

Kenneth J. Hopkins
Mayor

Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP
Committee Chairman
Director of Planning



Jim Woyciechowski
Fire Department

Stanley Pikul
Building Official

Justin Mateus, P.E.
Engineering Division

Stephen Mulcahy
Traffic Safety Division

DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

Cranston City Hall
869 Park Avenue, Cranston, Rhode Island 02910

MINUTES

9:30 AM, WEDNESDAY, February 1, 2022
CRANSTON CITY HALL – 3RD FLOOR COUNCIL CHAMBER

1. Call to Order

Chairman Jason Pezzullo called the Development Plan Review Committee meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. in the City Council chamber.

The following members were in attendance for the meeting: Justin Mateus, Steve Mulcahy, Franklin Paulino, Jason Pezzullo, Stanley Pikul, and Jim Woyciechowski.

The following Planning Department staff members were in attendance: Gregory Guertin, Senior Planner; Alex Berardo, Planning Technician; and Amelia Lavallee, Planning Intern.

2. Approval of Minutes

- 12/21/22 Meeting (vote taken)

Upon motion made by Mr. Pikul and seconded by Mr. Mateus, the Development Plan Review Committee unanimously voted (5-0) to approve the minutes of the 12/21/22 meeting.

3. "Village Sounds LLC" Pre-Application / Jurisdictional Determination (vote taken)

Location	2197 Board Street, AP 1, Lot 432
Zoning District	C-3 (General Business)
Owner/App	Joseph E. Grady & Jennifer Minuto
Proposal	Applicant seeks a change of use from a yoga studio into an entertainment venue with live music / saloon (Class C liquor license) with 41-person maximum occupancy.

Chairman Pezzullo introduced the discussion by noting the core issue in this jurisdictional determination was parking. He then invited Jennifer Minuto, one of the owners/applicants, to provide some information about her plans for the property.

Ms. Minuto said she was looking to open a piano bar that would serve as an entertainment venue and gathering spot in Pawtuxet Village, but not as a restaurant (she confirmed there would not be a kitchen). She said her facility would share an existing row of parking with the business next door, Village Laundry & Cleaners, which closes at 5:00pm.

Mr. Mulcahy and Mr. Pikul asked if there were any ADA-compliant spots among those already present on the side of the building; Ms. Minuto said the one closest to Broad Street was. Mr. Mulcahy expressed a desire to review a formalized parking plan.

Mr. Pikul said he had reviewed the parking standards and decided that although the proposal would represent a more parking-intensive use than what previously occupied the same space, the applicant was proposing a use that was allowed for the zone and appeared able to meet the standards. Ms. Minuto added for the benefit of those present that the standard she had to meet was one parking space for every three seats.

Mr. Mateus and Mr. Woyciechowski both agreed that they had no concerns with the proposal.

Upon motion made by Mr. Pikul, and seconded by Mr. Mulcahy, the Development Plan Review Committee voted unanimously (5-0) not to take jurisdiction on the matter.

4. “Iron Stag Brewery”	Preliminary Plan Application	(vote taken)
Location	72 Rolfe Square, AP 5, Lots 605 and 1835	
Zoning District	C-3 (General Business)	
Owner/App	Force Realty (Owner), Antler Ale Works, LLC dba Iron Stag Brewing (Applicant)	
Proposal	Applicant seeks to operate a 10,360 SF brewery located in a portion of the first floor of the existing vacant space to also include a seasonal outside patio. The subject property is designated as a C-3 zone, the proposed use “Brewery” is not allowed by-right in a C-3 zone, and the applicant is seeking a Use Variance.	

Atty. Robert Murray, representing the applicant team (comprised of AJ Kilroy and Mark Tessier, applicants, Antler Ale Works LLC; Charles Chin, owner, Force Realty, LLC; Paul Carlson, PE, of Insite Engineering Services LLC; and Matthew McGeorge, AIA, of McGeorge Architecture Interiors LLC) introduced the proposal.

Atty. Murray said Iron Stag agreed to lease half of the first floor of the building across the street from Durfee Hardware and their operation would be classified as a brewery, not a brew pub, under the City’s zoning code because of specified floor area and brewing calculations. As Brewery/Distillery is considered an industrial use under the code, the applicant is seeking a use variance to be able to operate their business at this site, which is zoned C-3. Atty. Murray noted that food would not be provided, and the applicant intends to begin with only limited hours at first, probably Thursday through Sunday, with brewing taking place during the other days of the week when the facility is closed to the public. He said the applicant was also proposing to construct an outdoor patio area on the northern side of the building, which would require creating a new door and eliminating 15 parking spaces in the adjacent lot, which is also owned by Mr. Chin.

Chairman Pezzullo then invited the Committee members to comment.

The first major topic of discussion concerned the proposed patio. Following questions from Mr. Pikul and Mr. Mulcahy, the applicants explained the patio would simply be an outdoor seating area delineated by a concrete half-wall, with the only point of sale being inside the building. Mr. Woyciechowski said the wall would need a gap in at least one spot to allow people an emergency exit from the patio space and asked if there were any plans for heating or eventually enclosing the space; the applicants said they had no such plans in the near term.

The Committee also focused on parking- and circulation-related issues. Chairman Pezzullo asked Mr. Mulcahy if he had any concerns with the loss of parking spaces; he deferred to Mr. Pikul, who suggested the applicant team prepare a parking comparison to share with the Zoning Board of Review when their use variance is heard. Atty. Murray noted they would have a precise parking count for the business once they agreed upon the number of seats they intended to provide; Chairman Pezzullo reminded the Committee members that regardless of the precise number of spots the code would call for the business to have, in this area, we should be encouraging shared parking arrangements. Mr. Carlson noted there would be new ADA spots provided. Mr. Mulcahy asked how the applicant intended to handle deliveries; Mr. Kilroy said there are loading docks in the rear (eastern facing side) of the building, but they also propose to build a 20-foot glass garage door on the side. Mr. Woyciechowski confirmed he didn’t have any concerns about emergency vehicle access to the site.

Several miscellaneous details and requests arose during the discussion as well. Among these, the applicants confirmed that the existing trees and landscaping located in the vicinity of the proposed patio area would be retained; that they were willing to provide a bike rack on site; that there would be a dumpster located at the rear corner of the building and it would be screened; and that the project would probably generate 5 or 6 new jobs. Mr. Pikul advised that he would need to see details on the building’s structural conditions and that the Building Code would require sprinklers (if they aren’t already present) because of the apartment above the

commercial space. Atty. Murray confirmed he sent Mr. Pikul a sign plan for review; Mr. Kilroy said they were proposing a blade sign over the sidewalk and a wall sign stenciled over the patio area. Mr. Mateus said the applicant would need to work closely with Ed Tally in the City's Department of Public Works to ensure adequate pre-treatment of brewery discharge will be accounted for, as it has been an issue before. Mr. Mateus added that the amount of paving required might vary depending on how far into the road the applicant might need to go to make a connection with needed utilities, like water lines.

Upon motion made by Mr. Mateus, and seconded by Mr. Woyciechowski, the Development Plan Review Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Preliminary Plan application.

5. "Taco Inc. Manufacturing and Warehousing Facility" Pre-Application (no vote taken)

Location	35 Carlsbad Street, AP 7, Lots 3141 and 3744
Zoning District	M2 and C4
Owner/App	Taco Inc., 1160 Cranston Street
Proposal	Applicant seeks to construct a new 99,000 SF building for light manufacturing, testing, and warehousing.

Chairman Pezzullo invited the applicant team, comprised of Atty. Andrew Teitz, of Ursillo, Teitz & Ritch Ltd; John Giampietro, Senior VP of Operations, Taco Inc; Jan Greenwood, Civil Engineer with Woodard & Curran; and Bob Kelliher, VP of Thermo-Mechanical Systems Corporation, to introduce their proposal to the Committee.

Atty. Teitz said Taco seeks to build a 99,000 ft² addition directly across Carolina Street from its existing facility, on a portion of a currently underutilized/surplus parking lot it owns. He said it is currently a split zone site and will need to be collectively rezoned to M-2 with conditions. Mr. Giampietro said an expansion of this size is needed to allow the facility to adapt to changing circumstances (supply chain issues necessitating more on-site warehousing) and to allow for growth. Of the total addition, 50,000 ft² would be dedicated to warehousing, 15,000 ft² for an engineering lab, and the remainder will be left as space for future growth.

Speaking to the site design, Ms. Greenwood said they want to separate truck traffic from employee parking through separate drive aisles delineated by a physical wall. She added that the applicant planned to install and underground infiltration for runoff, probably under the resulting parking area (which would be reduced in size, but is still projected to have 62 more spots than required, which will be sufficient to accommodate both occasional training events and 5-year growth projections). Ms. Greenwood said they are currently proposing only 3% landscaped area, so they would seek a waiver from the 15% requirement. Atty. Teitz justified the discrepancy by observing the adjacent bike path serves as a vegetated buffer on one side and Taco's neighbors are all industrial or commercial in nature. Chairman Pezzullo said the waiver request was significant, and Mr. Mateus cautioned the applicants that if they planned to plant trees or other vegetation in the public right-of-way, they would be responsible for all associated maintenance – not only mowing, but replacing sidewalks that had been lifted by tree roots, for example.

Mr. Pikul asked for confirmation that the applicant planned to bring the site's zoning into uniformity via ordinance/zone change request, which Atty. Teitz did (adding that the lots would also be merged, resulting in a collective M-2 zoned lot.) Chairman Pezzullo explained that Taco wouldn't need to seek variances for a few items, such as exceeding the maximum allowable building height to accommodate their lab space and encroaching into the front setback, by incorporating those items into the ordinance. Mr. Pikul advised the applicant to ensure their signage needs could be met within the standards of City code before they assembled their zone change request.

Atty. Teitz asked if the applicant should request additional extensions beyond the usual single one-year extension that the DPRC is authorized to grant – he said they intended to begin construction within two years but wanted to know their approval was still valid in case they took longer. Chairman Pezzullo said they could make such a request if they wanted, but extensions are virtually never denied.

Mr. Mateus said he would be interested to see the details of their proposed infiltration system, as the discharge site is presently undersized and 25-year storm runoff levels need to be kept on site. He also

advised the applicant to decide from which street they planned to connect to utilities and to know that they would be responsible for repaving.

Mr. Woyciechowski asked the applicant to review sprinkler system requirements before they submit their preliminary plan design and confirm that the available water mains in the adjacent road will be adequate.

Mr. Mulcahy asked what the impacts of truck circulation would be on the area. Mr. Giampietro said Taco currently draws about 22 trucks per day, and this addition would add perhaps one more. He did add that there could be around 6 new box truck movements between the two adjacent (existing and proposed) buildings, but this would not involve any unloading on city streets.

Mr. Paulino asked how many new employees the project would generate; Mr. Giampietro said there would be around 16 people working in the new facility. He also asked if Taco sought to take advantage of City tax incentives for industrial development; Mr. Giampietro said Taco hadn't considered that yet, and Chairman Pezzullo said they should review whether they are making a large enough investment to qualify for participation in the tax phase-in program.

Mr. Mateus and Mr. Paulino both left the meeting following that discussion. As this was a pre-application discussion, no vote was taken.

6. Adjournment (next meeting date TBD)

(vote taken)

Upon motion made by Mr. Woyciechowski, and seconded by Mr. Pikul, the Development Plan Review Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 11:04 a.m.