

CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – MARCH 17, 2023

Present:

Joe Colangelo/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

Ralph Brunette/Resident – 101 Forest Ave.
Barry O'Donovan/Resident – 710 Orange Ave.
Ryan Greco/Police Chief/Interim Administrator
Laura Kreiser/Reporter for The Westfield Leader

Absent:

Dennis Concha/Business owner

Ms. Demyen 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 February 2023 minutes by Ms. Mider. Mr. Durante seconded. Minutes were approved.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Kathleen Miller Prunty

- Commissioner Prunty said that next week the Township Committee will start interviewing for the Township Administrator position. A professional recruiting firm has been hired to find candidates. Next week the Township and DMC budgets will be introduced. A resolution will be introduced to issue the RFP for North Avenue gateway area. Commissioner Prunty praised the DMC Board and Redevelopment sub-committee for their work. There will be a maximum number of 40 units at the North Avenue development. Connolly and Hickey's work will accompany the plan to show what Cranford is looking for from the developer. A resolution will also be passed in support of the Pedestrian/Bike Safety Committee.

CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS – Kristen Mider

- Ms. Mider thanked the sub-committees for their support of the North Avenue plan. Ms. Mider asked Ms. Demyen and Ms. Stavrou to update their job descriptions by next month's meeting.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY COMMITTEE UPDATE – Anthony Durante

- Mr. Durante is working with the Pedestrian Safety Committee on updating Cranford's Complete Streets Policy. The Complete Streets Policy formalizes a community's intent to plan, design, and operate streets that are safe and more accessible for everyone. Mr. Durante showed examples of streets that incorporate complete street elements.
- This is a policy that compels those who work on the streets (contractors, engineers, etc.) to consider elements of the policy.
- The policy includes goals and asks the Township to establish a Complete Streets Oversight Board, exceptions, reporting, and checklists. Typically, this doesn't significantly increase project costs, and

is often a prerequisite for certain funding and gives a voice in street design. This policy would tie in with the Downtown Cranford streetscape study and the committee has been in touch with the firm doing the streetscape study.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Caren Demyen

- DMC Budget: Ms. Demyen reviewed the budget that was presented to the Township Committee. It includes administrative operations, maintenance, events, landscaping, and advertising.
 - Finance Chair Ms. O'Brien said that a flat budget is not sustainable. A large part of the budget is brought in from sponsorships which helps support events and maintenance. Adjusted for inflation, the budget has gone down.
 - Mr. LaCorte said it's irresponsible to not raise the SID budget for 20 years.
 - Commissioner Prunty said that the SID assessment fee is to enhance properties, e.g. events, flowers, etc. It's not meant to relieve the township of its responsibilities in regards to general upkeep.
 - Ms. O'Brien said the Finance Committee will plan to present its findings and suggestions for the budget to the DMC Board in June.
- Redevelopment Update: Mr. LaCorte said it continues to be a work in progress. The opposite side of North Avenue needs to be addressed in the future.
- Capital budget update
 - Parking study will be starting shortly.
 - Streetscape study is ongoing.
 - A digital sign concept will be presented at the next workshop meeting.
- Office Updates
 - Held a meeting with IFEL (Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership) last week, continuing Downtown Cranford's partnership with UCEDC. It connects potential business owners with UCEDC to form business plans.
 - Round up of businesses highlighted by NJ.com last month.
 - Business updates
 - New owner at F45
 - Fire Me Up will be celebrating 10 years and renovating its space
 - Ribbon cutting at Poke House, with others on the horizon
 - Closures: 908 Store and California Burrito
- Maintenance
 - Spring flowers will be installed mid-April.
 - Eastman clock restoration will be happening this spring and summer.
 - Little Library will be replaced as it is not wearing well in the elements.
 - A paver project will be starting in a few weeks to fix broken or loose pavers.
- Parklets
 - Ms. Demyen would like to formally put parklets on next month's agenda so business owners can give their feedback.
- Gift Card Update
 - There has been growth in the percentage of gift cards that are redeemed.
 - As of the end of February, over \$109K in gift cards has been sold.
- Events
 - Theater events have been doing very well. Dinner and a movie was successful and future movies are planned for this series. Garden State Film Festival will be taking place at the Cranford Theater in mid-March. Ms. Sayegh said events like the Garden State Film Festival bring in people from all over NJ and there are more film festivals for the Theater on the horizon.
 - Fire & Ice brought people of all ages downtown.
 - Upcoming events include Super Mario Day, Sip & Shop, Spring Hop, School's Out for Summer, and more.
- Ms. Mider made a motion to approve the budget. Ms. O'Brien seconded it. All in favor except for Mr. LaCorte. Budget approved.

- Commissioner Prunty thanked Chief Greco for attending the DMC Board meeting as Interim Administrator.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Mr. O'Donovan said that as a business and property owner, taxes and other costs go up every year. His past experience on the DMC Board was that the Township would pass along maintenance costs to Downtown Cranford.

Motion to adjourn at 9:53 am by Mr. LaCorte. All in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator