

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – DECEMBER 20, 2019**

Present:

Tom Connolly/business owner
Anthony Durante/chairman
Tricia Greely/ business owner
Paul LaCorte/property owner
Ashley Legg/resident
Jean Maisonneuve/Township Commissioner
Kristen Mider/resident
Steve Needle/property owner
Barry O'Donovan/business owner
Margaret Sacco/property owner
Gabe Bailer/Director
Caren Demyen/Administrative Assistant
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator

Absent:

Joe Colangelo/resident

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 November 2019 minutes by Mr. LaCorte, seconded by Mr. Needle. All were in favor.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Maisonneuve

- Commissioner Maisonneuve will continue to be the township representative for the DMC for 2020. A new TV screen is going up in the conference room at the municipal building. Commissioner Maisonneuve thanked Mr. O'Donovan for his service to the DMC.

CHAIRMAN REMARKS – Anthony Durante

- Mr. Durante wished everyone a happy holiday and thanked everyone for coming out. He mentioned that everyone was provided with an annual report to review. Mr. Durante thanked Mr. O'Donovan for his time on the DMC and that he has been a value to the Board. Mr. O'Donovan shared a bit about his experience on the Board and the journey it took to get to this point where there are new voices. One of the things he is most proud of is the strategic plan. However he feels that the township is still not getting the DMC involved and that is the main reason he feels that he needs to leave. He wants new businesses to come to the DMC. Mr. O'Donovan also feels that the light situation is unacceptable. It took 6-7 years to get the new lights approved and he doesn't feel that it is acceptable that only 80% are working. Mr. O'Donovan stated that we need to remember where we are coming from and know where we are going.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Gabe Bailer

Monthly Project Report

- Mr. Bailer thanked Mr. O'Donovan for his wisdom, guidance and always helping push things along.
- The events this past month were very successful. Starting with the Frozen Stroll that had over 200 participants to Small Business Saturday which featured a smores bar, hot cocoa bar and prize basket raffle. The businesses were very generous with their donations. Despite the rain the Holiday Shop weekend was also successful – we had over 550 raffle tickets (each person got a ticket for every \$10 they spent). 55 people participated in the Distrx scavenger hunt.
- The holiday window contest was a success – we had over 20 stores that participated and it seemed to have positive reviews.

- Mr. Bailer applied for another grant for pedestrian safety. Mr. Durante added that it's a small grant but that it's very important to do so when we apply for larger grants, they see that we did our homework.
- There are still 5 violations regarding signage. It started with 22 to 5. Mr. Bailer will continue following up on these.
- Annual report is broken down by project. Mr. Bailer reviewed a few highlights such as the Post Office Plaza improvements, Eastman Clock improvements, installation of bike racks, social media coverage, public wifi (500 people use it a month), utility box art and an increase in events (24). There were 15 new businesses in town – some in spaces that have been vacant for years.
- Mr. Bailer worked with the electrician on the lights – there are currently 31 out.

NEW BUSINESSES

- Delice Macarons received their final CO and should have a soft opening in January.
- Oasis Restaurant on North Union is moving ahead – they should have the new sign up in a few weeks.
- Blush will be opening in the former Posh salon.
- Perrotti's put in a new kitchen on the first floor as well as the basement. This is to help them grow with their prepared foods.
- Venue 104 is open and already working on an event with the Cranford Theater on January 22nd.
- Burger IM will have a ribbon cutting on January 11th at 2pm.
- The holiday movie series was successful at the Cranford Theater. The numbers have been good but we need to continue to support them. Mr. Connolly asked if the theater would be able to get a liquor license. Mr. Bailer said at this point the theater may not be able to with concerns about insurance and underage staff.
- Lure Lash will be opening on South Avenue.

BOARD COMMITTEES

- Application Review Committee – Mr. Durante brought up that a developer met with him, Mr. Bailer, Mr. LaCorte and Mr. Connolly regarding the Britton building. They wanted to discuss design and capacity for a potential 70 apartment building. The Board discussed making sure we rectify the ordinance in the DMC's favor.
- Business Development - Ms. Sacco mentioned that it's important for the Board and the office to introduce themselves to the businesses and the importance of getting involved in events.
- Maintenance – Mr. Connolly asked for an update on the dimmers. Painting of the light posts will happen this spring. Lot 7 – wanted to know an update on the garbage. Ms. Sacco asked an update on the striping of the lines. Mr. Connolly asked about the steps behind Sister Nails (Lot 7) – he says that they are dangerous. Mr. LaCorte suggested closing them off. Mr. Bailer said he will follow up. Mr. Connolly asked about the fence by Sub-Ology as well as some of the facades like Avenue East. Mr. Connolly mentioned some of the alleyway lights are out. Mr. Bailer said that Rui has purchased lights and will be fixing them. An update was given regarding the tree surrounds – they will be delivered this spring. Mr. Connolly asked for an update on the holiday lights. Mr. LaCorte suggested hiring someone to do commercial grade lighting. Mr. LaCorte also suggested getting an arborist to trim the tree. Commissioner Maisonneuve suggested bringing this up to the township committee. Mr. Connolly suggested we need to look into expanding the SID and Mr. Durante suggested putting this on the January agenda. Mr. Connolly also suggested inviting Mr. Cryan, the township administrator, to the meetings.
- Marketing & Communications – the committee went over the events the DMC should focus on and how to expand social media.

CAPITAL BUDGET

- Electric upgrade - regarding the lights, Mr. Bailer received a quote of \$185 per pole. Mr. LaCorte said that the town needs to put out an RFP for an engineer to diagnose the problem. Mr. O'Donovan said that the area by the Thirsty Turtle is a disgrace – it makes it look like the business is closed. Mr. LaCorte suggested the Board needs to go to meetings to bring this up. Commissioner Maisonneuve said that he will speak with Mr. Durante on what is needed.
- Improvements of pavers – by Lot 1 as well as South Avenue by TC Graphics.

- Grant received for electric charging stations. Actual installation is very expensive and Mr. Bailer suggested the parking garage. It would be about \$60k for installation.
- Paint the MDTV building – we received a price of \$10k. Mr. Needle said it's the ugliest building in Cranford and painting it one color would help. Mr. LaCorte said let's not put lipstick on a pig and that the township needs to step up and develop that area.
- Alleyway signage next to Sofi's as well as the one next to Simply – still working on a quote.
- Kiosk – still working on getting a quote.
- Will look into getting a digital sign by the gazebo.
- Survey to see who owns the steps by Track 5.
- Landscaping in Lot 7 as well as Centennial Avenue.

Motion to adjourn at 10am by Mr. LaCorte. Mr. Durante seconded. All were in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Caren Demyen, Administrative Assistant