

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES –MARCH 16, 2018**

Present:

Anthony Durante/chairman
Barry O'Donovan/business owner
Jean Maisonneuve/Township Commissioner
Chris Ashrafi/resident
Joe Colangelo/resident
Paul LaCorte/property owner
Kristen Mider/resident
Margaret Sacco/property owner
Terence Wall/Township Administrator
Gabe Bailer/Director
Michelle Stavrou/social media coordinator

Absent:

Tom Connolly/business owner
Steve Needle/property owner
Clara Nunziato/business owner

Mr. Bailer called the meeting to order at 8:31am. Announcement made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- ***Motion to approve February 16, 2018 minutes by Mr. Durante, seconded by Ms. Sacco, all in favor.***

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS - Commissioner Maisonneuve

- Continues to receive positive feedback from public strategic planning presentation.
- Next step is to meet with sub-committee, finalize plan and present to Township Committee.
- Mr. LaCorte asked for a status on Swan Cleaners with regard to construction equipment in front; per Commissioner Maisonneuve it is staging for road work on North Ave. but not relevant to Swan Cleaners.
- Mr. LaCorte asked for a status of Old City building that is under construction, (20 North Union) noting the unkempt condition and deems it unsafe; Mr. Durante questioned if there were code violations, believes it is a maintenance issue; Mr. Wall to follow up on enforcement.
- Mr. LaCorte remarked about the numerous vacancies on North Union Ave.

CHAIRMAN REMARKS – Anthony Durante

- Thanked DMC Board for attendance at the public strategic plan presentation, noting he has personally received positive feedback; welcomed Mr. Bailer.

Board sub-committees

Finance – C. Ashrafi, P. Lacorte

- Distributed monthly reports.
- Mr. Wall to confirm with Finance if reserve funds have been used to compensate former Director for money owed.
- Confirmed budget was adopted.

Business Development – Mr. Ashrafi, Ms. Mider, Ms. Sacco

- Reported that the team met, refined their plan, Mr. Ashrafi will distribute after the meeting.
- Targeting April or May to begin focus group meetings, starting with restaurant owners.

Maintenance – T. Connolly, P. LaCorte

Post Office Plaza Improvement: background & revisiting design proposals

- Dedicated funds exist specifically for P.O. Plaza: in 2017 the DMC Board agreed to use \$50k of reserve funds and roughly \$37k that was raised previously, intended for upkeep and maintenance.

- In 2017, RFP for design services was created, 7 proposals (that included design, engineering through construction administration) were received, sub-committee interviewed two firms, DMC Board made a final recommendation to the Township Committee but project didn't proceed.
- Mr. Connolly subsequently designed two separate plans for P.O. Plaza that didn't move forward.
- A Cranford Eagle Scout chose P.O. Plaza for his service project and collected a group that volunteered to clean it up, which was done in the summer of 2017.
- DMC Board has decided to revisit redesign of P.O. Plaza in 2018.
- Mr. LaCorte asked where the Township Committee stands on support of moving forward with redesign of P.O. Plaza, i.e., hiring an engineering firm for a project that could cost between \$150k-\$400k; Commissioner Maisonneuve to follow up.
- Discussion regarding option of bond, shared bond, public fundraising as well as the need to be mindful of underground utilities and donated items i.e., flag pole, fountain, benches.
- Next steps:
 - Mr. Bailer to investigate potential grants.
 - Mr. Bailer and Mr. Connolly to reach out to the two Landscape Design/Engineer firms from 2017 to get status on proposal, i.e., is it still valid.
 - Mr. Wall to follow up with regard to bond options.

❖ ***Motion by Mr. LaCorte to move forward with a redesign project for P.O. Plaza, seconded by Mr. Colangelo, all in favor.***

Snow Removal

- Mr. Ashrafi noted there were sidewalk corners in the downtown, particularly at South & Walnut Ave., that didn't have sufficient snow removal and were unsafe to pedestrians days after the last storm.
- The DMC Board was reminded that snow removal is responsibility of property owner including corners.
- Any issues noticed by board members should be escalated to the DMC office and Administrator.

