requirements in the regulations is to ensure there is enough land for well water and private sewer system. In response to his questioning, Mr. Casali stated that there is sufficient land to drill a well and a private sewer system. Mr. Casali also explained that the RIDEM would need to permit for a well and onsite sewer system. Solicitor Marsella explained recent legislative amendments to R.I.G.L. § 45-23 (HB 8004) regarding local buildable lot definitions, noting the application complies with statutory standards.

MOTION: Motion to adopt the Planning Department findings of fact, grant the recommended waivers for land suitable for development and plan deferrals, and approve the Preliminary Plan for 30 & 40 Cindy Lane subject to staff conditions made by Commissioner Barbieri. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Corrao and the motion passed unanimously with a (7-0) vote.

ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW – PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

LOC CONSTRUCTION, LLC (OWN/APP) applied to the board for permission to leave an existing two-family dwelling on an undersized lot with reduced frontage and setbacks previously merged by zoning at **89 Auburn Street**, AP 5 lot 124; area 5000sf, 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. Application ZBR-26-28 filed 06/11/2026.

LOC CONSTRUCTION, LLC (OWN/APP) applied 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 Auburn Street**, AP 5 lot 125; area 5000sf, 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. Application ZBR-26-31 filed 06/08/2026.

Planner Technician, Jamie Ray presented the application to retain an existing two-family dwelling on a 5,000 sq. ft. lot (89 Auburn St.) and construct a new single-family dwelling on an adjacent 5,000 sq. ft. lot (0 Auburn St.). Staff reported that, 5,000 sq. ft. lots are standard throughout the Auburn neighborhood. Staff recommended a positive recommendation to the Zoning Board for both parcels.

MOTION: Motion to send a positive recommendation to the zoning board for 89 Auburn Street made by Commissioner Corrao. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the motion passed with a (6-1) vote. Commissioner Lanphear voted in opposition to the motion.

MOTION: Motion to send a positive recommendation to the zoning board for 0 Auburn Street made by Commissioner Corrao. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the motion passed with a (6-1) vote. Commissioner Lanphear voted in opposition to the motion.

EDDY PENA (OWN/APP) has applied to the Board for permission to convert an existing legal, non-conforming single-family dwelling into a two-family dwelling at **309 Station Street**; AP 3, lot 71 & 72; area 10,000 sf; zoned M2. Applicants seek relief per 17.92.010- Variance; Section 17.20.120 Schedule of Intensity Regulations; Application ZBR-26-34 filed 07/02/26.

Planner Technician, Jamie Ray, reviewed the proposal to convert an existing single-family structure back into its historic, legal two-family use in an M2 (Industrial) zone near Park Avenue and I-95. The structure was constructed over 100 years ago as a two-family dwelling. Staff noted the property sits within a Special Redevelopment Area on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) where residential uses persist and rendered a positive recommendation.

In response to questions from Commissioners Corrao and Lanphear regarding building layouts and variance scope, Solicitor Marsella confirmed that a use variance runs with the land, and Planning Director Ashman noted approval enables administrative building permit review for internal alterations.

MOTION: Motion to send a positive recommendation to the zoning board for made by Commissioner Mancini. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Exter and the motion passed with a (6-1) vote. Commissioner Lanphear voted in opposition to the motion.

YOLANDA ROSA (OWN) AND NERY CRUZ (APP) applied to the Board for permission to convert the basement of a legal, non-conforming three-family dwelling into a fourth unit at **547 Park Avenue**; AP 3, lot 1141; area 5,989 sf; zoned B2. Applicants seek relief per 17.92.010 Variance; Section 17.20.030 Schedule of Uses; Section 17.20.120 Schedule of Intensity Regulations; Section 17.20.090 Specific requirements. Application ZBR-26-35 filed 07/07/26.

Planner Technician, Jamie Ray, presented the proposal to convert an existing 3-family dwelling into a 4-family dwelling. Staff offered a positive recommendation, arguing that multifamily uses align with the B2 district and parking is accommodated.

Commissioner Lanphear highlighted concerns about the proposal would have a density of 29 units per acre, and is higher than the surrounding area. Commission President Frias concurred with Commissioner Lanphear, expressing concern that this proposal exceeds density for the surrounding residential area.

Public Comment: **Annette Bourne (51 Community Drive):** Addressed the Commission via the online videoconference platform. Ms. Bourne spoke in favor of granting the requested zoning relief for 547 Park Avenue, as well as supporting the other residential variance requests across Cranston. She stated that the night's docket contained approximately 10 potential new housing units across 5 zoning variance applications and 2 planning items. Ms. Bourne beseeched the Commissioners to approve these variances to foster incremental housing development, emphasizing that Cranston urgently requires additional housing options of diverse types, particularly in lower- and moderate-income neighborhoods located within walking distance of major public transit corridors, like the Elmwood Avenue bus lines. She

concluded by urging positive recommendations on housing applications and expressed enthusiasm for upcoming public workshops on mixed-use corridors and the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element.

MOTION: Motion to send a negative recommendation to the zoning board made by Commissioner Lanphear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the negative motion unanimously passed with a (7-0) vote.

COLBEA ENTERPRISES, LLC (OWN/APP) have applied to the Board for permission to install a new electronic message center on an existing free-standing sign at **2050 Plainfield Pike**, AP 36, lot 117; area 72,638 sf; zoned C5. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010- Variances; Sections 17.72.010 - Signs. Application ZBR-26-33 filed on 06/29/26.

Planner Technician, Jamie Ray, presented the proposal to install an electronic message center (LED digital display) on an existing freestanding sign at 250 Plainfield Pike. Staff recommended a negative recommendation.

Commissioner Frank Corrao observed that electronic message signs exist at neighboring commercial establishments along Plainfield Pike and suggested a positive recommendation subject to strict operational restrictions.

Commission President Frias concurred that Plainfield Pike represents a heavy commercial arterial corridor where controlled LED signage is acceptable.

MOTION: Motion to send a positive recommendation with conditions to the zoning board made by Commissioner Corrao. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Colasante and the motion passed with a (4-3) vote. Commissioners Corrao, Mancini, Colasante, and Commission President Frias voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Lanphear, Barbieri and Exter voted in opposition to the motion.

JORGE JORGE (OWN) AND TRUMAN HERRERA (APP) have applied to the Board for permission to convert a legal, non-conforming mixed-use building into a three-family dwelling at **1594-1596 Broad Street**; AP 2, lot 2624; area 4,118 sf; zoned C1. Applicants seek relief per 17.92.010 Variance; Section 17.20.120 Schedule of Intensity Regulations; Section 17.20.090 Specific requirements; Section 17.64.010 Off-street parking; Section 17.84.150 Parking Area Design Standards. Application. ZBR-26-26 filed 05/31/26.

Planner Technician, Jamie Ray, presented the application to convert a legal nonconforming mixed-use building (2 residential units, 1 ground-floor commercial unit/former dental office) into a 3-family dwelling. Staff rendered a positive recommendation based on compatibility with surrounding Edgewood multifamily uses.

Commissioner Lanphear highlighted severe off-street parking shortages in Northern Edgewood, stating that converting commercial space to residential creates permanent, overnight parking demands that cannot be accommodated by on-street parking. Commission President Frias noted that the proposal would have a density of 31.7 units per acre which exceeds the surrounding area.

Public Comment: **Sean Sierra-Patev (260 Aqueduct Road):** Submitted a written public comment through the online meeting portal (noting technical microphone difficulties): Mr. Sierra-Patev inquired into the record why the city's off-street parking requirement for 1594 Broad Street was so restrictive (requiring 6 spaces for 3 units, leaving the applicant 1 spot short), given that Broad Street is an active public transit corridor served by high-frequency RIPTA bus routes running approximately every 10 minutes.

City Solicitor Marsella and Commission President Frias responded for the record, explaining that municipal parking mandates are established strictly by zoning district, lot area, and land use code under Cranston ordinance, and do not automatically decrease based on current RIPTA bus routes or transit frequencies.

MOTION: Motion to send a negative recommendation to the Zoning Board made by Commissioner Lanphear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barbieri and the negative motion passed with a (5-

2) vote. Commissioners Corrao and Mancini voted in opposition to the motion.

MIXED-USE CENTERS AND CORRIDORS PROJECT PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL

Planning Director Beth Ashman delivered a detailed progress report on the Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors Project, supported by consultants Kittelson & Associates under a competitive Rhode Island Housing grant. The study focuses on three key corridors:

1. **Rolfe Square / Pontiac Ave / Park Ave:** Established commercial core where ground-floor active storefront requirements make sense to preserve historic walkable Main Street.
2. **Elmwood Avenue / Wellington Ave:** Industrial/commercial transit corridor with the highest potential for transit-oriented multifamily development (proposed baseline 4-story building height with step-backs).
3. **Broad Street:** Historic, transit-rich corridor requiring context-sensitive design standards and natural resource balancing.

Director Ashman outlined proposed Overlay District concepts, including reduced parking mandates (1.5 spaces/unit), shared commercial/residential parking rules, transitional buffer zones adjacent to single-family neighborhoods, street tree canopy requirements, and a public benefit menu for height/density bonuses.

Commission Feedback:

- Commission President Frias emphasized the end for a realistic project timeline by noting that while grant deliverables will be drafted by late 2026, City Council review and adoption will extend into 2027 due to statutory notice periods and election cycle. He urged a targeted, incremental approach, focusing first on high-potential areas like Elmwood Avenue for housing and Rolfe Square for commercial revitalization, rather than broad sweeping changes. He favored the incentive bonus structure and cautioned that shared parking rules must strictly prevent conflicts between late-night commercial uses and residential tenants.
- Commissioner Kathleen Lanphear strongly endorsed prioritizing Elmwood Avenue first.

2026 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, HOUSING ELEMENT PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL

Commission President Frias provided an update regarding proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element. Commission President Frias explained that in the summer 2025 the Commission began the process of amending the Housing Element in order to address the Rhode Island Housing goal for Cranston of 1,367 units by 2030 and to address legislative changes regarding comprehensive permits. He noted that following a public workshop at the Cranston Public Library in May 2026 and subsequent revisions incorporating Commission feedback, staff has updated the draft. He noted the changes to draft reflect lower population figures, and lower housing production goals. He noted that the plan provides for various housing production options to achieve these goals. He explained that the revised draft Housing Element will be submitted to Rhode Island Statewide Planning for preliminary state agency review and feedback prior to any action by the City Council. He also emphasized that the plan allows for the opportunity for more housing without negatively impacting our existing neighborhoods.

Commissioner Lanphear indicated that neighborhoods differ and did not support an ordinance related to neighborhood zoning districts which would allow changes by right.

MOTION: Motion to submit the housing element to the Division of Statewide Planning and other relevant agencies for review with one revision related to the elimination of the phrasing “by-right” for neighborhood zoning designation made by Commissioner Lanphear. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Exter and the motion passed unanimously with a (7-0) vote.

CITY PLANNING DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Ashman stated that she has no other updates to share.

ADJOURNMENT

Next Regular Meeting | September 1, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.– **Regular Meeting**
City Council Chamber, City Hall, 869 Park Avenue

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

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:10 p.m.