

CITY OF CRANSTON  
CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE  
Regular Meeting of December 9, 2021 – UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

BOARD OF CANVASSERS  
AND REGISTRATION  
CRANSTON, R.I.

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2021

The City Council Public Works Committee met on December 9, 2021, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on December 2, 2021. The meeting was called to order by the Acting Chairperson, Council President Christopher Paplauskas, at 6:06 p.m. It was held in Council Chambers at Cranston City Hall.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councilmember Matthew Reilly, Vice Chairperson Richard Campopiano, Councilmember Lammis Vargas, Councilmember Jessica Marino, Council President Christopher Paplauskas (Ex-Officio, Acting as Chair)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Council Vice President Robert Ferri (Chairperson), Councilmember Nicole Renzulli

**NON-MEMBERS PRESENT:** Nicholas Lima (Registrar / Director of Elections – Acting Recorder), Christopher Rawson (Assistant City Solicitor), Councilmember John Donegan, Councilmember Aniece Germain, Stephen Angell (Council Legal Counsel), Thomas Lima (Council Communications Aide), Ken Mason (Director of Public Works), Meredith Fortune (Court Reporter), Raymond Tessaglia (Director of Parks and Recreation)

The chair declared a quorum present.

Council President Paplauskas said that the two absent members were due to illness but the members were listening in on Zoom. He asked Mr. Angell for a legal opinion to clarify why they could not participate remotely. Mr. Angell said that under the Open Meetings Act, absent an executive order, the members who are unable to attend in person cannot participate remotely under these circumstances and can only listen in. He said that does not apply to members of the public, who may still participate remotely.

### APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Council President Paplauskas asked for a motion to continue the minutes.

**MOTION:** By Councilmember Reilly and seconded by Councilmember Vargas to continue the minutes of Nov. 9, 2021 to the next meeting.  
**PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 5-0 –** Councilmember Reilly, Vice Chairperson Campopiano, Councilmember Vargas, Councilmember Marino, and Council President Paplauskas voting aye.

### I. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER

*Ordinance 5-21-07*

Council President Paplauskas said that this matter was withdrawn at the last meeting, however he asked Director Mason to provide an update. Mr. Mason said work is being done at the intersection of Park Ave. and Grace St. He said foundations for the new rapid-flash beacons are installed, and the new handicap ramps are also installed. He said we are just waiting on the mast to be installed. Depending on shipping he said it may be complete by the end of the month. Councilmember Germain thanked Mr. Mason for the update.

## II. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND/OR NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

### A. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Council President Paplauskas noted there was no one present in chambers to speak. He asked if there was anyone from the public participating remotely who wished to provide comment, and no one came forward.

### B. NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

#### *Assessment Report of all City-owned playgrounds to be provided to Councilmembers (Councilmember Vargas)*

Council President Paplauskas introduced Director Tessaglia, who provided a written summary of projects and plans regarding playgrounds. Mr. Tessaglia said wood fiber mulch is one of the more glaring needs at some playgrounds, including at Doric, Meshanticut, Dutemple, and Commercial. He said that he is meeting this week to get that addressed. Mr. Tessaglia also provided an inventory report of all city playgrounds, what facilities each has, and what year it was last built or renovated. He said the work is ongoing at multiple playgrounds, and that he is trying to eliminate some equipment that breaks often and replace it with better products.

Mr. Tessaglia said he has been working with Councilmember Vargas on the Friendly playground on Doric St. He is also trying to get some HUD and CARES Act funding for playground improvements. Discussion ensued.

Councilmember Vargas asked to clarify what are the first priorities, and Mr. Tessaglia listed Doric, Meshanticut, Dutemple, and Commercial are the first targets based on how much cubic feet is needed per playground to replenish wood fiber mulch. She thanked Mr. Tessaglia for providing the inventory sheet that listed 36 tot parks, seven tracks, 22 tennis courts, 22 basketball courts, 23 baseball fields, 14 softball fields, two football fields, and nine soccer fields in the city. Discussion ensued.

Councilmember Vargas asked about a broken bench and slide at Edgewood Highland. Mr. Tessaglia said the rubber matting there is an extensive replacement cost. He said worn rubber areas may be cut out and replaced, but is costly to maintain compared to wood fiber. He said he believes the hazards have been removed at Edgewood but he will double check. He said communication is important, as staff could be at a playground on a Tuesday, but on Wednesday a swing could be broken, and once notified they will get it fixed. Councilmember Vargas asked whether trash is picked up on the neighborhood schedule. Mr. Tessaglia said he didn't believe so, but he would check.

Councilmember Germain said that Doric Park needs major renovations, particularly the replacement of benches. Mr. Tessaglia said he saw the photos that Councilmember Germain provided. He said he will try to set up a plan and provide a timetable. He said fixing larger issues like cracks are a major project and will take more time and resources. Discussion ensued. Councilmember Germain also asked if there could be grant funding or plans to improve the Speck Field playground. She said it's important to increase options for younger children as the city's population grows. She would also like a follow-up on Aqueduct in addition to Speck and Doric.

Councilmember Germain asked about the Budlong Pool. Mr. Tessaglia said there are plans to reopen the pool, and that ARPA funds could be used to refurbish or reopen it. He said work needs to begin in the next few weeks in order to be ready for the summer season. Councilmember Donegan said he was happy to see the Whipple St. Playground on the list as one potentially to be redone. Councilmember Vargas asked about the timeframe for CDBG-funded upgrades to Smith St., and Mr. Tessaglia said it's ready to go and he has already met with Director Tim Sanzi on it. She thanked Mr. Tessaglia again for working with the Council's grant writer on sharing information.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Council President Paplauskas announced that next week is the final week for yard waste pick-up. He asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: By Councilmember Reilly and seconded by Councilmember Vargas to adjourn.

PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 5-0 – Councilmember Reilly, Vice Chairperson Campopiano, Councilmember Vargas, Councilmember Marino, and Council President Paplauskas voting aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nicholas J. Lima  
Registrar / Director of Elections  
Acting Recorder

*The preceding Unofficial Minutes are a draft copy of the record of proceedings on the date specified, subject to amendment and final approval by the Cranston City Council Public Works Committee, and are presented for informational purposes only.*