

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

AGENDA

Tuesday, October 3rd, 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 6:30 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, and Lisa Mancini. Commissioners Coupe and Zidelis were absent.

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

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(vote taken)

- 9/5/23 Regular City Plan Commission meeting
- 9/20/23 City Plan Commission Workshop (Comp Plan)

***The meeting minutes from the 9/5/23 and 9/20/23 meetings were not available for review at the 10/3/23 meeting due to staffing constraints.**

ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW – RECOMMENDATIONS

(votes taken for all items)

- 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.

Due to the findings that the application is neither consistent or inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that it would alter the character of the neighborhood by way of creating a potential hazard for motorists travelling through on both Oaklawn Avenue and Weaver Avenue, upon motion made by Ms. Lanphear, and seconded by Mr. Barbieri, the City Plan Commission voted (5-2) to forward a **negative recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review. Commissioners Frias and Exter were opposed.

Due to the finding that at this time, the Committee still has unresolved issues with this residential conversion proposal that have yet to be addressed, upon motion made by Mr. Barbieri, and seconded by Ms. Mancini, the City Plan Commission voted (7-0) to forward a **negative recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review.

- SUSAN P SPARKS & MATTHEW P ALDRED JT. (OWN) and DAVID SISSON ARCHITECTURE (APP) have applied to demolish an existing garage and construct a new garage with a rooftop deck connected to the existing single- family dwelling at 15 Taft Street, A.P. 2, lot 2820, area 3,467 s.f, zoned A6. 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 findings that this application is consistent with the goals and purposes of the Comprehensive Plan and is compatible with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood, upon motion made by Mr. Barbieri, and seconded by Mr. Exter, the City Plan Commission voted (7-0) to forward a **positive recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review.

- 101 COMSTOCK 24, LLC. (OWN) and JOHN B. CANNING III (APP) have filed an application to operate a motor vehicle repair and service establishment (light) at 101 Comstock Parkway, Suite 24, A.P. 36, lot 64-24, area 1.827 ac, zoned M2. Applicant seeks permission per 17.92.020- Special Use Permit.

Due to the findings that this application is consistent with the goals and purposes of the Comprehensive Plan and directly compatible with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood, upon motion made by Mr. Barbieri, and seconded by Ms. Lanphear, the City Plan Commission voted (7-0) to forward a **positive recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review.

- JAMES A. BACCA & KRISTINA K. BACCA, TRUSTEES (OWN) and JAMES A. BACCA (APP) are seeking a variance to allow a garage addition to be constructed within a front setback on a corner lot at 70 Ellen Lane, A.P. 25, lot 394; area 20,189 s.f; zoned A-20. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010- Variances; Sections 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity Regulations.

Due to the findings that this application is consistent with the goals and purposes of the Comprehensive Plan and is compatible with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood, upon motion made by Mr. Barbieri, and seconded by Mr. Mancini, the City Plan Commission voted (7-0) to forward a **positive recommendation** to the Zoning Board of Review.

WORKSHOP

(no vote taken)

- 2023 State law changes generally related to zoning enabling legislation and required local zoning code amendments.

Assistant City Solicitor Marsella and Assistant Director Kirkland provided a presentation for the Commission regarding 2023 State law changes related to zoning enabling legislation, zoning code amendments, and general land development review.

Mr. Pezzullo stated that these changes would be sent to City Council for adoption as “New Business” for a December vote.

Commissioner Lanphear raised concerns regarding use tables pertinent to Special Use Permits. Ms. Lanphear suggested that all uses that do not have existing criteria and guidelines in the use table should by default be prohibited and reviewed further potentially by a subcommittee. Commissioner Frias reiterated this concern.

Mr. Kirkland responded to concerns by stating that some uses have existing, specific guidance while others are reviewed by the Development Plan Review Committee. Mr. Frias continued with concerns regarding various allowable uses in Open Space and Residential zones.

DISCUSSION

(vote may be taken)

- Comprehensive Plan Update, Mapping tool and possible survey questions

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

(no votes taken)

- Planner Technician search update
- Subdivision and Land Development Regulations – Major update

Regarding the survey questions within the Comprehensive Plan update process, Director Pezzullo stated that survey questions for public engagement purposes would not be altered to fit an individual interest of interested parties, as it disrupts and complicates the process.

Director Pezzullo stated that Statewide Planning had recently informed planning staff that the City of Cranston was the only municipality in the state that did not have a Comprehensive Planning Committee involved in the Comprehensive Plan update process. Mr. Pezzullo stated that it bears discussion how the Commission and staff will move forward efficiently with the update process.

Chairman Smith stated that he has been drafting recommendations on facilitating openness and discussion to be presented at a later date.

Director Pezzullo reiterated that efficiency is important in the process in order to meet the expected timeline of the plan update.

Commissioner Frias expressed concerns about the nature, content and wording of the survey questions, as well as the ability for commission members to provide input on questions. Commissioner Lanphear shared similar concerns regarding the content of survey questions.

Chairman Smith announced that the joint sitewalk previously scheduled for October 21st regarding the **Costco** application has been cancelled, as the application has been paused per the applicant's request. Director Pezzullo stated that if the application process resumes in a timely manner, the sitewalk may be rescheduled at a later date, potentially in December.

Commissioner Frias suggested holding a special meeting to discuss the community engagement survey questions and the commissioners' feedback to said questions.

Upon agreement by commissioner members, Chairman Smith accepted a motion to schedule a special meeting to further discuss the Comprehensive Plan update.

Upon motion made by Mr. Mateus, and seconded by Mr. Exter, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to meet Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 6:30pm for a **Special City Plan Commission Meeting/Workshop – City Hall Council Chambers, 869 Park Avenue.**

UPCOMING MEETINGS / ADJOURNMENT

(vote taken)

- Tuesday, November 7, 2023, 6:30PM – **Regular City Plan Commission Meeting** – City Hall Council Chambers, 869 Park Avenue
- **Wednesday, October 25, 2023, 6:30PM – Special City Plan Commission Meeting/Workshop – City Hall Council Chambers, 869 Park Avenue**

Upon motion made by Ms. Mancini, and seconded by Mr. Exter, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to adjourn the meeting at 9:03pm.