

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES –JANUARY 19, 2018**

Present:

Anthony Durante/chairman
Barry O'Donovan/business owner
Jean Maisonneuve/Township Commissioner
Chris Ashrafi/resident
Joe Colangelo/resident
Tom Connolly/business owner
Paul LaCorte/property owner
Kristin Mider/resident
Steve Needle/property owner
Clara Nunziato/business owner
Margaret Sacco/property owner
Terence Wall/Township Administrator
Kathleen Miller Prunty/Director
Michelle Stavrou/social media coordinator
Ellen O'Donnell/administrative assistant

Dept. Heads Present

Lavonna Patterson/CFO
Rich Belluscio/Construction Code Official
Chief Ryan Greco/CPD
Ed Davenport/TV35
Chief Dan Czeh/CFD
Lt. Matt Lubin/CFD
Bill Masol/Twp. Engineer
Ron Johnson/Twp Zoning Officer
Michael Maziekien/Library
Patty Donahue/Twp. Clerk
Steve Robertazzi/Recs & Park
Lorie Powell/Court
Monika Jencik/Health Dept.

Absent:

none

Ms. Prunty 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 December 8, 2017 minutes by Mr. LaCorte, seconded by Mr. Connolly, all in favor.***

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS - Commissioner Maisonneuve

- Thanked all for attending including township department heads; expressed enthusiasm for upcoming year.

CHAIRMAN REMARKS – Anthony Durante

- Thanked attendees; reminded DMC Board that they are an advisory board and advocate for the downtown, not a final decision maker; encouraged board members to not be complacent and encouraged participation/ideas in an effort to stay relevant in a competitive environment.
- Reviewed short term goals (e.g., maintenance, events, marketing) and long term goals (e.g., strategic plan, business development, parking, implementation of strategies)
- Emphasized the need for DMC involvement/input in the township's next Master Plan.
- Indicated that P.O. Plaza redesign will remain on the Board's radar.

Board sub-committees

- Provided a brief description of sub-committees; stated that the board will receive detailed description of each via email and asked for members to volunteer;
 - Finance - Mr. Ashrafi, Mr. LaCorte
 - Business Development – Mr. Ashrafi, Ms. Mider; Mr. Durante confirmed this is a new sub-committee.
 - Design Standards & Maintenance – Mr. Connolly, Mr. LaCorte
 - Marketing & Communications – Ms. Nunziato, Ms. Sacco

Draft Downtown Strategic Plan

- Requested that DMC board members review draft strategic plan and identify specific strategies they would be interested in championing.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Kathleen Miller Prunty

2018 Meeting Schedule

- ***Motion by Mr. Colangelo to approve 2018 DMC Board meeting schedule of monthly meetings every 3rd Friday at 8:30am, seconded by Mr. O'Donovan; all in favor.***

Meeting with business and property owners

- Announced that Tuesday, January 30, 6 pm will be the next business & property owner meeting; location is being finalized.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

- Mr. LaCorte thanked fire, police and building departments for swift action and assistance after a recent fire at his 11 North Union Ave. property.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Rita LaBrutto, 104 Arlington Road noted that the DMC Board meeting schedule was not listed on the township website and asked that it be made available; Ms. Prunty replied that since the schedule was just approved during the meeting it will now be made available on the township website; requested that meeting minutes also be posted.

Ms. LaBrutto asked Mr. Durante what his background was; Mr. Durante responded that he is a transportation planner with focus on pedestrian issues.

Ms. LaBrutto asked if DMC Board members filled out disclosures i.e., financial disclosures; the response was yes; Ms. LaBrutto expressed that she feels the DMC Board is out of touch with property owners and would like to see that improved; would also like to see communication with residents improved; referenced the draft strategic plan saying it was done without resident input; her opinion is that residents don't want 4 story buildings throughout the downtown and don't want buildings condemned; after noting that the strategic plan was included in the North Ave study and that there were no members of the DMC Board nor Twp. Administrator at the Planning Board meeting Ms. LaBrutto addressed Mr. Wall and said she believed he should've been there.

Ms. LaBrutto noted that the North Ave. Redev. study was on the DMC October 2017 meeting agenda and asked if there was a presentation by Mr. Wall; Ms. Prunty clarified that the agenda item was for a status update only and the status from Mr. Wall was that the study was not yet complete; Mr. Wall concurred also noting that he doesn't attend meeting of autonomous bodies, i.e., Planning Board.

Ms. LaBrutto noted that she believes the township lacks in transparency with regard to an affordable housing plan, mentioning surrounding towns that share it on their websites; she heard there is a plan for 4 story structures; Mr. Wall clarified that there are no plans for 4 story structures; Mr. Durante confirmed that 4 stories in the downtown was at one time a strategy in the draft DMC Strategic Plan but has since been stripped after receiving feedback from the zoning and planning boards; additionally that the intent is for transparency and next steps are to present to the public.

Mr. O'Donovan, in response to Ms. LaBrutto's comments on transparency, said the strategic plan continues to be in draft form and DMC Board transparency includes a presentation to the Township Committee, who gave approval to move forward, presentation to downtown business and property owners, to the Planning, Zoning and Historic Preservation Boards, a subset of those boards as well as the public which is to be scheduled early 2018; he remarked that he and the DMC Board are not aware of how the strategic plan was included in the North Ave Redevelopment study.

Ms. Prunty added that the draft Strategic Plan is not solely about development but includes numerous other elements necessary for a successful downtown including maintenance, parking, pedestrian safety.

Judy Swick, 36 North Ave. – Chapman Bros., said has she never received an invitation to a business & property owner meeting; Ms. Prunty responded that the DMC office has sent such invitations to Chapman Bros., discussion confirming if email address is correct; will add Ms. Swick's personal email address to ensure she receives future notices.

Mr. Durante then clarified the difference between DMC Strategic Plan and North Ave. East Redevelopment Study; Mr. O'Donovan confirmed the DMC Board was aware of the study and asked to provide input but was never included in the process; Mr. Maisonnueve confirmed he and other DMC Board members met with several North Ave E property owners on January 17, 2018 and ensured that going forward communication to business and property owners will come from the DMC.

Ms. Swick encouraged the DMC to check with business and property owners who don't or haven't attended meetings to ensure the office has the correct email addresses.

Ms. Swick brought up her repeated requests to Ms. Prunty for paving of the road behind Chapman Bros., Ms. Prunty agreed, Twp. Engineer Bill Masol confirmed he received the request from Ms. Prunty and will follow up.

Department Heads left the meeting at 9:30am

Mr. Colangelo offered his continued support of the DMC draft Strategic Plan noting the next step is to present to the public, board members agreed; discussion followed regarding existing resident input in the draft by way of appointed DMC Board members and how the DMC Board Strategic Plan and North Ave. East Redevelopment study have been erroneously conflated.

Mr. LaCorte commented that there are no properties under condemnation regardless of the term used in the North Ave. Redevelopment study; Ms. Swick noted concern over the term "condemnation" within the study as it impacts her property; Mr. LaCorte recommended Ms. Swick receive confirmation in writing from the Township that her property is not under condemnation.

Mr. LaCorte further commented that the MDTV needs to be fixed; it was confirmed that the building is not for sale; Mr. Ashrafi asked what the plans for the building are; the DMC Board agrees that the status quo is not acceptable but the DMC has no control over that property or the plans for that property.

Ralph Brunette, 101 Forest Ave – asked why the township purchased the MDTV building and when; Mr. Colangelo recalled that it was mentioned in a 2017 Twp Committee meeting that the purpose was to allow for more control over development but didn't recall who made the comment or precisely when; Mr. Wall confirmed that it was purchased in 2015, noted the importance as a gateway to town and whatever is done should be done purposefully; Ms. Swick also questioned the plan for the MDTV building.

Next Steps

- Provide Ms. Swick with a copy of the draft Strategic Plan.
- Coordinate a Strategic Plan sub-committee meeting.
- **Motion to adjourn by Mr. LaCorte, seconded by Colangelo, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:47am.**

Respectively submitted,
Ellen O'Donnell, Administrative Assistant