

Kenneth J. Hopkins
Mayor

Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP
Committee Chairman
Director of Planning



Jim Woyciechowski
Fire Department

Stanley Pikul
Building Official

Justin Mateus
Engineering Division

Stephen Mulcahy
Traffic Safety Division

DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

Cranston City Hall
869 Park Avenue, Cranston, Rhode Island 02910

MINUTES

9:00 AM, WEDNESDAY, November 16, 2022 CRANSTON CITY HALL – 3RD FLOOR COUNCIL CHAMBER

1. Call to Order

Principal Planner Douglas McLean, on behalf of Chairman Jason Pezzullo, called the Development Plan Review Committee meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. in the City Council chamber.

The following members were in attendance for the meeting: Justin Mateus, Steve Mulcahy, Franklin Paulino, Jason Pezzullo, and Stanley Pikul.

The following Planning Department staff members were in attendance: Doug McLean, Principal Planner; Gregory Guertin, Senior Planner; Alex Berardo, Planning Technician; and Amelia Lavalley, Planning Intern.

2. Approval of Minutes

- 11/2/22 Meeting (vote taken)

Upon motion made by Mr. Mateus and seconded by Mr. Mulcahy, the Development Plan Review Committee unanimously voted (4-0) to approve the minutes of the 11/2/22 meeting.

3. “1224 Oaklawn Avenue - Bank” Pre-Application (no vote taken)

Location:	1224 Oaklawn Avenue, AP 15, Lots 1012 & 1014
Zoning District	C-4 (Commercial Highway)
Owner/App	RICA Realty LLC
Proposal	Applicant seeks to construct a new Cranston Municipal Employees Credit Union bank branch with a drive-thru facility, along with associated parking and landscaping on a vacant site.

Atty. Dan Meyer, of DarrowEverett LLP, presented the pre-application concept on behalf of his client, Cranston Municipal Employees' Credit Union. Although he was the only member of the applicant team present for the meeting, he noted that his client is working with NES Group, a design-build firm, on preparing floor plans and elevations and with Bohler Engineers for surveying.

Atty. Meyer said the subject site is currently vacant and under a Purchase and Sale agreement. He observed that the proposed use of the property (bank), as well as the associated drive-thru use, are both allowed by-right in the C-4 zone, but the dimensions of the site are such that the applicant will probably need a variance for relief from the 100-foot buffer for drive-thru speakers, as the rear abutters are residential. He also asked to confirm the conceptual plans would comply with stacking requirements; as proposed, the site could handle 18 vehicles.

Mr. McLean observed that requesting relief for the outdoor speaker buffer will have to be handled well to ensure that residential abutters are not dissatisfied with the proposal and suggested that the applicant consider installing a well-landscaped buffer if a variance for speakers cannot be avoided through site plan modifications. Chairman Pezzullo said there didn't seem to be an alternative layout that would obviate the need to seek a speaker variance without triggering another variance request in the process. He suggested

an 8-foot stockade fence and a 10-15 foot vegetated and/or landscaped buffer. Mr. McLean agreed and said it would be more important to effectively landscape a 10-foot buffer than to simply leave an untreated 25-foot buffer, so there might be a need for a peer reviewer to provide input on that matter.

After confirming that there was sufficient lot area for a drive-thru associated with a bank use, Mr. McLean encouraged Atty. Meyer to ensure the figures for lot frontage are include on the site plan. Mr. Pikul recommended the applicant figure out the total square footage of all signs it intends to place on-site to ensure a signage variance will not also be needed. Mr. Guertin asked if there would be up-lighting for the signs, but Atty. Meyer said there would be none as the bank would not be open at night. Following up, Mr. Pikul asked if there would be rear lighting; Atty. Meyer said if the applicant decides it wants to install any, it would follow the Committee's recommendations to keep the lighting impacts minimized.

Mr. McLean asked if the branching of the proposed drive-thru would impact stacking requirements, but Mr. Pikul said no. Mr. Guertin suggested the applicant team look at an alternative drive-thru layout which placed the entry and exit points adjacent to one another, like a horseshoe, as another means of moving the speakers away from the rear abutters.

Mr. Pikul then asked if the applicant had calculated its parking based on square footage, which Atty. Meyer affirmed. Mr. Pikul and Mr. McLean observed that the site is overparked and suggested the applicant explore the possibility of eliminating the row directly in front of the building, their logic being that the building could be shifted close enough to Oaklawn Avenue to comply with the 100-foot buffer for speakers. Atty. Meyer said the applicant team would explore that possibility but he would need to confirm the particular needs of his client before giving a firm answer.

Mr. Pikul asked the applicant to ensure its proposed monument sign is sited at least 10 feet from the front lot line and drive-thru lanes and to ensure the proposed location for the dumpster is 10 feet from the property line.

Mr. Mateus reminded Atty. Meyer that Oaklawn Avenue is a state road, so the applicant will need to seek a Physical Alteration Permit from RIDOT.

Mr. Paulino asked how many jobs the project would create; Atty. Meyer said he would have to ask his client and follow up later.

Finally, Mr. McLean asked about a note on the plan that referenced a 90% impervious area limit, which did not square with the City's usual standard of 15% landscaped area on-site. Atty. Meyer said he would look into that detail but felt the proposal would be compliant regardless of the correct percentage.

4. Adjournment *(next meeting date TBD)*

(vote taken)

Upon motion made by Mr. Pikul, and seconded by Mr. Mateus, the Development Plan Review Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 9:46 a.m.