

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, January 2, 2024 – 6:30 PM

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

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Coupe called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 869 Park Avenue.

The following Commissioners were in attendance for the meeting: Vice Chair Robert Coupe, David Exter, Thomas Zidelis, Steven Frias, Thomas Barbieri, Lisa Mancini, and Kathleen Lanphear. Chair Smith and Justin Mateus were absent for the meeting.

The following Planning Department members were in attendance: Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP, Planning Director; Asst. Director Kenneth R. Kirkland, AICP; and Gregory Guertin, Senior Planner.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(votes taken on all items)

- 10.25.23 Special Meeting – Comprehensive Plan Workshop

Vice Chair Coupe asked if the Commissioners wished to recommend any edits prior to voting on the minutes. Commissioner Frias offered an amendment to the meeting minutes.

Upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Exter, the City Plan Commission voted (6-0) to **amend** the special City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 10/25/23. Vice Chair Coupe abstains, as he was absent for the meeting.

Upon motion made by Mr. Zidelis, and seconded by Mr. Exter, the City Plan Commission voted (6-0) to **approve** the special City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 10/25/23 as amended. Vice Chair Coupe abstains, as he was absent for the meeting.

- 11.9.23 Regular Commission Meeting

Commissioner Frias offered an amendment to the meeting minutes.

Upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Ms. Mancini, the City Plan Commission voted (6-0) to **amend** the regular City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 11/9/23. Vice Chair Coupe abstains, as he was absent for the meeting.

Upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Exter, the City Plan Commission voted (6-0) to **approve** the regular City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 11/9/23 as amended. Vice Chair Coupe abstains, as he was absent for the meeting.

- 12.5.23 Regular Commission Meeting

Commissioner Frias offered an amendment to the meeting minutes.

Upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Ms. Lanphear, the City Plan Commission voted (6-0) to **amend** the regular City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 12/5/23. Vice Chair Coupe abstains, as he was absent for the meeting.

Upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Barbieri, the City Plan Commission voted (6-0) to **approve** the regular City Plan Commission meeting minutes of 12/5/23 as amended. Vice Chair Coupe abstains, as he was absent for the meeting.

SUBDIVISION & LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS – PUBLIC HEARING (vote taken)

- Amendments related to the 2023 State legislative session.

Vice Chair Coupe opened the discussion to the public for comment. Seeing no public comment in-person nor online, Vice Chair Coupe invited a motion to close the public comment section for this item.

Upon motion made by Mr. Zidelis, and seconded by Mr. Exter, the City Plan Commission voted (7-0) to close public comment.

Atty. Steve Marsella suggested that the Commission raise questions or comments regarding the subdivision and land development regulations prior to Staff presentation. Commissioner Frias stated that he would propose minor amendments following Staff presentation.

Commissioner Lanphear asked if the proposed changes would be made to comply with changes in state law. Ms. Lanphear asked if impending state law changes were to be challenged and potentially changed, would the changes to be adopted by the City Plan Commission remain in place. Atty. Marsella stated that the proposed changes would be adopted upon approval, but if related state laws changed, the subdivision and land development regulations pending approval would become void, and would require revision upon changes to state law following a potential challenge.

Mr. Kirkland provided the staff presentation.

Commissioner Frias discussed his proposed amendments to the subdivision and land development regulations [itemized].

Atty. Marsella inquired if applicants are able to submit supporting materials in a format in which planning staff will be able to post and share for electronic viewing/access. Atty. Marsella voiced concerns about the City being obligated to post materials in an incompatible format that may affect the integrity and/or scale of certain documents. Mr. Kirkland stated that applicants are required to submit electronic versions of all physical materials.

Director Pezzullo discussed the proposed amendment to the timeline in which meeting materials are circulated among the Commission. Mr. Pezzullo voiced concerns about budget constraints regarding printing and copying physical copies of meeting materials and supporting documents upon request.

Vice Chair Coupe stated that electronic accessibility to application materials and supporting materials would suffice. Mr. Kirkland added that, if necessary, Staff can distribute physical copies of application materials to Commissioners with proper notice.

