

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – AUGUST 27, 2020**

Present:

Dennis Concha/business owner
Tom Connolly/business owner
Anthony Durante/chairman
Paul LaCorte/property owner
Jean Maisonneuve/Township Commissioner
Kristen Mider/resident
Steve Needle/property owner
Steve Oliveira/property owner
Gabe Bailer/Director
Caren Demyen/Administrative Assistant

Absent:

Joe Colangelo/resident
Ashley Legg/resident
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media
Coordinator

Mr. Bailer called the meeting to order at 8:02am. Announcement made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion to approve July 2020 minutes by Mr. Durante, seconded by Mr. Connolly.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Maisonneuve

- Commissioner Maisonneuve mentioned that the parklets were approved by the Township Committee and that they are looking for more updates of what the DMC can come up with. He said that the Township Committee is very open to any innovative ways the DMC can help our Downtown businesses. Commissioner Maisonneuve did touch on the potential of redevelopment with North Avenue. Mr. Durante asked if the redevelopment was just in the study phase. Commissioner Maisonneuve mentioned that it's a little bit beyond that since there have been many studies done.

CHAIRMAN REMARKS – Anthony Durante

- Mr. Durante thanked everyone for attending. Mr. Durante thanked Ms. Mider for suggesting having a meeting this month. Mr. Durante feels like the DMC was able to get a lot done in a short amount of time and he thanked everyone for their help in pushing it through. Mr. Durante said there is more work needed with the weather changing.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Gabe Bailer

Monthly Project Report

- Mr. Bailer thanked everyone for their support and assistance with the pandemic response plan. Concrete barricades were purchased and parklets have been created for Venue 104, Playa Bowls, Oasis and Thirsty Turtle. The office coordinated with the police on the delivery. Since the parklets have been installed, there has been an increase in 20-30% of sales for these restaurants. Next set of barricades will be for Ambeli and Track 5. Old City Grill will be the last set delivered – with the construction going on in the building, we have to wait until the dumpster is removed. Mr. Bailer sees them there until November. Mr. Bailer has been speaking with the Building Department and Fire regarding tents and heating.
- Curbside pick-up locations should be installed next week – the office just finalized the signs and they are getting printed at TC Graphics. Locations will be in front of Urban Burger, Ciao Bello, Kilkenny, Cranford Bagels, Cranford Station House and Marinos. Many of the locations will be for multiple businesses. Mr. Needle expressed concern that the signs will say 5 minutes parking.
- Alden Street will be reopened after Labor Day weekend. Mr. Bailer did say that Ambeli would be willing to pay police to close the street from 5-10pm on Sundays so they can continue their music and outdoor

seating. Eastman Street will continue to be closed on the weekends and hopefully the yoga studios will continue doing their classes in that locations. There has been music three nights a weekend – Vinny’s Pizza coordinates music on Fridays and thanks to Cranford Community Connections, Mr. Bailer was able to coordinate music on Thursdays and Saturdays.

- The office is still having Zoom meetings which are available for the Downtown businesses. Later this morning, John Guimaraes who specializes in websites and marketing will be doing a session for our businesses.
- The office will be purchasing four more sets of bistro tables so there can be additional seating outside. Mr. Bailer updated everyone on the wifi extending to North Union. Unfortunately, it cannot extend that far, even with a booster. There would have to be another antenna put on the Crown Bank building. Mr. Bailer said it could possibly happen but we would need approval from Crown Bank. Mr. Durante asked if it could be another set-up or building on North Union. Mr. Bailer said we would also have to consider the cost of \$2000 for the materials as well as the monthly fee. Commissioner Maisonneuve asked if there is a study of how many people tap into the wifi currently – Mr. Bailer said there is about 60-70 a day.
- The Now More Than Ever campaign has been very successful. Mr. Bailer said he has done 39 interviews and he says it’s been really interesting learning why these businesses came to Downtown Cranford.
- The next campaign will be Fall in Love with Downtown Cranford which will feature a video of different business owners. Mr. Bailer thanked Ms. Mider and Ms. Demyen on working together to get the project going. The office is working with two photographers to do a photo shoot of the clothing retail stores – Amber Feather, Anthem, Augusta Mae, Look Twice and Milk Money.
- Taste of Cranford will be the first event in September and it’s in coordination with Cranford Community Connection. Restaurants who would like to participate will offer a small plate for \$5 or \$7. A map and menu will be created for participants.
- Scarecrow Stroll will continue – the office is working on events and a plan to make sure social distancing rules are followed. Commissioner Maisonneuve asked that the office coordinate with Police to make sure we are following COVID guidelines so the events do not get shut down.

NEW BUSINESSES

- Mr. Bailer updated the Board that Emma’s Pizza has a new owner – it will now be called Sapore Di Italia. They should open by the end of September. They will be taking down the awning which does not follow the SID code and will be working with the office on signage.
- Folklore Taco and Spoonful Masala had their ribbon cuttings – it seems like things are going well for both locations.
- 109 Walnut will have Ani Ramen and a bubble tea store. Ani Ramen construction is completed but they are still working on the signage. They are ready to open but they are waiting on indoor dining.
- Fromage Grill is closed and will be taken over by Yumpanadas. They currently do catering out of Rahway.
- Anthem will be expanding to next store in the old Reach for the Stars location. It will be a baby store called Max + Luna.
- A La Mode Creamery location will be now Woofgang Bakery – a successful dog grooming and retail store that was originally in Westfield.
- Construction on the old Wells Fargo building has begun on South Avenue. There will be a restaurant in the old hardware store. They will have a liquor license which was purchased from Bar Americana.
- Pastosa’s expanded into the old Cranford Bakery & Desserts where they will focus on to-go and catering.
- Reach for the Stars has moved to the old Annealed location.
- Mr. Bailer said that the vacancy rate is under 3%.
- Lidia’s Cuban Kitchen will not be returning. There will be a new restaurant there eventually.
- Zensational U is trying to sell their business.
- Two Rivers Bank – the location is for sale.

- Mr. Oliveira had a question about Jungle Juice – Mr. Bailer said that it is for sale. Mr. Concha asked about the possibility of Folklore getting outside seating to help them since they are a new business. Mr. Bailer said that he will look into this option.

Motion to adjourn at 8:57am by Mr. Durante. Mr. Connolly seconded. All were in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Caren Demyen, Administrative Assistant