

(The following is not a verbatim transcript of comments or discussion that occurred during the meeting, but rather a summarization intended for general informational purposes. All motions and votes are the official records).

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

Special meeting of the Ordinance Committee was held on Thursday, September 26, 2024 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by the Vice-Chair.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli
Councilman Richard D. Campopiano
Councilman Robert J. Ferri
Councilwoman Kristen E. Haroian
Councilman Daniel Wall, Vice-Chair
Council President Jessica M. Marino, Ex-Officio

Absent: Councilman John P. Donegan
Council Vice-President Lammis J. Vargas, Chair

Also Present: Councilman Christopher G. Paplauskas
Christopher Rawson, Assistant City Solicitor
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
Ron Ronzio, Stenographer

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Albert Scaralia appeared to speak and stated that the big thing with this is you need lots. There is a problem with housing and young couples can't afford homes, which is another problem. We have to think of the future. We make plans, but always short-term a lot of times. You have to think of tomorrow, you can't be short-range thinkers and not think "not in my backyard".

Steve Stycos, 37 Ferncrest Ave., appeared to speak and stated that he does not understand what Appendix "A" in the Comprehensive Plan indicates. It seems to indicate Zone changes for specific pieces of property that are being recommended and his understanding is that the Comprehensive Plan sets general categories of land use and then it is up to the City Council to determine the Zone. His understanding is that the landowner has the right, even though if the property is Zoned Residential and the Comprehensive Plan says it should be Commercial, it can be Commercial that he has the right to change and the City Council's power is limited to the Zones that are in the category of neighborhood commercial which are C1, C2 and C3. His concern is that huge list of properties, there are lot of properties near his home on Broad St. and Warwick Ave. which appear to be recommended changing from Residential to Commercial. There are few concerns he has with that. One concern is the streets specifically near his house, Warwick Ave. and Broad St., are mixed-use. There are a few lots that are Commercial and a few lots that are houses. In the last Comprehensive Plan, those were made all Commercial and the Council decided to make those mixed-use so that the properties that are

Commercial would stay Commercially Zoned and the ones that were Residential would stay Residential. That ought to stay the way it is for Broad St. and Warwick Ave. Other concerns he has is a larger concern Citywide, which is in that list, we are taking a lot of property out of the category of Residential property and turning it into potentially Commercial property. He urged the Council to look at that and look at your own neighborhood. Another problem area, which he does not know if it is in the Plan or not, is in Ward 6 with Northeast Tree property. That is all Zoned Residential and the City has under the Fung Administration absolutely refused to act on the problem that there was a business operating in a Residential Zone. If that property gets changed in the Comprehensive Plan to some kind of Commercial category then the landowner would have a legal right to get that property changed from Residential Zone to Commercial. He hopes that the Planning Department can comment on that whole issue. The other danger is, and he does not have any evidence of that, is that people have pressured behind the scenes to have property changed in category for their plan to go from Residential to Commercial or do something else with the land.

Andy Andovar, 17 Ruby St., appeared to speak and thanked the Planning Commission for proposing this Comprehensive Plan and for their hard work, but he has some concerns. Table 3.5 you are dropping the lot size from 8,000 sq. ft. to 6,000 sq. ft., but in Ward 3 alone, he stopped counting after he found more than 50 lots that are under 6,000 sq. ft., but over 3,200 sq. ft. If you do the math, on a two-family house with this tax rate, that is approximately \$4,700 per property which comes out to \$237,000 a year times whatever this Comprehensive Plan is which is ten years, it comes out to almost \$2.1 million. We all want shovels in the ground and we need housing, but he is present this evening to say he does not know why we do not adopt what other cities and towns are doing by if you are in a Zone and you meet the setbacks, you should be able to build what you want as long as you meet the setbacks.

IV. NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

9-24-01 ORDINANCE Approving the 2024 Comprehensive Plan of the City of Cranston; as recommended by the Planning Commission; Sponsored by Council President Jessica M. Marino.

Council President Marino stated that at the workshop the Planning Department was going to have amendments based on some of the conversations held. This should be discussed this evening.

Vice-Chair asked Director Pezzullo to respond.

Director Pezzullo stated that from Tuesday's meeting, there were a few minor corrections. One was about the cultural aspects and he believes some of the Churches were mislabeled; there was a correction on Meshanticut Park; a Table of Contents was created and everything is very minor and the latest draft is online.

Vice-Chair asked if what is online is what we will be voting on this evening or if there are any other amendments. Director Pezzullo stated that he would say yes. The draft online has the corrections from a few days ago. Vice-Chair asked Solicitor if that is the case. Solicitor stated, yes.

On motion by Councilman Campopiano, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Councilwoman Renzulli stated that based on a one of the speaker's comments about the 8,000 sq. ft. to 6,000 sq. ft., she asked if that was just an error. Director Pezzullo stated that they double-checked the numbers and the numbers in the Plan were correct.

Councilwoman Renzulli stated that from the last meeting, she thought that the only properties that were changing were the few parcels in the Western part of the City in Alpine Estates. One of the speakers this evening mentioned several parcels changing from Residential to Commercial. Is that the case or is that not the case? Director Pezzullo stated that Appendix “A” was carried over without change from 2012 Plan to now. It was during the adoption process that an amendment was made in addition to the Plan that restricted future Commercial on Warwick Ave. and he believes Broad St. Staff has no issue of continuing that policy. No one has come to the table in the past twelve years looking to upzone anything in those areas. If we want to carry that policy forward, it is not in the Plan, it was in the Ordinance that was adopted for the Plan and that probably got lost in the shuffle, but they have no issue with that policy.

Roll call was taken on motion to recommend approval of this Ordinance and motion passed unanimously.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees