

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

BOARD OF CANVASSERS  
AND REGISTRATION  
CRANSTON, R.I.

2021 JAN 19 P 3: 29

The City Council Ordinance 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 Chairperson, Councilmember Matthew Reilly, at 6:38 p.m. It was held in Council Chambers at Cranston City Hall.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairperson Matthew Reilly, Councilmember Richard Campopiano, Councilmember Lammis Vargas, Councilmember Aniece Germain, Council President Christopher Paplauskas (Ex-Officio)

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

**NON-MEMBERS PRESENT:** Nicholas Lima (Registrar / Director of Elections – Acting Recorder), Christopher Rawson (Assistant City Solicitor), Councilmember John Donegan, Councilmember Jessica Marino, Stephen Angell (Council Legal Counsel), Thomas Lima (Council Communications Aide), Joshua Berry (Planning Department), Meredith Fortune (Court Reporter)

The chair declared a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Reilly asked for a motion to continue the minutes.

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

I. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER

*Ordinance 6-21-03*

Chairperson Reilly said this ordinance is going to be withdrawn and resubmitted with numerous substantial changes.

Without objection, the ordinance was withdrawn.

*Ordinance 9-21-04*

Chairperson Reilly said this ordinance will be continued for one month.

**MOTION:** By Council President Paplauskas and seconded by Councilmember Vargas to continue Ordinance 9-21-04 to the next meeting.  
**PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE – 5-0 –** Chairperson Reilly, Councilmember Campopiano, Councilmember Vargas, Councilmember Germain, and Council President Paplauskas voting aye.

*Ordinance 9-21-01*

Chairperson Reilly asked if the next two related ordinances could be handled as a block or separately. Mr. Angell said that procedurally, they need to be voted on separately. He added that 9-21-01 and 9-21-02 need to have a sponsor listed in accordance with the Charter. He said that there may be some scrivener's errors and formatting issues that are non-substantive that he can correct if he's provided a Word document format of the ordinances. Mr. Angell advised going ahead with the ordinances with the understanding that the sponsor and clerical changes will be made prior to final approval.

Council President Paplauskas said he would be OK with being listed as sponsor. Chairperson Reilly asked whether a representative from Trolley Barn is present.

John Mancini provided testimony on behalf of the owner-applicant with respect to the property at 777 Cranston St. Mr. Mancini said he drafted the ordinances and would work with Mr. Angell to correct the format.

Mr. Mancini said the Trolley Barn was part of the Narragansett Brewery site and was a multi-plan district development in the late 1990s. He said that it is a sustainable and useful complex for the area, but the Trolley Barn has not been able to reach the same level of viability. He said the proposal is to breath some new life into the project and that the Comprehensive Plan was changed to provide different zoning than the surrounding area, due to consideration of this parcel being an important element to the overall neighborhood. He said this is the final piece of the puzzle for the broader development of the area, and what they are asking the Planning Commission and the City Council to do is rezone that area to a C-4 designation in order to allow the mixture of uses proposed. That will include a 35,000 sq. foot retail warehouse distribution facility, a 5,500 sq. foot convenience store, a gas station, and two smaller sites for a fast food restaurant and a bank.

Mr. Mancini said the focus of the lot is to have everything on one property, and that the 35,000 sq. foot building will serve as both a retail building and the main distribution hub for Rhode Island for Autozone. He said they are requesting a change in signage so that the sign can be permitted to be adequate for the size of the building. He said the original request was 250 sq. feet, however after discussion with the Planning Commission it was reduced to 150 sq. feet, which is smaller than other business signs in the area. Mr. Mancini said the project received conditional master plan approval subject to the Council's review of the zone change request.

Mr. Mancini said one ordinance would amend the Comprehensive Plan, while the second ordinance would accomplish the zone change and allow for the agreed upon signage size. He said the engineer from DiPrete Engineering working on the project is available on the Zoom call if there are any questions. He said he and the engineer can testify regarding questions related to site layout, traffic circulation, and other concerns. Mr. Mancini said the applicant has gone above and beyond the requirements of the master plan, and has also worked with the neighboring City of Providence. He said a positive recommendation was provided by the Planning Commission and its staff.

Chairperson Reilly asked if any members of the public present or on Zoom wished to speak. There was no public comment.

**MOTION:** By Council President Paplauskas and seconded by Councilmember Germain to approve Ordinance 9-21-01.

Under discussion, Council President Paplauskas asked if the Planning Commission staff present had anything to add. Senior Planner Joshua Berry appeared and said much of what Mr. Mancini said was accurate. Mr. Berry clarified that the site is an M-2 industrial zone and the proposal is to change to C-5 with conditions. He added that some other minor edits to the Comprehensive Plan including delineating that a “mixed-use” and a “multi-use” development were not terms to be used interchangeably. He said that this is a multi-use, commercial development. The positive recommendation is contingent upon those minor edits being included.

Councilmember Marino said she attended the Planning Commission meeting and asked Mr. Mancini to address the negative finding related to the gas pumps being located in proximity to residences. She said that portion was withdrawn from the final recommendation on a motion of the Commission. Mr. Mancini said the Commission had feedback that the gas pumps and building be aesthetically situated to flip the location away from the plan. He said the Planning Commission ultimately didn’t include that as it was felt the request was excessive. He said the developer of the property will still look into improving the orientation and location of the gas pumps. He said the proposal is more of a market than a convenience store, as gas is a secondary use as opposed to a primary intended use. He said another component is having hook-ups for electric vehicles.

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

*Ordinance 9-21-02*

Chairperson Reilly entertained a motion to approve this related ordinance. There was no public comment in Council Chambers or on Zoom relative to the ordinance.

**MOTION:** By Councilmember Germain and seconded by Councilmember Vargas to approve Ordinance 9-21-02.

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

*Ordinance 10-21-03*

Councilmember Vargas asked that this ordinance be continued to the February Ordinance Committee meeting.

**MOTION:** By Council President Paplauskas and seconded by Councilmember Germain to continue Ordinance 10-21-03 to the February Ordinance Committee meeting.

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

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

**A. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were no public hearings.

**B. NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE**

*Ordinance 11-21-01*

Chairperson Reilly asked for a motion to continue this ordinance for one month.

**MOTION:** By Councilmember Vargas and seconded by Councilmember Germain to continue Ordinance 11-21-01 for one month.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Reilly asked for a motion to adjourn.

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 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.*