Atty. Marsella suggested that the Commission discuss each proposed amendment prior to the vote, allowing public comment for each proposed amendment.

Commissioner Frias reiterated his proposed amendments to the subdivision and land development regulations. The first amendment was a change in verbiage regarding the public notice requirement for public meetings. Mr. Frias' second proposed amendment considered a change in the notice area for notice of public hearings. Mr. Frias' third proposed amendment considered an administrative change to the section regarding the agenda and disbursement of physical copies of meeting materials for Commission members.

Vice Chair Coupe invited members of the public to comment on the proposed amendments.

- Atty. Robert Murray, 21 Garden City Drive – Mr. Murray stated, in reference to sharing electronic copies of application materials, that it can be difficult to send large files/documents electronically due to bandwidth constraints.
- Tricia Gilmore, 4 Pepper Mill Lane – Inquired about changes to administrative process regarding developments requiring a change of zone.

Director Pezzullo stated that developments requiring a zone change would follow the same, existing process of publication and notification that the City Council is required to follow. Atty. Marsella stated that if a minor subdivision application required zoning approval, the application would now follow the unified development review process.

Seeing no further public comment in-person nor online, Vice Chair Coupe entertained a motion to close public comment.

Upon motion made by Mr. Zidelis, and seconded by Mr. Barbieri, the City Plan Commission voted (7-0) to close public comment.

Seeing no further discussion by the Commission, Vice Chair Coupe entertained a motion to adopt the subdivision and land development regulations, as amended.

Upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Zidelis, the City Plan Commission voted (7-0) to approve the proposed amendments to the subdivision and land development regulations.

Upon motion made by Mr. Zidelis, and seconded by Mr. Exter, the City Plan Commission voted (7-0) to adopt the modified subdivision and land development regulations, as amended.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

(votes taken on both items)

- President
- Vice President

Vice Chair Coupe suggested tabling this item to the subsequent regular City Plan Commission meeting scheduled for 2/6/24, as Chairman Smith was not present for this meeting.

Upon motion made by Mr. Frias, and seconded by Mr. Zidelis, the City Plan Commission voted (7-0) to table this item to the following regular City Plan Commission meeting scheduled for 2/6/24.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

(no votes taken)

- Open positions / ongoing hiring process
- Staffing levels into the new year

Director Pezzullo stated that Planning Staff anticipates interviewing applicants for the planner technician position in the coming weeks. Director Pezzullo stated that there was limited response for the senior planner position following solicitation, in which the Planning Department would be re-soliciting for said position.

Mr. Pezzullo stated that Staff would be working with the consultant on elements for the Comprehensive Plan update, to be shared with the Commission. Mr. Pezzullo also shared that planning Staff and the

consultant for the Comprehensive Plan will be holding a public meeting on 1/23/24 at the Cranston Senior Center regarding the Comprehensive Plan update.

Mr. Zidelis inquired how the greater public will be notified for this community meeting. Mr. Pezzullo stated that Staff would utilize news media and social media platforms through City administration and City Council to share all meeting materials and information.

Commissioner Lanphear inquired about the specific sections of the Comprehensive Plan update currently being drafted by the consultant and when Commissioners may expect to review these sections. Director Pezzullo stated that element drafts would not be reviewed at the special meeting slated for 1/24/24, as the purpose of the special meeting is to elicit comments from the public. Director Pezzullo stated that the pending elements for review include the energy element, natural/cultural resources, historic preservation and hazards. Director Pezzullo stated that these sections have been updated previously, and that the Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved in 2023.

UPCOMING MEETINGS / ADJOURNMENT

(vote taken)

- Wednesday, January 24, 2024, 6:30PM – **SPECIAL MEETING – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC WORKSHOP**
Senior Center – 1070 Cranston Street
- Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 6:30PM – **Regular Meeting**
City Hall – Council Chamber – 869 Park Avenue

Upon motion made by Mr. Zidelis, and seconded by Mr. Frias, the City Plan Commission voted (7-0) to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

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