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Lisa Mancini
Nicole Renzulli

Frank Corrao
Public Works Director

Thomas Zidelis
Finance Director

CITY PLAN COMMISSION

City Hall – 3rd Floor, Room 309
869 Park Avenue – Cranston, RI 02910

MINUTES

CITY HALL – 3rd FLOOR, COUNCIL CHAMBER 6:30PM – TUESDAY, JULY 1, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Commission President Frias called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

The following Commissioners were in attendance for the meeting: Commission President Steven Frias, David Exter, Kathleen Lanphear, Lisa Mancini, Nichole Renzulli, and Frank Corrao, Director of the Department of Public Works. Commission Vice-President Robert Coupe, Thomas Barbieri, and ex-officio member Thomas Zidelis, Director of the Finance Department were absent.

The following members of the City Planning Department were in attendance: Beth Ashman, City Planning Director; Jonas Bruggemann, Assistant Planning Director, and Brianna Valcourt, Senior Planner.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 5.6.25 City Plan Commission Meeting

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Commissioner Renzulli and seconded by Commissioner Exter, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to continue the approval of minutes to the regular August meeting.

SUBDIVISION & LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

“Vaughn Lane RPD”

CONTINUANCE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Master Plan – Residential Planned Development

Proposal: The Proposal is the extension of public roadways, Wini Street and Vaughn Lane, to create 44 lots for single-family residential use on 30.47+/- acres and preserve 55.95+/- acres through a conservation easement.

Applicant/Owner: 777 Main Street LLC
538 Main Street, Vaughn Lane, Wini Street
AP 30, Lots 83, 84, 85, and 258

The representative of the applicant, Attorney Tenessa Azar, spoke about the scheduling of the site visit on July 17th at 5:30 pm as well as land survey of the city rights-of-way on Vaughn Lane and Wini Street.

Ms. Azar mentioned that the abutter's attorney submitted a memo and the applicant responded with a memo today. Ms. Azar indicated that there will be more discussion and a response needed at the meeting in August.

Commission President Frias said he is particularly interested in more details about stormwater and drainage issues on page 13 of the abutter's memo, as well as public water and service issues on page 14. Mr. Frias asked that answers to these questions be provided by the August meeting. Ms. Azar responded saying they will be ready with answers by then.

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Commission President Frias invited the public to engage in comment:

- Attny Steve Sypole, of Gidley, Sarli & Marusak, an attorney for several of the neighbors, opened by stating that he objects to the continuance and asks that the Commission deny this project now because the applicant cannot satisfy the burden of proof to show that they have access to this property. He expressed opposition due to issues surrounding easements, lack of access, and other problems with the application. He stated that existing homes and properties would be demolished in the process of constructing the development. He asked for confirmation of when the 90 days would expire.
 - o Mr. Bruggemann confirmed that the application was received in May, Certificate of Completeness issued May 14, 90 days expires August 12.
- Attny Steve Sypole expressed concern that the site visit plan starting with nearby Q &A would limit the daylight to visit the site. He was also concerned that the applicant wants to leave questions unresolved until the preliminary plan stage when public comment is not required.
 - o Mr. Frias confirmed that he allows public comment at the preliminary plan review stage, even if it is no longer required by RI law.
- Carly Dousette, 223 Main St, Fiskeville shared concern that if blasting is used to deal with the ledge on site, it risks contaminating residents' wells - their only water source. She said city water is not available to residents on Roberts Ave.
- Jessica Salter, 6 Vaughn Lane, voiced concerns about the details of the site visit, and requested that the visit start at the site rather than off-site Q&A.
- Sonya Meysembourg (0 Wini Street) She stated the site visit was requested by the community. She indicated that the proposal to Q&A at the Harris Bar and Grille feels inappropriate. She noted that anyone can visit and see Wini Street or Vaughn Ln without stepping on the applicant's property. She further shared concern about drainage for the expanded Wini Street because of the high volume of runoff down the slope. She submitted photographs showing existing ledge and drainage issues.
- Shanna Bananna, 18 Locust Court, stated she was opposed to the application for environmental reasons. She stated that the project is close to the Pawtuxet River which regularly floods. She is worried that a disturbance to the local environment would be very harmful to the river and entire ecosystem.
- Lori Pimentel, 275 Main Street, local resident who lives on Wini Street. She mainly expressed concerned about her house being knocked down or her water source being damaged by the expansion of Wini Street. She said she is a long-term resident and is very personally invested in this issue.
- Janet Jarbeau, 78 Vaughn Lane, stated opposition to the project because she lives nearby and has large open fields that may be trespassed upon by outsiders if the RPD is built. She is also concerned about motorbikes and ATV and noted the high cost of fencing her five acres.
- Jason Baker, 1359 Hope Road, stated he is opposed to the project because of the lack of capacity for Western Cranston schools to take new students from this and other new developments.
- Jackson Jennings, 54 Vaughn Lane, stated he opposed the project for reasons pertaining to the difficulties of construction on ledge and the resulting disruptions that the project would cause for the area.
- Richard Campopiano, 1640 Pippin Orchard Rd, Citywide Councilor, stated that when this many constituents come out with concerns about a project, he takes notice. He hopes the commission addresses their concerns and does their due diligence with this plan.
- Michael Green, 42 Vaughn Lane, stated he opposed the project for reasons pertaining to water runoff impacts of the project. He spoke of flooding in his basement that has increased by the clearing of trees on nearby land. He stated the clearing of land for this development will diminish the water infiltration capacity of the land. He also expressed concern about losing frontage on his property, which includes half of his circular driveway.

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- Frank Ritz Jr, 46 Carrie Ann Drive, Councilor for Ward 4. Mr. Ritz summarized the many concerns of his constituents including: clearing of forest canopy, flooding, disturbance to an historic area, and strains on schools and emergency services. He said this development does not reflect the needs, values, or vision of the community.
- Mike Klitzner, 1410 Hope Road, stated he opposed the project for reasons pertaining to the disruptions that the project would cause for his horse business. He stated property owners have to contend with trespass by dirt pikes, four-wheelers, and hunters. He noted that the road extensions and 44 new homes will add to this dangerous nuisance.
- Jan Ragno, 1439 Hope Road, stated he opposed for reasons pertaining to the environmental disruptions that the project would cause.
- Patricia Vargas, 79 Vaughn Lane, stated she opposed the project for reasons pertaining to the Western Cranston school system capacity and change to the peaceful natural setting that drew her to move here and remodel a historic home built in 1754. She questioned whether this new development will cause taxes to go up. She expressed safety concerns about increased traffic on narrow roads.
- Robert Sansone, 145 Main Street, stated he opposed the project for reasons pertaining to multiple issues with the development plans, and specifically questioned the accuracy of the developer's submitted plans.
- Jonna Doyle, 104 Franklin Rd, Scituate, stated she boards and rides her horse at Klitzner's farm. She expressed opposition for reasons pertaining to the lack of capacity for the Cranston School systems and environmental impacts. Ms. Doyle also expressed many other concerns about the long-term impact of the project.

Commission President Frias summarized where this application stands in the process. He stated that his inclination is to grant the continuance for the following reasons: Last time the Commission met Commission granted a continuance to July because it would give time for A) the abutters to hire an attorney, B) for the Commission to acquire more information, and C) for the applicant to respond to issues raised, and D) allow time for a site visit. Mr. Frias said he would talk to the staff about modifying the site visit itinerary.

Ms. Renzulli spoke about the importance of the organized site visit and said she is in favor of starting the site visit at the site. She also stated that she wants the public to be able to speak at each stage of the process.

Ms. Lanphear asked that the site visit be arranged with consultation with the city solicitor. Through the chair, Ms. Lanphear asked the applicant about their request for an extension or a waiver of the 90-day limit. Ms. Azar indicated the client requests a 30-day extension or would be open to 60 days, but she wants to keep everyone accountable to a timeline. Ms. Lanphear stated that the extra time is helpful to adequately consider everyone's information and arguments.

After discussion, Mr. Frias announced that the site visit Special Meeting will be posted to start at 1 Vaughn Lane.

Richard Scolavino, 1380 Hope Road rose to speak. Mr. Frias indicated that the Commission is now deliberating and it is not time for public comment. Mr. Scolavino indicated it is an emergency situation. Mr. Frias said the Commission will temporarily recess deliberation to allow the gentleman to speak.

- Richard Scolavino, 1380 Hope Road, stated that if another 44 houses are built, the city will need to built a new fire station. He indicated that Hope / Jackson responded to a house fire before the Cranston Fire Department. He stated that deer will be displaced by the development and they eat his corn.

Mr. Frias resumed deliberation.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Lanphear to continue the application to the August 5, 2025 meeting and accept the applicants request for an extension to October 12, 2025. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Renzulli and passed unanimously (6-0).

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“199 Gladstone Avenue Subdivision” PUBLIC HEARING

PRELIMINARY PLAN/UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT REVIEW –

Minor Subdivision requiring zoning relief

Proposal: To subdivide one (1) 10,000 SF lot into two (2) 5,000 Sf lots. The proposal requires zoning relief for lot size, lot width, and frontage.

Zoning District: B-1; AP 8/3, Lot 90; 199 Gladstone Avenue

Staff recommend continuance to August 5, 2025 Commission meeting due to error with abutter notice.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Renzulli to continue the application to the August 5, 2025, meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Exter and passed unanimously (6-0).

“Cullion Homes” PUBLIC HEARING

PRELIMINARY PLAN – Minor Subdivision with street extension

Proposal: To extend the paper street Lilyana Way and create 2 lots. Application requires waivers.

Zoning District: A-8; AP 18-3, Lot 2006; Briarwood Avenue, Southview Terrace, Lilyana Way

Staff recommend continuance until August 5, 2025.

Commissioner Renzulli inquired about the risk of going over the 90-day deadline. Assistant Planning director, Mr. Bruggemann, noted that there were no expected issues with this deadline and that the plan is expected to be ready by the next meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Corrao to extend the application to the August 5, 2025, meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mancini and passed unanimously (6-0).

ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW – PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

DENNIS P CALDERONE and RYAN T CALDERONE (OWN/APP) have filed an application to request permission to leave an existing two-family dwelling on an undersized lot and to separate a second lot for development at **76 Packard Street**, A.P. 6, lot 2794; area 3,320 sf; zoned A6. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010- Variance; Sections 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity, 17.20.090 (A)- Specific Requirements. Application filed on 5/22/2025. Zachary Bourdony, Esq.

DENNIS P CALDERONE and RYAN T CALDERONE (OWN/APP) have applied to the Board for permission to construct a new single-family dwelling on an undersized lot with reduced area and frontage at **0 Packard Street**, A.P. 6, lot 2795; area 3320 sf; zoned A6. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010- Variance; Sections 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity, 17.20.090 (A)- Specific Requirements. Application filed on 5/22/2025. Zachary Bourdony, Esq.

Senior Planner Brianna Valcourt presented the details of the staff memo. She noted that the relief being requested would conform to the sliding scale if it were able to be applied in this scenario. The application would increase the density of the surrounding area slightly, while also aligning with multiple goals outlined in the comprehensive plan. Staff concluded that the proposal is not disruptive to the fabric of the existing neighborhood and helps expands housing options in Cranston.

In accordance with RIGL § 45-24-41 (b) and Section 17.92.010(A) of the zoning ordinance, staff finds the application consistent with the goals and purposes of the comprehensive plan and is compatible with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood. Staff therefore recommend that the City Plan Commission adopt the findings of fact documented above and forward a positive recommendation on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.

Mr. Frias asked for public comment, there was none.

Commissioner Mancini inquired about the owner’s intention to sell the property or to live in it. Ms. Valcourt responded, saying she hadn’t been made aware of this information.

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Commission President Frias requested more specifics about the variances required. Ms. Valcourt explained that because the lots are both undersized they are considered merged for the purposes of zoning. That is the reason the sliding scale cannot be applied directly. Planning Director, Beth Ashman, stated that the Zoning Board decision on this matter will decide if the lots are unmerged.

The commissioners discussed the resulting density.

Ms. Ashman referenced that there is a test in state law for unmerging substandard lots of record, but these lots do not meet the test, so we are not required to approve the unmerger.

Ms. Renzulli stated that since the Zoning Board heard and approved an application for unmerging these lots in 2009, and for the reasons stated in the staff memo, she is comfortable with this unmerger.

Commission President Frias concluded saying that he is going to vote no but he understands why others would disagree. The proposed density is 19.6 units per acre, which is above the density in the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and the neighborhood. He also noted that the lot size is smaller than the median lot size within 200'.

MOTION: Motion made by commissioner Corrao to accept the recommendations of the planning department for 0 and 76 Packard St and forward positive recommendations on the requested variances. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Renzulli and the motion failed with a (3-3) vote. Commissioners Frias, Lanphear, and Mancini voted 'nay'. The Commission issued no recommendation.

VALENTINO & KELLY CAITO (OWN/APP) have applied to the Board for permission to construct a new single-family dwelling on an undersized lot previously merged with A.P. 7, lot 2074 with reduced area and frontage at **0 Doane Street**, A.P. 7, lot 2073; area 3200 sf; zoned B1. Applicant seeks relief per 17.92.010- Variance; Sections 17.20.120- Schedule of Intensity, Application filed on 5/22/2025. John O. Mancini, Esq.

Senior Planner, Mr. Bruggemann, provided the staff memo and positive recommendation. He noted that the proposed lot is 3,200 sq ft is equal to the median size of the lots within 200'. The memo focuses on the neighborhood character and lot sizes. The proposal stays within the density range of the Future Land Use Map.

Mr. Frias asked for public comment, there was none.

Commissioner Lanphear asked about the specifics of the density calculation for the analysis of the application. Ms. Lanphear questioned why we would accept this application before a merger determination is made by the Zoning Official. Planning Director Ashman agreed that the process needs to be improved. She stated that Stan Pikul, Zoning Official, Steve Marsella, legal counsel, and herself have discussed the process and agreed to put forward this proposal for Plan Commission recommendation to the Zoning Board. She stated that recent changes in state law make it necessary to revisit the process for handling this type of application.

Mr. Bruggemann calculates the resulting density of this proposal as 13.6 units per acre. Mr. Frias stated that the proposed lot size is equal to median lot size of the neighborhood.

Commissioner Lanphear wanted it to be known that she is voting no because she does not believe the matter is appropriately before the Plan Commission without having received a merger determination from the Zoning Official.

MOTION: Motion made by Commissioner Renzulli to accept the findings of fact and the recommendation of the planning department and forward a positive recommendation to the Zoning Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Corrao and the motion passed with a (5-1) vote. Ms. Lanphear voted nay.

CITY PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Comprehensive Plan Community Workshop was held on June 26th at the William Hall Library. It was attended and the people who came were very engaged in giving feedback.

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Planning Director Ashman updated the Commission about the hiring of a new Planner Technician. She also mentioned her efforts to get the personnel office to post the Senior Planner position.

She reported that Cranston Planning Department is working on responding to the state Dept of Business Regulation about any customization needed to the e-gov platform to move all planning applications online.

Planning Director Ashman highlighted some of the recent state law changes that impact planning including language on attached single-family homes and the neighborhood character-based modifications. At a future meeting we will have a summary of state law changes and recommendations for city ordinance modifications. Ms. Ashman indicated she is applying for technical assistance funds from the state to assist with the ordinance revisions.

She concluded by saying the Planning Department is fast-tracking the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element rewrite with the intension of having a first draft for review by the August meeting.

Mr. Frias outlined the timeline for revising the Housing Element to get it approved by the Commission, City Council and the Mayor and submitted to Statewide Planning for approval by January 1, 2026.

Commissioner Lanphear spoke in support of prioritizing the Housing Element. The state laws go into effect whether Cranston takes a little more time to respond with revised ordinances.

Commissioner Renzulli spoke in favor of seeking technical assistance funds to support the ordinance work.

ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting | August 5, 2025 @ 6:30 p.m.– **Regular Meeting**
City Council Chamber, City Hall, 869 Park Avenue

MOTION: Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Renzulli. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Corrao and the motion passed with a (6-0) vote.

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