

CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – JULY 21, 2023

Present:

Joe Colangelo/Business owner
Tammie Crispino/Business owner
Anthony Durante/Resident
Paul LaCorte/Property owner
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

Lavona Patterson/Administrator

Absent:

Kristen Mider (Chairwoman)/Resident

Ms. Demyen called the meeting to order at 8:44am. Announcement made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion to approve June 2023 minutes by Ms. Demyen. Mr. Durante abstained. Minutes were approved.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Kathleen Miller Prunty

- The Building Department and Fire issued violations to the owner of the 24 South Avenue. The owner was doing work without permits. The electricity and water have been shut off. A restraining order has also been issued against the owner.
- There was a meeting between town, Army Corp of Engineers, Department of Environmental Protection, and Rahway River Council regarding flooding. There was an intense 2-day discussion and Army Corp came back last week with plans. Ms. Prunty is happy with how much has been accomplished in the past 2 years.
- Township received a \$575,000 grant for pedestrian projects. Mr. Durante is the chair of Pedestrian Committee. The committee came up with a list of places throughout town for improvement. The locations were then ranked and presented to Engineering. Engineering pursued funding through DOT and it was approved. The grant should be able to fund 5 or 6 projects. Ms. Demyen complimented Mr. Durante and the pedestrian safety committee for the hard work they put in.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Caren Demyen

- Ms. Demyen apologized that the meeting started late because a few of the business owners were at the News12 studio recording segments about the Barbie promotion in Downtown Cranford.
- Office Updates
 - Mary Alderman from UCEDC and Ms. Demyen have been meeting with businesses to discuss grant opportunities.
 - The office will be working with New Frontier to update the DMC website.
- Ms. Demyen is hoping to announce shortly that Cranford is officially designated as Film Ready. She has been working with NJ Motion Picture and TV Commission to be Film Ready, and also updating the film permit.
- Business Highlights
 - Celebrated 25th anniversary of Better Vision New Jersey at Calderone Building
 - Looking into adding bike rack at Starbucks on South Avenue
- Social media update and update on new businesses

- Downtown Parking Study update provided by Mr. Durante.
 - Consultant did data collection in the spring. The big picture is that there's supply but the inventory needs to be managed. The parking study should be wrapped up in a month. Mr. Durante said that the firm is bringing institutional knowledge to the study, which is helpful.
- Redevelopment update
 - Mr. LaCorte said there were no takers for the North Avenue RFP. The process is being reviewed by the Township attorneys and Topology. Mr. LaCorte believes that the site was too small for developers to be interested. Commissioner Prunty said she's also not surprised that no proposals were submitted and the attorneys and Topology will be reaching out to developers who didn't bid on the project for their feedback.
 - Ms. Patterson added that she has met with Ms. Demyen, Mr. LaCorte, the Township attorneys, and Topology to decide what the next steps are. They will be reviewing the feedback from those who looked at the proposal.
- Maintenance update
 - Ms. Demyen provided an update on the dumpsters and flowers. Post Office Plaza had an invasive weed which has been pulled out by the landscaper.
 - All of the trash can liners will be replaced with metal liners. Working with Health Department to send out a letter to business and property owners about trash removal.
- Nearly \$20k in gift cards sold in June, which was a new record.
- Overview of past and upcoming events including Cranford Theater events, Summer Sounds, Storytime, and Sidewalk Sale.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Kendall O'Brien

- Finance committee looked at SID rates in other towns. Cranford is in the lower half in regards to its rate.
- Planning to talk to property owners before the Finance Committee presents to the Township Committee.
- Ms. Prunty requested a follow-up meeting with L. Patterson, C. Demyen and K. O'Brien to discuss next steps on budget.

Motion to adjourn at 9:58 am. All in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator