

CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES –APRIL 20, 2018

Present:

Anthony Durante/chairman
Jean Maisonneuve/Township Commissioner
Joe Colangelo/resident
Tom Connolly/business owner
Paul LaCorte/property owner
Kristin Mider/resident
Steve Needle/property owner
Clara Nunziato/business owner
Barry O'Donovan/business owner
Margaret Sacco/property owner
Terence Wall/Township Administrator
Gabe Bailer/Director
Michelle Stavrou/social media coordinator
Ellen O'Donnell/admin. asst.

Absent:

Chris Ashrafi/resident

Public:

Ralph Brunette
Rita LaBrutto

Mr. Bailer called the meeting to order at 8:30am. Announcement made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- ***Motion to approve March 16, 2018 minutes by Mr. LaCorte, seconded by Mr. O'Donovan, all in favor.***

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS - Commissioner Maisonneuve

- Reported that meetings continue regarding opportunities in town, i.e. PO Plaza, North Ave East.
- Discussion regarding reception of P.O. Plaza presentation to Township Committee; Commissioner Maisonneuve responded that most members are on board, funding remains to be determined.

CHAIRMAN REMARKS – Anthony Durante

- Reminded board members they should have received email with financial disclosure information, due in a couple of weeks.
- Board agreed to change DMC Board meeting from May 18 to May 11.

Board sub-committees

Finance – C. Ashrafi, P. Lacorte

- Monthly report distributed; former director's sick day compensation has been taken out of reserve.

Business Development – Mr. Ashrafi, Ms. Mider, Ms. Sacco

- Ms. Sacco reported that the team met to plan specific focus group questions for restaurant owners; will include Restaurant Week feedback.

Maintenance – T. Connolly, P. LaCorte

Open Issues:

- Numerous street lights still out.
- Old City Grill building still has damaged and unsafe windows
 - Rich Belluscio attended meeting at 9:25am to provide update: property owner was issued demo permit only; no plans have been submitted; will contact property owner to ensure windows are safe.

- Pedestrian "Walk" sign at North & North Union Ave out since October 2017.
- Several paver piles remain on sidewalks where utility work is complete; no status on removal/repair.

Marketing & Communications – C. Nunziato, M. Sacco

- Get Fit Cranford, April 22, sponsored by Cranford Community Connections.
- Cranford Women's Club Sip & Shop Friday, May 11.
- \$75 in prizes to 3 winners of Snap Share Win during March contest.

Strategic Planning

Survey results

- Over 500 combined responses received.
- Next step: make revisions to strategic plan based on survey feedback and share with DMC Board.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Gabe Bailer

Alden Street Improvements – Planter Removal (handout)

- Bill Masol arrived at 8:55am; provided status update and details of the project that is set to begin week of May1 and expected to take 2 months.
- Mr. Bailer suggested removal of 3 additional planters at the corner of North Union and Alden street (Anthem corner) not in original scope of work.
- Mr. O'Donovan reminded DMC Board to be sensitive to those former Board members responsible for the planters and who may wish them to remain.
- Mr. LaCorte requested clarification that planters would be replaced with pots similar to those at the train station.
- Mr. Masol will determine additional cost, which he confirmed would be part of the capital budget.
- Mr. Bailer to provide Mr. Masol and Commissioner Maisonneuve with the recommendation in writing.

❖ ***Motion by Mr. Colangelo for DMC Board to recommend removing 3 additional planters at the corner of North Union and Alden Street, not currently included in the scope of work, for the purpose of uniformity and maintaining high quality aesthetics and to replace with suitable greenery, seconded by Mr. Needle, all in favor; Mr. O'Donovan abstained.***

Meet & greet – May 16, 5:30pm at Kilkenny House.

Zoning Code

- Shared information regarding the 3 primary zones – Downtown Transition, Downtown Core, Downtown Business.
- Will follow up with Zoning Officer and provide DMC Board with a report including observations and recommendations as to where improvements to the code can be made.

Downtown Arts Council

- Initial meeting included Mr. Bailer, Ms. Mider, Deb Leber, Genna Degan & Lindsay Lehault.
- Seeking additional resident member with a strong arts background; DMC Board provided suggestions, Mr. Bailer to follow up.
- The Downtown Arts Council is intended to be independent of DMC Board but have representation from Downtown Director and a volunteer board member.

New Events

- Piano Opening Night: Saturday May 12th at Eastman Plaza; in the process of securing different performers; estimating event to cost between \$600-\$800; piano will be open to the public; plan to schedule additional performances throughout the season.
- Music in the Squares: discussed idea to have bands perform at both Eastman clock and P.O. Plaza, same night; still in planning phase but considering end of June; discussed partnering with Jaycees, and potential South Ave locations; Mr. LaCorte emphasized maintenance of the areas in advance.
- Restaurant Week: plan for August, dates to be finalized; 9 confirmed restaurants to participate.

- Craft & Draft: considering South Ave. train station parking lot on a Sunday; reached out to numerous business owners who have been receptive; Mr. O'Donovan advised to reach out to all restaurants; working with Market Space vendors; Mr. Wall described the permit process and willingness to help facilitate the process with NJ Transit.

NEW BUSINESS

106 Eastman Street

- Mr. Bailer notified the board of Zoning Board application at 106 Eastman; proposing to knockdown existing home and create structure to include 2 commercial spaces, 4 apartments, 7 parking spaces on site.

Board Volunteer Day

- Mr. Durante introduced the idea, discussed with DMC maintenance staff Rui DeJesus who noted June would be a time when volunteer help would be appreciated for mulching.
- Mr. Colangelo suggested Volunteer Day involve planting at P.O. Plaza; Ms. Mider will take the lead, talk to Dreyers about plants; Mr. Bailer will ensure sprinklers are properly functioning ahead of planting; scheduled for Saturday, May 19.

Historic Preservation Advisory Board presentation

- Kinney Clark to present to DMC Board next month.

Car shows

- Ms. Nunziato requested that parking spots in the area of Alden and North Union be closed later than 2pm in advance of 5pm Chamber of Commerce car shows; Mr. Wall will reach out to the Chief of Police and get back to Mr. Bailer; Mr. Wall confirmed such spots closed off are lost revenue to the township.

OLD BUSINESS

Post Office Plaza

- Eagle Scout, Rob McNamara, will be painting benches and adding planters as part of his project.
- Mr. Durante provided recap of 2017, the Board's intent for improvements, presentation to Township Committee, etc.
- Discussion regarding "found" funds, who they belong to, intended and/or approved use of funds ,i.e., flagpole only or flagpole and plaza; Board and Mr. Bailer continuing efforts to resolve outstanding issues.

Mr. Connolly left at 9:33am

Mr. Needle left at 9:40am

Parklet

- Playa Bowls has expressed interest in having a parklet in front of their location on North Union Ave.
- Discussion regarding how to improve upon 2017 parklet, emphasis on communication to surrounding businesses and that it is a public space.
- Mr. Bailer will follow up with Playa Bowls business owner to confirm their interest and intent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Rita LaBrutto, 104 Arlington Road – noted that she was a member of The Flagpole Committee that raised money by citizens; recommends being respectful of the purpose of the WWI memorial; agrees something needs to be done at the plaza, expressed her opinion and doesn't agree with placement of tables, chairs, believes the area deserves a level of respect.
- Ralph Brunette, 101 Forest Avenue – agrees with the idea of being conservative at PO Plaza.
- ***Motion to adjourn by Mr. Durante, seconded by Mr. Colangelo, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.***

Respectively submitted,
Ellen O'Donnell, Administrative Assistant