

Kenneth J. Hopkins
Mayor

Michael E. Smith
President

Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP
Planning Director



CITY PLAN COMMISSION

Thomas Barbieri
Robert Coupe
David Exter
Steven Frias
Kathleen Lanphear
Lisa Mancini
Justin Mateus
Thomas Zidelis

MINUTES

Tuesday, August 1st, 2023 – 6:30 PM

3rd Floor - City Council Chamber, 869 Park Avenue, Cranston RI

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 869 Park Avenue.

The following Commissioners were in attendance for the meeting: Chairman Michael Smith, David Exter, Steven Frias, Kathleen Lanphear, Justin Mateus, Lisa Mancini, and Thomas Zidelis. Commissioner Thomas Barbieri was absent.

The following Planning Department members were in attendance: Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP, Planning Director, Gregory Guertin, Senior Planner and Amelia Lavallee, Interim Planning Technician.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(vote taken)

- 7/11/23 Regular City Plan Commission meeting

Upon motion by Mr. Zidelis, and seconded by Ms. Mancini, the City Plan Commission voted (7-0) to approve the regular City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 7/11/23 as submitted. Commissioner Lanphear abstained due to her absence at the 7/11/23 meeting.

Chairman Smith moved the following item out of order, and explained that it was to be continued;

- DOMAIN REALTY, LLC (OWN/APP) has applied to the Board to construct a new freestanding sign within the required setbacks from the street(s) and within the area required as to not impede corner visibility; and to waive the required Development Review Process for the site at 846 Oaklawn Avenue, A.P. 15, lot 361; area 15,490 s.f. zoned C-3. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010- Variances; Sections 17.20.100(A)- Corner Visibility, 17.72.010- Signs; 17.84, et seq Development Plan Review.

Upon motion by Mr. Zidelis, and seconded by Mr. Exter, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (8-0) to continue the matter to the September 5, 2023 City Plan Commission meeting.

SUBDIVISIONS & LAND DEVELOPMENTS

(vote taken)

- **“Briarwood Estates” PUBLIC HEARING**
PRELIMINARY PLAN – Major Subdivision with street extension
14-lot subdivision with 12 new single-family house lots
Zoned A-8
AP 18, Lots 1023&1026

1365/1375 New London Avenue / Terminus of Briarwood Road

Senior Planner Gregory Guertin gave the staff presentation, including a brief overview with graphics, zoning, Future Land Use, as well as the staff analysis and recommendation.

Atty. Robert Murray, 21 Garden City Drive on behalf of the applicant, provided a brief overview of the application. Mr. Murray recalled previous Master Plan approval of the application (City Plan Commission - June 7, 2022). Mr. Murray then introduced another member of the applicant's team, Joe Casali, P.E., Casali Engineering.

Mr. Casali presented a slideshow presentation to the Commission regarding the application. The presentation included geographic context as well as updated information regarding the application following feedback provided from the prior Master Plan phase, as well as conditions of approval.

Mr. Casali referenced details of the application from the Pre-Application stage (City Plan Commission – 4/5/2022 – see Staff memorandum) stating that the applicant has since filed with the Department of Public Works, Viola Water, and have since received a groundwater discharge permit, DEM permit, water quality permit, and a DOT Physical Alteration Permit.

Chairman Smith invited members of the Commission to discuss the proposal.

Commissioner Frias asked Mr. Casali about the proposed drainage plan, specifically regarding total runoff volume as presented. Mr. Casali responded, stating that there is an overall reduction in the peak rate and volume of storm events, except for the 100-year storm event, which is a rainfall event that has a 1% chance in any given year to occur.

Commissioner Lanphear recalled a discussion about traffic mitigation at the Master Plan phase. Ms. Lanphear asked Mr. Casali if there had been measures taken to mitigate potential traffic concerns. Mr. Casali responded, stating that there were two changes made to the Master Plan including; the proposed roadway width had been reduced to 24' feet, which would safely allow two firetrucks to travel through, but narrow enough to curb speeding, and the addition of curvilinear features.

Commissioner Mateus inquired about the continuance of the proposed road to the intersection, specifically the narrowment of the road. Mr. Casali responded, stating that due to physical constraints of an existing driveway, it would be difficult to taper the proposed road off. Mr. Mateus stated that the proposed angle of the roadway would be a potential issue for drainage and snow removal.

Mr. Mateus then inquired about an existing residence at the Manor Road and Briarwood Road intersection. Mr. Mateus stated that there is potential confusion with the existing residence being located within the limits of the new street, for purposes of trash removal, mail and emergency services. Mr. Mateus asked Mr. Casali if this issue has been addressed. Mr. Casali responded, stating that the existing residence has an address of "4 Briarwood Road", where the proposed roadway would begin. Mr. Casali stated that he would be hesitant to change the property owner's address, as it is "not practical or pragmatic". Mr. Casali stated that he would respectfully defer to emergency personnel to provide directions regarding the numbering of houses within the limits of the proposed subdivision. Mr. Mateus suggested working offline with Mr. Casali to put forward an address plan that does not inconvenience the existing property owner.

Commissioner Frias suggested that the existing property owner retain their current address, and the following addresses to be numbered on the proposed road may follow, deviating slightly, not unlike other streets in the City, according to Mr. Frias. Mr. Casali responded, stating that the City Tax Assessors typically dictate lot numbers for assessment purposes, and first responders dictate house numbers and advise street names. Mr. Casali stated that the original street name proposed was "Woodbridge Road", but the proposed name is too similar to an existing street in the City.

Commissioner Frias inquired about proposed utilities, specifically if natural gas was being provided. Mr. Casali responded that natural gas would be provided to service the proposed subdivision, stating that Rhode Island Energy would coordinate, though property owners reserve the right to use propane.

Commissioner Frias then asked if street lights were proposed, to which Mr. Casali responded that per an agreement with the City, the applicant has not proposed the addition of street lights.

Chairman Smith asked Mr. Casali if Briarwood Road extends beyond the two existing homes depicted on the plan (see Staff Memo from 8/1/2023 City Plan Commission meeting). Mr. Casali responded that Briarwood does not extend further beyond the existing homes.

Commissioner Mancini inquired about the property addresses of the proposed homes within the subdivision, asking how homes would be numbered, if numbered negatively. Mr. Casali responded, stating that negative numbers are not used for addressing. Ms. Mancini then asked Mr. Casali why the proposed subdivision is entitled Briarwood Estates, if Briarwood is not the name of the street. Mr. Casali responded that the applicant intended on changing the name of the roadway before the issue of the existing property owner at 4 Briarwood Road was made evident.

Mr. Murray provided further information regarding various inconsistent addressing throughout the City. Mr. Murray noted that the numbering issue is an issue of public safety and will be resolved through contact with emergency service personnel and the Department of Public Works.

Chairman Smith inquired if the post office is typically involved in disputes regarding addresses. Mr. Casali responded, stating that first responders are typically the main contact for address issues.

Chairman Smith invited the Commission to share further comment or discussion.

Mr. Murray referenced the existing conditions associated with the application (see Staff Memo from 8/1/2023 City Plan Commission meeting) and that further documentation will be made available to DPW and Solicitor Marsella prior to the next phase of review to address the associated conditions.

Chairman Smith invited the public to comment on the application.

- Atty. Anthony Paolino, Mancini Carter Associates, representing Preservation Development, LLC (AP 18, Lot 2006) requested that the proposed right-of-way be a condition of approval to avoid land locking the client's property.

Mr. Murray noted that Mr. Paolino's concerns will be satisfied at the next phase of the project.

Commissioner Smith invited public comment from individuals viewing the meeting online.

- Nicole Renzulli, (unidentified), asked if a traffic study was shared as part of the application.

Mr. Casali stated that a traffic study was not warranted for this proposal, as the proposed number of trips generated fell below the threshold of one-hundred (100) trips at peak hour. The applicant also went through the Physical Alteration Permit process with the DOT, in which a traffic study was not warranted.

Chairman Smith invited public comment from both online and in-person audience members. Seeing no further comment, Chairman Smith accepted a motion to close public comment. Upon motion made by Commissioner Mancini, and seconded by Mr. Coupe, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (8-0) to close public comment.

Mr. Guertin re-read Staff findings and the recommendation with associated conditions (see Staff Memo from 8/1/2023 City Plan Commission meeting).

Chairman Smith suggested that the extension of the roadway be included as a condition of approval to satisfy the identified parcel from Mr. Paolino's client. Solicitor Marsella stated that it would be unnecessary to include the roadway extension as a condition of approval if the extension is included on the Final Plan.

Commissioner Lanphear asked Mr. Guertin to return to the Staff findings slide of the Staff presentation (see Staff Memo from 8/1/2023 City Plan Commission meeting). Ms. Lanphear noted a mistake made on Staff finding #8, in which the finding stated "The design and location of building lots, utilities, drainage and other improvements will conform to local regulations for mitigation of flooding and soil erosion, details of which will be reviewed during the **Preliminary Plan** phase of the application."

Ms. Lanphear stated that Staff finding #8 *should* read “The design and location of building lots, utilities, drainage and other improvements will conform to local regulations for mitigation of flooding and soil erosion, details of which will be reviewed during the **Final Plan** phase of the application”.

Ms. Lanphear suggested a motion to amend the aforementioned finding.

Chairman Smith accepted a motion. Upon motion made by Ms. Lanphear, seconded by Ms. Mancini, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (8-0) to amend the Staff findings and correct the record.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Coupe and seconded by Commissioner Frias, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (8-0) to **approve** the Preliminary Plan – Major Subdivision with street extension and applicable conditions of approval.

ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW – RECOMMENDATIONS

(votes taken for all items)

- PAPILLON HOME SOLUTIONS, LLC. (OWN/APP) has filed an application to alter an existing multi-family dwelling on an undersized lot, reducing it to a two-family house and to allow an adjacent lot considered merged to be removed from the specific requirements at 592 Dyer Avenue, A.P. 8, lot 1385, area 5,000 s.f, zoned B1. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010- Variances; Sections 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity Regulations and 17.20.090 (A)- Specific Requirements; 17.88.100- Substandard lots of record.

Due to the finding that the application is generally consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan and is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Zidelis, the City Plan Commission voted (7-1) to forward a **positive recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review. Commissioner Lanphear was opposed.

- PAPILLON HOME SOLUTIONS, LLC. (OWN/APP) has filed an application to construct a new single-family dwelling on an undersized lot previously considered to be merged with an adjacent lot at 0 Dyer Avenue, A.P. 8, lot 1386, area 5,000 s.f, zoned B1. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010- Variances; Sections 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity Regulations; 17.88.100- Substandard lots of record.

Due to the finding that the application is consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan and is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, upon motion made by Mr. Coupe, and seconded by Mr. Zidelis, the City Plan Commission voted (7-1) to forward a **positive recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review. Commissioner Lanphear was opposed.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Comprehensive Plan Update

Director Pezzullo provided an update to the Comprehensive Plan process. Mr. Pezzullo stated that in the coming weeks the Planning Department will work with the consultant to initiate a schedule of meetings and public hearings for discussing the Comprehensive Plan update.

Director Pezzullo provided an update on the Principal Planner position within the department. Kenneth Kirkland, AICP has been hired for the position and will begin working for the City in coming weeks. In regards to hiring, Mr. Pezzullo stated that solicitation for the Planning Technician position is underway, with interviews scheduled in the coming week. Planning Intern, Amelia Lavallee is currently filling the vacancy in the interim.

Commissioner Frias inquired about the status of zoning changes recently introduced at the end of the 2023 Session. Mr. Pezzullo responded, stating that he will be working with City Solicitor Marsella and former Cranston Planning Director Peter Lapolla to initiate joint workshops with the Commission and the Department. Mr. Marsella will further advise in the coming weeks.

UPCOMING MEETINGS / ADJOURNMENT

(vote taken)

- Tuesday, September 5th, 2023, 6:30PM – **Regular City Plan Commission Meeting** – City Hall Council Chambers, 869 Park Avenue

Upon motion made by Mr. Zidelis, and seconded by Mr. Mateus, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (8-0) to adjourn the meeting at 7:45pm.