

CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – DECEMBER 16, 2022

Present:

Brian Andrews /Commissioner/Liaison
Dennis Concha/Business owner
Tammie Crispino/Business owner
Anthony Durante/Resident
Paul Gallo/Resident
Paul LaCorte/Property owner
Kristen Mider (Chairwoman) Resident
Kendall O'Brien/Resident
Steve Oliveira/Property Owner
Doreen Sayegh/Property owner

Caren Demyen/Director
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator

Kathleen Miller Prunty/Mayor
Laura Kreiser/Reporter for The Westfield
Leader

Absent:

Joe Colangelo/Business owner

Ms. Demyen called the meeting to order at 8:34am. Announcement made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion to approve November 2022 minutes by Ms. Mider. Mr. Oliveira seconded. Minutes were approved. Mr. Durante asked that the minutes be modified to reflect that Mayor Prunty was the one who suggested a downtown resident be included on the streetscape steering committee.

MAYOR REMARKS – Mayor Kathleen Miller Prunty

- Administrator Cryan has been placed on administrative leave and Police Chief Greco is serving as the interim Administrator. Ms. Prunty will be the DMC liaison next year.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Brian Andrews

- The Township Committee finished the year by closing out a good amount of business. Mr. Andrews thanked the Downtown office staff, Ms. Mider, and Mr. LaCorte for their hard work. He recognized how Mr. LaCorte has continued to push the town forward when it comes to redevelopment.

CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS – Kristen Mider

- Ms. Mider thanked the Downtown office for its hard work over the past few months.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Caren Demyen

- Graham Petto from Topology joined via Zoom
 - Mr. Petto and Ms. Demyen have been working on sidewalk café permit amendments to further define parameters (storage, time of year use, sidewalk access, etc.). They hope to have it ready by March. The plan is to form a committee that includes Building, Zoning, DMC, and Health.
 - Ms. Demyen said this is to create more structure. The office is unable to enforce anything as the current ordinance language is too vague.
 - The updated ordinance will apply to the entire town.
 - Mr. LaCorte asked if this will be enforced. Ms. Demyen said that's why multiple departments will be involved. The ordinance will give departments certain roles in regards to enforcement.

- Township received a \$119K Transit Village grant for the stairs on Eastman Street. The grant will help make the area safer and more accessible.
- Finance
 - Ms. Demyen thanked Ms. O'Brien, Mr. Oliveira, and Mr. Colangelo for meeting with her regarding the budget. Expectations have changed since the start of Covid – shoppers want options, ability to gather downtown, and be entertained.
 - Future assumptions include costs going up due to inflation, a flat budget, and decrease in donations due to economic forces.
 - Changes include the removal of Wi-Fi and building the cost of events into ticket prices.
 - The tentative operations budget is \$87,766.99.
 - The trust this year was \$79,025. This was collected from film donations, bench donations, planter sponsorships, marketing, and events.
 - Ms. Mider said that the trust value was a reflection of Ms. Demyen's efforts. Mr. Oliveira and Ms. O'Brien said that the businesses see the value in what the DMC provides.
 - Mr. LaCorte said that there has not been a SID increase in 15 years and the value will continue to be reduced if the SID tax is not increased. Mayor Prunty said it's coming up on 20 years since the SID tax was increased. She also believes there should be a look at how the assessment is structured.
- Office Updates
 - There is free shopper parking until December 24.
 - Union County Education Series program continues to grow. Ms. Sayegh spoke positively about her experience with the program.
 - Business Updates
 - Breens holiday window was decorated by a volunteer.
 - Social Media Update
 - Ribbon Cuttings
- Redevelopment
 - Mr. LaCorte said that they're waiting for the visual model for North Avenue from Connolly & Hickey. He expects the town to move forward with an RFP for North Avenue redevelopment after the DMC Redevelopment Subcommittee makes its recommendations. He is also making an effort to stay in touch with property owners on North Avenue.
- Maintenance
 - In regards to the lights downtown, Ms. Demyen met with the DPW Superintendent, Engineering, and light distributor. A sample light will be shipped to the building to see if that can serve as a replacement light.
 - Wreaths and garland were installed. There was a shipping delay but next year they will be installed before Thanksgiving.
- Gift Card Program
 - Through November, \$81k in gift cards has been sold.
- Event Recap
 - Small Business Saturday was very busy. Ms. Demyen thanked the volunteers from Cranford Woman Club who helped during the event.
 - Holiday Lights Night Out, Festival of Trees, Cranford Theater Pajama Series, This is Our Jam, and more took place in the past few weeks.
- Capital Budget Projects
 - Steering Committee for the Streetscape Project has been finalized.
 - Received second round of RFP for Parking Study
 - Utility Box Art Project is nearly complete.
- 2023 Goals
 - More efficient maintenance schedule
 - Continuing to work on SID budget
 - Continuing work on Redevelopment Committee
 - Work on updating film permit
 - Market and improve the Downtown Cranford gift card program

- Ms. Crispino asked about the possibility of installing a crosswalk by Fire Me Up and Cleveland Plaza. She said children are often running across the street there and she worries that someone is going to get hit by a car. Mayor Prunty said it had been discussed before but was told it couldn't be done as it's mid-block. She agrees that it needs to be looked at.

Motion to adjourn at 9:53 am by Ms. Mider. Seconded by Mr. Gallo, all in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator