

CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – JUNE 19, 2020

Present:

Joe Colangelo/resident
Tom Connolly/business owner
Anthony Durante/chairman
Tricia Greely/ business owner
Paul LaCorte/property owner
Ashley Legg/resident
Jean Maisonneuve/Township Commissioner
Kristen Mider/resident
Steve Needle/property owner
Steve Oliveira/property owner
Margaret Sacco/ business owner
Gabe Bailer/Director
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator
Caren Demyen/Administrative Assistant
Dennis Concha/resident

Absent:

Mr. Bailer 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 May 2020 minutes by Mr. Durante, seconded by Mr. Needle. Ms. Sacco did abstain since she wasn't at the meeting.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Maisonneuve

- Commissioner Maisonneuve said that the feedback from the Alden Street closure was very positive. There will still be discussions for the closure of Eastman Street. Commissioner Maisonneuve said he had a conversation with a fire official from Asbury Park who explained how they are doing their street closures and he was going to share that information with the Cranford Police and Fire.

CHAIRMAN REMARKS – Anthony Durante

- Mr. Durante expressed his sadness that Annealed will be closing and that Ms. Greely will have to end her term on the board. Ms. Greely said that she has enjoyed being part of the community and she does hope to come back. She hopes that Downtown Cranford continues to support the arts. Dennis Concha from Think D'sign Print is interested in becoming a member of the DMC. Dennis and his brother Brian have been a member of the community for over 8 years. Mr. Durante is very happy to say he was proven wrong in the street closures – he was originally concerned it wasn't going to happen. He feels that we will need to closely monitor the situation and make changes as needed.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Gabe Bailer

Monthly Project Report

- Mr. Bailer stated that we are in Stage 2 which means restaurants can have outdoor seating and retail can have up to 50% capacity.
- News 12 reached out to take some footage of the retail stores and Cranford.
- Mr. Bailer said that he has been impressed with how the businesses have come together to think outside the box. He mentioned that Kilkenny House, Thirsty Turtle and Il Gabbiano have done a great job with the outdoor seating. Mr. Bailer also mentioned that Venue 104 has worked with Dream Kitchen who will allow tables in front of their storefront.

- Mr. Bailer feels that the street closures are going well. Yoga classes are going well and are usually at full capacity (30 people). Garlic Rose and King Strength seem to be taking advantage of the Lot 7 closure and it seems to be very positive.
- Planter sponsorship was a big success – we raised over \$3500.
- Mr. Bailer wanted to thank Mr. Connolly for his help with the Old City building. Mr. Connolly said the contractors are doing an amazing job.
- Mr. Bailer said that the office is continuing with the weekly Zoom meetings. He has found a lot of the businesses were able to take advantage of the PPP loans. Mr. Bailer also thanked Mr. Colangelo for being one of the presenters during the Zoom meeting.
- Little Buffalo space will now become Folklore, a Mexican restaurant. The restaurant owner has a restaurant originally in Chatham and South Orange.
- 113 North Union building application was approved by the Planning board. Mr. Bailer said he went on record to the Planning board that he was disappointed that the design changes that were suggested by the SID were not taken into account.

NEW BUSINESSES

- Capital budget items have been put on hold.
- Tammie from Fire Me Up! Studio has been working with the DMC office to put an art mural on the Breadsmith building. Mr. Bailer thanked Mr. Oliveira for allowing the mural to be put on his building.
- Mr. Bailer had a meeting with NJ Transit to do a potential art mural for the train underpass going towards Walnut. Mr. Connolly said that there is a great spot for a mural on the side of the building near the Cranford Station House from a historical perspective. Mr. Connolly said he isn't thrilled about painting unpainted masonry under the underpass.
- Mr. Bailer suggested installing more bike racks throughout the Downtown. Mr. Durante agreed that additional bike racks would be great as long as we are ADA compliant. Ms. Mider expressed concern that with restaurants needing access to outdoor dining if we would be giving them enough space on the sidewalk/outdoor space. Mr. Bailer said the he can share the Powerpoint he did on the space locations. He said he will speak with the business owners to see what their thoughts are. Mr. Needle asked if there was a way to have temporary bike racks for the next few months. Mr. Bailer said the he will look into the bike rack near the old A La Mode location.
- Ms. Mider asked if Hot Yoga Revolution has been contacted to use the outdoor space. Mr. Bailer confirmed that he has been in touch with the HYR owner.

OLD BUSINESS

- Mr. Bailer said that businesses are hurting and many businesses have reached out to express their concern. Beyond Dance, Sonny G's, Ciao Amici, GLOW Beauty Bar and Arthur Murray are a few of the businesses who have reached out to the office. Four businesses have closed so far – Annealed, Zensational U, FLIC Spa and Eye Level Learning Center. Mr. Bailer has reached out to the broker regarding the spaces on South Avenue – the broker feels that the spaces will get rented out in the fall. Many businesses have been in touch with Cranford Parks & Recreation about using the township parks to hold classes. Commissioner Maisonneuve expressed concern to make sure the DMC does not single out specific businesses to support but the business community as a whole. Ms. Mider mentioned that Rebecca Tantillo and the Cranford NJ Moms group has done a terrific job highlighting some of the businesses in town like Ciao Amici, Café Teasia and more.
- The office is continuing the gift card campaign contest – so far there have been \$17k worth of receipts turned in. Mr. Bailer said that there will be one last gift card campaign and the hope is to get to \$20k.
- The website should be live next week. Mr. Durante said that if there are any suggestions to get them to Mr. Bailer sooner then later.

BOARD COMMITTEES

- Application Review – Mr. Durante mentioned the vacant lot at 113 North Union Avenue which would include two retail stores. Mr. Durante's concern is the design looks completely out of place with the surrounding buildings. Feedback was given to the Planning Board and it wasn't fully heard.

Mr. Connolly's concern is that the building will stick out like a sore thumb between the height of the building as well as the height of the storefront windows. The other location was for the potential Dunkin Donuts spot – Mr. Durante has concerns about traffic. Mr. LaCorte mentioned that if the office has concerns regarding the design, we should look into putting a stop to it. Mr. LaCorte volunteered to look into it. Mr. Connolly also asked about the Britton building who is submitting an application to the zoning board. Wells Fargo – the contractor will be doing exterior changes which look nice. That owner purchased the liquor license from Bar Americana and looking to put in a restaurant. Mr. Connolly asked if he could be put in touch with the developer. Mr. Bailer also mentioned that Ani Ramen is close to opening. Tomasello Winery is currently open. The rentals in the 109 Walnut building are almost filled.

- Business Development – Ms. Sacco said that they have not met to discuss business development. Her thoughts are that the group should pivot to support current businesses. Ms. Sacco said she will meet with the office to help come up with two options – general advice for all businesses as well as specific strategies for businesses.
- Finance – no updates.
- Maintenance – Tree surrounds and the dumpster in Lot 7 were discussed.
- Marketing & Communications – Ms. Legg mentioned how some of the businesses like Lure Lash, who have done a great job marketing the changes to making an appointment to come in. She feels that the DMC can do more marketing to make note of the changes the contact businesses are doing. Ms. Sacco asked how long parking will be free in the lot. She also asked if permit holders who parked in the lower lot can park anywhere in the lot.

Motion to adjourn at 9:45am by Mr. Durante. Mr. Connolly seconded. All were in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Caren Demyen, Administrative Assistant