

Kenneth J. Hopkins
Mayor

Michael E. Smith
President

Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP
Planning Director



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

CITY PLAN COMMISSION

MINUTES

MEETING DATE CHANGED TO:

Thursday, November 9th, 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 6:36 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 869 Park Avenue.

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

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

Also in attendance: Stephen Marsella, Assistant City Solicitor.

ORDINANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

(votes taken on all items)

- 9-23-01 ORDINANCE in Amendment of Title 17, Chapter 24 of the City of Cranston, 2005, Entitled "Performance Standards Generally" adding Section 17.24.50 Retail Sales of Cannabis

Mr. Guertin provided a brief summary of the Ordinance recommendation.

Chairman Smith opened the discussion to the public.

- Robert Murray, 21 Garden City Drive – Mr. Murray stated that he was in support of restricting this use to industrial zones.

Commissioner Frias provided amendments to the recommendation.

Mr. Guertin provided clarification of language included in the Ordinance recommendation.

Commissioner Lanphear provided further edits to the language included in the recommendation.

Commissioner Frias made a motion to revise language provided in the Staff report yet maintain the recommendation as presented.

Commissioner Zidelis inquired about the process of forwarding a recommendation with an accompanying Staff report to the City Council. Mr. Marsella clarified that the recommendation would include the Staff report, as amended by the City Plan Commission.

Commissioner Frias offered an amendment with associated revisions to the Staff report.

Note: Commissioner Frias' proposed amendments and the final version of the revised staff report are attached herein.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Frias, and seconded by Commissioner Barbieri, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to accept the amendment.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Zidelis, and seconded by Commissioner Mateus, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to accept Staff recommendation as amended.

- 9-23-05 ORDINANCE in Amendment of Title 17 Zoning, Chapter 17.36.010 of the City of Cranston, 2005, Entitled 'Industrial Uses'

Assistant Director Kirkland presented the Staff report and associated recommendation.

Chairman Smith opened the discussion to public comment.

- Robert Murray, 21 Garden City Drive – Mr. Murray shared his concerns regarding inconsistencies with the language of the Ordinance.

Mr. Marsella provided clarifying language to Mr. Murray's concerns.

Seeing no other public comment, neither in-person nor online, Chairman Smith entertained a motion to close public comment.

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

Seeing no further discussion by the Commission, Chairman Smith entertained a motion to accept Staff recommendation.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Barbieri, and seconded by Commissioner Zidelis, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to accept Staff recommendation.

ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

(votes taken on all items)

- **BRIDGE GROUP, LLC (OWN/APP)** has filed an application for permission to convert an existing industrial building to residential use with two dwelling units at 5 Aborn Street. AP 1, lot 30, area 5217+/- SF, zoned C-3. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010 -Variances; Sections 17.20.030- Schedule of uses; 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity Regulations. Application filed 9/24/2023. Robert D. Murray, Esq.

*Due to the findings that the requests for dimensional and use relief are consistent with the goals and purposes of the Comprehensive Plan; and due to the findings that the requests would be compatible with the character of the surrounding area; upon motion made by Mr. Barbieri, and seconded by Mr. Zidelis, the City Plan Commission voted 6-1 (Mr. Frias voted no, Vice-Chair Coupe and Ms. Mancini were absent) to accept the Staff Recommendation and forward a **positive recommendation** on this Application to the Zoning Board of Review.*

- **NICHOLAS & DONNA USENIA (OWN/APP)** have applied to the Board for permission to convert an existing detached garage to be used as personal recreation with restricted setbacks at 96 Armington Street, A.P. 2, lot 3283; area 6,930 SF, zoned B2. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010 -Variances; Sections 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity Regulations; 17.60.010 (B)- Accessory Uses. Application filed 10/11/2023. Edward R. McCormick, Esq. **(PETITION WAS WITHDRAWN BY THE APPLICANT)**
- **BRIAN LONGO (OWN/APP)** has filed an application for permission to convert an existing industrial building to residential use with two dwelling units at 45 Windsor Road, A.P. 2, lot 2406; area 6,000 SF, zoned B2. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010 -Variances; Sections

17.20.030- Schedule of uses; 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity Regulations. Application filed 10/11/2023. Joseph C. Manera, Esq.

*Due to the findings that the requests for relief are consistent with the goals and purposes of the Comprehensive Plan; and due to the findings that the requests would be compatible with the character of the surrounding area; upon motion made by Mr. Barbieri, and seconded by Mr. Zidelis, the City Plan Commission voted 5-2 (Mr. Frias and Ms. Lanphear voted no, Vice-Chair Coupe and Ms. Mancini were absent) to accept the Staff Recommendation and forward a **positive recommendation** on this Application to the Zoning Board of Review.*

WORKSHOP

- Comprehensive Plan Drafting Procedure (vote may be taken)

Chairman Smith provided opening remarks about the Comprehensive Plan update drafting procedure. Mr. Smith provided an updated document that included previous suggestions and concerns by Commission members in previous discussions.

Commissioner Lanphear inquired if the each existing narrative overview preceding sections of the Comprehensive Plan would be amended in the first phase of the plan update process. Mr. Pezzullo confirmed, stating that elements would be amended to comply with state law.

Commissioner Lanphear inquired if Commission members are provided the ability to direct inquires directly to the consultant. Chairman Smith confirmed that Commission members would have the ability to communicate directly with the consultant through traceable, electronic correspondence.

Commissioner Lanphear offered a suggested revision to the Comprehensive Plan update procedure.

Commissioner Frias shared his support of the amendments to the drafting procedure.

Director Pezzullo directed the consultant, Ashley Sweet from Weston and Sampson, to respond to the Commission's inquiries. Ms. Sweet joined the meeting virtually.

Ms. Sweet reminded the Commission of the agreed upon scope, budget, and schedule of the plan update. Ms. Sweet stated that existing deadlines would not be met if the Commission voted to dedicate special meetings to discuss and amend each chapter prior to drafting.

Chairman Smith inquired about upcoming elements of the plan to be discussed by the Commission in the near future, prior to January 1, 2024. Ms. Sweet stated that the consultant creates an internal matrix of chapters to be disseminated, with internal deadlines for review.

Chairman Smith inquired about the timeline of data gathering. Ms. Sweet provided an overview of the sequence of chapters being drafted by the consultant's team in terms of existing conditions at the first phase of the process.

Commissioner Frias suggested that the City Plan Commission meet with the consultant at a later date to again discuss the drafting process.

Chairman Smith opened the discussion to the public, both in-person and online. There was no public comment on the matter. No vote was taken.

Commissioner Lanphear suggested withdrawing her previous amendments following clarification by Ms. Sweet on the drafting and review process.

Director Pezzullo stated that a dedicated meeting about policy language in the Comprehensive Plan update by the Commission would not be appropriate at this phase, as the policy of the plan is guided by public input following public survey and charrette processes.

Mr. Barbieri stated that correspondence between the Commission and the consultant can be communicated through the Planning Department. Mr. Barbieri stated that the Commission could potentially jeopardize transparency between the Commission and the public by contacting the consultant privately.

Commissioner Frias reiterated previous statements regarding a follow-up meeting between the Commission and the consultant.

Commissioner Lanphear withdrew her previous edits to the draft plan. Commissioner Lanphear moved to edit the draft plan to include one public meeting with the consultant by the end of November, at which Commissioners may attend to provide their thoughts to the consultant regarding initial draft. Commissioner Frias seconded the motion.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Lanphear, and seconded by Commissioner Frias, the City Plan Commission voted (6-1) to accept the amendment. Mr. Barbieri voted against the amendment.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Zidelis, and seconded by Commissioner Frias, the City Plan Commission voted (6-1) to accept the rules as amended. Mr. Barbieri voted against the amendment.

UPCOMING MEETINGS / ADJOURNMENT

(vote taken)

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

Upon motion made by Commissioner Zidelis, and seconded by Commissioner Mateus, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to adjourn the meeting at 9:02pm.