

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – JULY 15, 2022**

Present:

Brian Andrews /Commissioner/Liaison
Dennis Concha/Business owner
Anthony Durante/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

Lavona Patterson/Director of Finance

Josh Bornstein/Director of Work Readiness
Academy at Union County Educational Services
Commission
Laura Kreiser/Reporter for The Westfield Leader

Absent:

Tammie Crispino/Business owner
Joe Colangelo/Business owner
Paul Gallo/Resident

Ms. Demyen called the meeting to order at 8:35am. Announcement made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion to approve June 2022 minutes by Ms. Mider. Mr. LaCorte seconded. Minutes were approved.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Brian Andrews

- Governor Murphy was in town earlier this month to sign the NJ budget. \$1.8 million was given to Cranford to address flooding by High and Chestnut Streets. The flooding in that area is the result of flash flooding. The project will improve drainage for a large area.
- Township Committee approved Downtown Cranford's new sign ordinance.
- Commissioner Andrews asked for ideas about helping small business owners with rising inflation, supply chain issues, etc. He said people can come to him with any ideas or suggestions. Ms. Demyen suggested connecting with UCEDC for ideas, and Mr. Concha added that maybe UCEDC could be invited to a Township Committee meeting.

CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS – Kristen Mider

- Ms. Mider thanked the DMC office for its work at events, especially School's Out for Summer and Summer Sounds. She said she heard very favorable feedback from a business owner about the recent business owner meeting at UCEDC.
- Ms. Mider thanked Mr. LaCorte and the Redevelopment Committee for their hard work.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Caren Demyen

- Ms. Demyen introduced Josh Bernstein, Director of Work Readiness Academy at Union County Educational Services Commission.
 - UCESC pairs students who have graduated high school and are looking for employment experience. Mr. Bornstein worked with Downtown Cranford on piloting a program that involved Augusta Mae, Breadsmith, and Sweet & Fancy. The business owners embraced the opportunity and trained the students. He thanked Ms. Demyen and said he's looking forward

to doing it again. The program provides skills for the students and also provides an inclusive environment within the community. Mr. Bornstein presented the DMC Board with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Mr. Durante motioned to go into a closed session. Mr. LaCorte seconded.

CLOSED SESSION

OPEN SESSION

- Office Updates
 - There will be a movie filming downtown at the end of July.
 - UCEDC hosted a Downtown Cranford business and property owner meeting on July 13. Mr. Concha said that it was very productive and gave a chance for business owners to come together and talk.
 - An update was provided on social media growth and recent business openings.
- Redevelopment Update
 - Mr. LaCorte said that the Redevelopment Committee met with the Swan Cleaner property owner about their plan for their property. They are supposed to provide additional information to the DMC about their plans within two weeks. While the Swan Cleaners owners plan to move ahead with their own project, they are happy to work with other property owners on that same side of the street if those property owners are interested. In regards to the side of North Ave designated for redevelopment, the Redevelopment Committee wants to meet with tenants and property owners later this month to update them. Mr. LaCorte would like to see a financial model so the town has a projection of what redevelopment of this area would bring in tax dollars.
- Ms. Demyen said the office received a \$5,000 grant from Union County for a mural. The office also submitted a Transit Village grant.
- Maintenance Update
 - New benches for Post Office Plaza are on order.
 - Working on a Little Library to be placed at Eastman Plaza.
 - There has been some offensive language chalked at Eastman Plaza. Ms. Demyen has reached out to CPD about getting a camera in the area and they're looking into it.
 - Lamp posts will be numbered.
- Over \$52,000 of Downtown Cranford gift cards have been sold. The redemption rate continues to improve.
- Events Update
 - Continue to focus on Cranford Theater. The Theater also now has a stage installed.
 - Recent successful events include School's Out for Summer, Lego Night, and Storytime. Coming up on October 1st is the Ghost Walk Tour. Wellness Week will take place in September.
- Capital Budget Projects
 - Mr. Durante said that work is being done on the Parking Study RFP. They're looking to get it out soon so the study can take place in the fall. One of the first tasks in the study is to inventory parking supply and utilization.
 - Streetscape Improvement Plan RFP is being finalized.

Motion to adjourn at 9:53 am by Mr. LaCorte. Seconded by Mr. Durante, all in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator