

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – DECEMBER 18, 2020**

Present:

Joe Colangelo/Resident
Dennis Concha/Business owner
Tom Connolly/Business owner
Anthony Durante/Chairman
Paul LaCorte/Property owner
Ashley Legg/Resident
Jean Maisonneuve/Township Commissioner
Kristen Mider/Resident
Steve Needle/Property owner
Steve Oliveira/Property owner
Caren Demyen/Acting Director
Kathleen Prunty/Deputy Mayor
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator

Absent:

Tammie Crispino/Business owner

Ms. Demyen 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 2020 minutes by Mr. Colangelo, seconded by Mr. Needle. All were in favor except Mr. Connolly and Mr. Durante who abstained.

DEPUTY MAYOR REMARKS – Deputy Mayor Kathleen Prunty

- Deputy Mayor Prunty wanted to say thank you to the Board for the difficulties they have faced with the pandemic. She feels that working as a team, the Board was able to help put a positive spin on the Downtown. Deputy Mayor Prunty stated that Commissioner Andrews will be the liaison for 2021. The Township Committee was in agreement to name Ms. Mider as chair. She also mentioned that the Township Administrator and the mayor will be attending the meetings in 2021. Deputy Mayor Prunty thanked Mr. Needle for his time on the DMC.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Maisonneuve

- Commissioner Maisonneuve mentioned that he was thrilled that Ms. Mider is taking on the role as chair and thanked Mr. Needle for his time on the Board. He thanked everyone for their help on the Board.

CHAIRMAN REMARKS – Anthony Durante

- Mr. Durante wished everyone a happy holiday and thanked everyone for their support. He thanked Ms. Demyen and Ms. Stavrou for their support through the transition. Mr. Durante thanked Mr. Needle for his time on the Board and said that he appreciated his perspective. Mr. Durante thanked Commissioner Maisonneuve for his advocacy and support that he has given to this Board and town. Mr. Durante thanked Ms. Mider for taking over the role as chair for the 2021 year.

ACTING DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Caren Demyen

Monthly Project Report

- Ms. Demyen updated the Board that social media is continuing to grow. The office has been highlighting anything the businesses share, new businesses, etc... Hoping to have live classes in January.
- The office released a holiday video which included holiday greetings from the stores.
- Theme for the winter will be "I Choose in Cranford" – Ms. Demyen thanked Ms. Stavrou for coming up with this idea.

- News 12 did a feature for their “We’re Open” segment which featured Papa Ganache as well as the Downtown events.
- The office partnered with UCEDC on a marketing session earlier in December.
- Tree lighting was virtual this year and the Chamber of Commerce did a great job. Mayor Giblin present Ellen Ramer of Martin Jewelers with a dozen roses (on behalf of the DMC) to thank her for sponsoring the lights. The Jaycees did a great job putting up the lights at Eastman Clock Plaza and Post Office Plaza.
- Small Business Saturday was a huge success – over \$40k of receipts were collected for the contest. Businesses donated \$2k of prizes and gifts. Overall foot traffic was strong and the businesses seemed happy.
- Hilltop Bicycle giveaway was successful – over \$400 worth of gift cards for beauty businesses which were donated to Cranford Family Care.
- Broadway Comes to Downtown Cranford has been a hit – the singers have been in town 12 times – a total of 36 hours. We have received a lot of compliments on the personalized scarves and hats from Think D’sign Print.
- Santa is using a 7 foot candy cane for socially distant photos.
- Cocoa and Cookies on December 5th was a huge success – Cranford Family Care picked up 3 carloads of food that were donated. Track 5 and Delice Macarons were kind enough to donate the supplies.
- The first year with the Festival of Trees was very positive – we had 32 participating stores. The office has been making a list of improvements for next year.
- Gnome for the Holidays was a bigger hit than expected – we had over 100 scavenger hunt sheets were turned in. These gnomes were made by the Green Thumb Garden Club of Cranford.
- The office has been trying to work one-on-one with stores on activities – Gingerbread Decorating Contest with Venue 104, Cupcake Wars with Cake Artist and Winter Wonderland Pizza Kit with Vinny’s Pizza. The stores participating have been pleased with how it’s going.
- Holiday Look Book was a big project for the office – it’s on the website as well as our social media. It’s a 31 page booklet that covers categories such as “For the Hostess, For the Celebrations” etc... It’s been read over 1000 times to date. Ms. Demyen mentioned there is room for improvement next year and hopes to get the booklet out next year.
- Papa Ganache opened up early December and have been pleased with how things are going. Mr. Colangelo asked how the new businesses are doing that have opened up the past few months. Ms. Demyen mentioned that she hasn’t been able to reach out to all of the businesses but has received positive responses from Yumpanadas, Ani Ramen and Hickory and Hill.
- Maintenance updates – mums will get pulled from the planters and replaced with kale, looking to get personalized plates for the light posts, new garbage cans at Eastman, and Baker Brothers is working with our vendor on the tree surround project.
- Electric Vehicle Charging Station was installed in the parking garage.
- Looking ahead, the office wants to create a parklet/street closure plan for 2021, gift cards and winter activities.
- Gift card program – looking into EML and Yiftee as options. Will get more information to run it by the Board in January.
- Downtown Takeover Makeover – hoping to redo the inside of a store with the help of local businesses who are volunteering their support and materials.
- Souperhero Stroll event will take place in January.
- NJ Film Festival will open on March 23rd at the Cranford Theater.
- Downtown Cranford May Day – town-wide event to clean up the downtown. Madison, NJ runs a similar program. We are hoping to partner with the Jaycees.

OLD BUSINESS

- Discussion regarding the budget for 2021 including bringing back the awning/sign grant program, COVID support, gift card program, holiday guide support, additional events, holiday lighting of the two town trees, additional planter installations and more.

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

Respectively submitted,
Caren Demyen, Acting Director