Marketing & Communications – C. Nunziato, M. Sacco

- Cranford Community Connection is hosting, "Get Fit Cranford" to be held downtown on Sunday, April 22; it will be located in Lot 1 and part of North Union Ave; DMC office to meet with CCC to get more details.
- Upcoming downtown event includes the Cranford Women's Club sponsored Sip & Shop on Friday, May 11.
- Public piano will be placed in Eastman Plaza in June for the second year.

Strategic Planning

Survey Status

- Mr. Bailer to distribute current results, 63 from online as well as tallied results from the public presentation.
- Glitches with the Constant Contact survey, the DMC office to look into Survey Monkey as an alternative.
- Agreement that hard copies are a good alternative for some residents; Mr. Bailer to provide Mr. LaCorte with hard copies for his tenants.
- Suggestion to create polls on Facebook highlighting popular survey questions.
- Discussion regarding social media policy for responding to public comments regarding the Strategic Plan.
- Agreement that the DMC office should draft a response addressing public comments (i.e. 4 stories) and continue to request feedback, participation in the survey.
- **Next steps**
 - Launch survey monkey
 - Analyze results
 - Update strategic plan based on results; results will be included in the plan as an appendix
 - DMC Board vote on finalized Strategic Plan (goal is April)
 - Pursue professional design of the plan

- Present survey findings
- Present to Township Committee for adoption by resolution.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Gabe Bailer

Business updates

- Power Home Yoga remains under construction, dumpster issue resolved.
- Little Fox Cooking School still under construction.
- SDL access provided to Mr. Bailer.

Alden Street Improvements (Bill Masol)

- Weather delaying the start, hoping for early April to begin; anticipate 2 month project.

LED lights (Bill Masol)

- Steve Wardell is working with the DPW electrical contractor to identify problem & solution for the large stretches of outages that have occurred since the Victorian light upgrade; reported to be coincidence.
- Individual outages will be repaired when dimmers are installed; expecting dimmers to be delivered in 1-2 weeks; DPW will install.
- Confirmed that Victorian lights have been completely paid for.

Green team Initiative "Straws by Request"

- Met with members of the Green Team who introduced initiative, a national effort by rethinkdisposable.org.
- Will reach out to restaurant and food establishments to get feedback about limiting plastic straws and provide Green Team with an update.
- May help township achieve silver level of Sustainable Jersey certification and could tie into grants.

Meet and Greet

- Tuesday, March 20 at Gourmet Deli.
- Feedback from speaking with business owners is they are requesting to have a bigger presence in all downtown events and looking for better parking signage, which is included in the strategic plan.

Short Term goals

- Public Piano- Will have another piano donated; planning for grand opening, kick off event; hope to have piano painted again by CHS students.
- Temporary Seats and Tables in Eastman Clock Plaza - put out in Spring.
- Video Production - talking to TV 35 regarding promotional video; expressed need for Downtown Cranford to have own webpage where video can be shared; don't own domain names; may pursue a new domain name; encouraged to reach out to township committee.
- Downtown Arts - committee members identified, plan to meet before next board meeting; strong interest based on survey results.

Mid-Long Term Goals

- Music festival – planning for monthly performances at Eastman and P.O. Plazas.
- Cranford Bike Day - spoke with Hilltop Bike owner who is on board to participate/collaborate; intent to promote biking to downtown, transportation; will reach out to Hilltop with regard to bike racks as it pertains to the strategic plan.
- Introduced other potential event ideas including Farmers Market, Craft Beer Festival, Arts Market, Scarecrow Run.

NEW BUSINESS - none

OLD BUSINESS - none

PUBLIC COMMENTS - none

- ***Motion to adjourn by Mr. Colangelo, seconded by Ms. Sacco, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10: am.***

Respectively submitted,
Ellen O'Donnell, Administrative Assistant