

(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

Regular meeting of the Ordinance Committee was held on Thursday, March 12, 2020, in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M. by the Chair.

Present: Councilmember Kenneth J. Hopkins
Councilmember Paul J. McAuley
Councilmember Edward J. Brady
Councilmember Christopher G. Paplauskas, Vice-Chair
Council Vice-President Michael W. Favicchio, Chair

Absent: Councilmember Lammis J. Vargas

Also Present: Councilmember Steven A. Stycos
Councilmember John P. Donegan
Daniel Parrillo, Director of Administration
John Psilopoulos, Deputy Director of Administration
John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
Heather Finger, Stenographer

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Councilmember McAuley, seconded by Councilmember Brady, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the last meeting and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

Council Vice-President Favicchio indicated that Council President Farina is sick and will not be present this evening.

Council Vice-President Favicchio stated that the Resolution regarding Large Capacity Feeding Device Ban Act is being withdrawn by the sponsors.

OLD BUSINESS:

- 6-19-8 Ordinance in amendment of Title 2 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Administration and Personnel” (Tourism Commission). Sponsored by Councilmember Donegan and Vargas. Co-sponsored by Councilmembers Brady, Paplauskas and Council President Farina. Cont. 9/12/2019, 10/17/2019, 11/14/2019 & 1/16/2020.**

Councilmember Donegan asked that this Ordinance be withdrawn.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/NEW BUSINESS:

- 1-20-04 Ordinance amending the Cranston 2010 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Cranston, as amended 2012 (Catherine St. and Bateman Ave.). Petition filed by Gayle A. St. Germain as Trustee of Family Trust A of the Jerome A. Geller Trust, owner and Christy LLC.**
- 1-20-05 Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 17 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Zoning” (Change of Zone – Catherine St. and Bateman Ave.). Petition filed by Gayle A. St. Germain, trustee of Family Trust A of the Jerome A. Geller Trust, owner and Christy LLC.**

Doug McLean, Principal Planner, appeared to give a presentation regarding the above two Ordinances and stated that the plan is to demolish three commercial and three residential buildings and develop two new commercial buildings. The Planning Commission gave a positive recommendation on these Ordinances. He also stated that there was a site walk of the property and there were no concerns except from abutters regarding condition of rear of property and how construction will be managed and pedestrian safety. The Catherine St. abutters requested that Catherine St. would have no commercial access and there was a concern of the safety of the intersection. There are new safety features the State is bringing in for better crosswalks and lighting.

Councilmember Stycos stated that giving the housing crisis in our State and City, he would hate to see three houses torn down in this area. He asked if Planning had any discussion with the property owner about saving one or more of those houses for affordable housing. Mr. McLean stated that the three homes are under common ownership. Of the three homes, only one is currently occupied and not being utilized. The City was able to get enough information that there was not a high volume of occupancy there.

Robert Murray, Esq., appeared to represent the applicant and addressed both Ordinances. He introduced Debra Clift, applicant and intended developer for the site. He thanked the City Council and Planning Commission members who attend the site walk on February 22nd. As to Councilmember Stycos’s question regarding the three homes, he stated that they did discuss that. The condition of those houses is deplorable and would require extensive renovations and would not be the most effective use of the property. One of the buildings would house a liquor store. He also stated that Ms. Clift is in active discussion with a bank in Rhode Island that possibly would be another tenant. Attorney Murray stated that Ed Pimentel is also present this evening to answer any questions.

Ed Pimentel of Pimentel Consulting appeared to speak regarding the above two Ordinances and presented a report. He stated that the three homes have basically been used as a buffer. He stated that in

his professional opinion, the City Council can approve these two Ordinances and still protect the integrity of the neighborhood.

Councilmember Brady asked if there will be additional buffer added for the residents. Attorney Murray stated that there will be detailed plans provided in the near future.

Public Speakers:

Bob Almborg, 11 Jennie St., appeared to speak and stated that Catherine St. has always been a buffer. The neighbors for years have endured with people coming in and out of that street. The proposal sounds good as long as there is a buffer from the proposed buildings and the homes.

Lucy Almborg, 11 Jennie St., appeared to speak and stated that she thinks that the area is going to be beautiful and cleaned up. The whole corner has been a nuisance and she is glad it is going to be cleaned up.

Ralph Duclos appeared to speak and stated that his mom lives at 17 Jennie St. and stated that he is glad this is being cleaned up and it looks like a good project.

Councilmember Donegan stated that he shares Councilmember Stycos's concerns regarding losing three homes even though they need extensive rehab. He asked if there are any intentions of incorporating green building or solar or electric vehicle charging stations. Attorney Murray stated that they are not there yet. They will incorporate all those concepts where they can.

Councilmember Hopkins stated that that the area needs to be cleaned up. This project will greatly benefit that neighborhood and will benefit our tax base there.

On motion by Councilmember Paplauskas, seconded by Councilmember McAuley, it was voted to recommend approval of Ordinance 1-20-04.

Under Discussion:

Councilmember Paplauskas stated that this project will clean up that area and he will be supporting this.

Councilmember Brady stated that he will be supporting this project and he really appreciates the investment in this project.

Councilmember McAuley stated that he will be supporting both Ordinances and he looks forward to seeing the end results.

Council Vice-President Favicchio stated that that area is a mess right now. He understands the need for residential, but this is an area that has become commercial and those homes have become obsolete. This project would also create more commercial tax dollars.

Roll call was taken on motion to recommend approval of Ordinance 1-20-04 and motion passed unanimously.

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to recommend approval of Ordinance 1-20-05. Motion passed unanimously.

Resolution in support of The Large Capacity Feeding Device Ban Act of 2020. *Sponsored by Councilmembers Donegan, Vargas and Stycos.*

Withdrawn by sponsors.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees