

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION  
BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES – JANUARY 20, 2023**

**Present:**

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

Caren Demyen/Director  
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator

Brian Andrews /Mayor  
Ryan Cooper/Township Attorney  
Ryan Greco/Police Chief/Interim Administrator  
Matthew Nazzaro/Police Captain  
Laura Kreiser/Reporter for The Westfield Leader

**Absent:**

Ms. Demyen called the meeting to order at 8:33am. Announcement made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Motion to approve December 2022 minutes by Ms. Mider. Mr. Colangelo seconded.

**MAYOR REMARKS** – Mayor Brian Andrews

- Mayor Andrews thanked the Board for its work. He sees four areas that are Township priorities which also tie in with the Downtown: improving quality of life for residents, investing in infrastructure, improving local government, and living our values.

**TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS** – Commissioner Kathleen Miller Prunty

- Commissioner Prunty is also Commissioner with Public Works and Engineering, as well as the liaison with Pedestrian and Bike Safety Committees, which are closely connected to Downtown. She will be working with Director Demyen, Public Works, and Interim Administrator Greco to finalize a maintenance plan for Downtown. Commissioner Prunty also mentioned that Trenton is talking about reforming liquor laws.

**CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS** – Kristen Mider

- Ms. Mider thanked the Downtown office for its hard work over the past few months and thanked the Board members for continuing to volunteer their time.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT** - Caren Demyen

- Ms. Demyen presented the 2023 DMC Board Meeting Calendar.
- Sub-Committees
  - Vice Chair of Board – Ms. Mider will circle back on this next month.
  - Maintenance
    - Paul LaCorte (chair), Paul Gallo, and Anthony Durante

- Finance
  - Kendall O'Brien (chair), Joe Colangelo, and Steve Oliveira
- Redevelopment
  - Paul LaCorte (chair), Paul Gallo, Anthony Durante, and Joe Colangelo
- Business Development/Marketing
  - Dennis Concha (co-chair), Kristen Mider (co-chair), Doreen Sayegh, and Tammie Crispino
- Redevelopment
  - Mr. LaCorte said Connolly & Hickey is progressing with its architectural rendering for the North Avenue Gateway Vision Plan. The goal is to be out for RFP no later than June. There is a June 2025 deadline to start work. In regards to the Swan Cleaners side of the street, Mr. LaCorte is hopeful that property owners there will be motivated to develop a plan of their own.
  - Ms. Demyen said 49 South Avenue may close next week and is pleased to see the transition.
- Capital budget update
  - Parking Study was finalized
  - Mr. Durante said that the Streetscape Study is advancing. Arterial had an initial consultation with the steering committee and stakeholders. There are 2 strategies Arterial is focusing on. Strategy 1 – Enhance pedestrian connections and experience. Strategy 2 – Unify and expand public spaces in heart of Downtown. Mr. Durante said that he thinks the sticking point will probably be any impact on street parking. Another focus is how to maximize the open public space that Downtown Cranford has. Mr. Oliveira asked about enhancing Post Office Plaza and Volunteer Plaza as open spaces and gathering areas. Mr. Durante said that Arterial is looking to thematically link those spaces with Eastman Plaza so an expanded open space is created with temporary street closures. Mr. Durante said that there's opportunity to find parking in other areas if parking in certain areas is taken away.
- Finance
  - Budget presentation will be in February.
  - WiFi has been disconnected and removed which saves the office about \$2,000 a year.
- Office Updates
  - Will be holding a business meeting on Jan. 25 with a guest speaker from Meta talking about Instagram.
  - Have been posting about filming in town and are working on updating the film permit.
  - Social media update.

#### Iron Ore Presentation – Josh Mann, Avelino Martinez, Josh Sternberg

- Mr. Cooper said that Iron Ore met with the Redevelopment committee in October regarding South Avenue. The South Avenue phase will be going to the Planning Board shortly.
- Mr. Sternberg said that the plans for South Avenue are responsive to the comments Iron Ore received.
- Mr. Martinez showed a rendering of the proposed development on South Avenue. It will have 2 retail spaces with an entrance to parking on South Avenue. There will be 3 stories of residential with 55 total units. 9 of these units will be affordable housing. The third story of residential (fourth story of building) will be set back so it reduces the visual impact of the building. Mr. Cooper said that this phase of the project counts towards the town's affordable housing and allowed the town to eliminate an overlay zone on Burnside and reduce the density of 750 Walnut. He said that Iron Ore has been very responsive to feedback from the Redevelopment Committee.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT (cont'd)**

- Ms. Demyen and Ms. Stavrou have spoken with Mr. Cooper regarding a Social Media Policy for Downtown Cranford. This past fall the Township Committee discussed a social media policy as a way to moderate content so spam and inappropriate comments don't detract from what is posted by the Township. The plan is to have the DMC test it as a pilot program before it's rolled out to the entire Township. The policy will be adjusted as needed, and will be announced by the DMC office as well as posted on the Downtown Cranford website.

- Recent ribbon cuttings that were held included 8Thai and Thai Mama. Red Crab and The Garrison will be closing.
- Maintenance
  - Currently working on a plan for 2023 holiday lights and décor.
  - Victorian poles update
    - The new light that was installed on South Avenue is 8500 lumens, while current lights are 10,000 lumens. The idea was to get feedback from the Board in regards to the brightness of the light. The eventual goal is to replace the guts of the lights as that may be part of the reason for the outages. Mr. LaCorte said the town needs to hire an electrical engineer to review the entire system. Ms. Prunty agreed with Mr. LaCorte and said the whole infrastructure issue needs to be addressed. The current Victorian light heads and lumen levels are incorrect and were signed off on by a past Township Administrator. In addition, the street lighting is a township responsibility. Ms. Mider asked what the next step is, and Ms. Prunty said that in her opinion the Township needed to make the decision to hire a contractor to examine the issues. Ms. Prunty said that the Victorian lights tie in with the streetscape study and an understanding of the bigger picture. Chief Greco said that CPD has been working with PSE&G to fix the lights that they own on Centennial under the bridge.
- Ms. Demyen would like to update signage on the pay stations.
- Utility box art will be installed in the next few months.
- Gift card update
  - Have done over \$100K in Downtown Cranford gift card sales since the program first started in December 2021.
  - Working on an information sheet for businesses regarding the gift card and best practices
- Events
  - Superhero Stroll was a big success. Over 20 businesses took part in handing out soup and a number of other businesses took advantage with tie-in events.
  - Upcoming events include Winter Restaurant Week, Galentine's Chocolate Walk, Black History Month programming, and Fire & Ice.

***Motion to adjourn at 9:57 am by Ms. Mider. Seconded by Mr. Colangelo, all in favor.***

Respectively submitted,  
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator