

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – MAY 19, 2023**

Present:

Joe Colangelo/Business owner
Dennis Concha/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
Steve Oliveira/Property owner
Doreen Sayegh/Property owner

Caren Demyen/Director
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator

Ryan Cooper/Township Attorney
Lavona Patterson/Administrator

Absent:

Kendall O'Brien/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 April 2023 minutes by Mr. LaCorte. Mr. Colangelo seconded. Minutes were approved.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Kathleen Miller Prunty

- Ms. Prunty thanked Ms. Patterson for attending the meeting.
- Township Committee was approached by a group of residents on Columbia Avenue who had concerns about short-term rentals on their street. The Township Committee is looking at the issue of short-term rentals and whether there should be restrictions in place. The Township Committee is looking at prohibiting short-term rentals in residential neighborhoods and allowing them in the downtown and transition neighborhoods. Mr. Cooper said that the issue is the regular and sustained use of a property for short-term rentals. Short-term rentals will be defined as anything less than 30 days.
- Ms. Prunty said that at the last 2 Township meetings a resident has made public comments about the Downtown parking study, asking why Enovate was chosen as the firm to conduct the study. Ms. Prunty asked Ms. Demyen to go over the process. Ms. Demyen said that the DMC worked on the proposal and the first RFP received at least proposals, all of which were over the project's budget. The RFP then went back out and received 2 proposals. Cranford Police reviewed the RFP, as well as the proposals. Enovate submitted the lowest bid and was chosen after review. It was confirmed that there were no relationships between the firm and any members on the DMC Board. Mr. Durante stated that it was a thorough and fair process. Ms. Patterson also added that contract law requires the lowest bid to be accepted.

CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS – Kristen Mider

- Ms. Mider thanked Ms. Demyen and Ms. Sayegh for hosting the recent Movie Book Club event.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Caren Demyen

- Office Updates

- Ms. Demyen and Ms. Stavrou attended a workshop focusing on downtowns at Rutgers which was run by Downtown New Jersey.
 - A business owner meeting is planned for June about website design
 - Summer project plans are to digitize materials in the office and also refresh the website and business materials.
- Business Highlights
 - Mentioned downtown businesses that were recently highlighted in local media.
 - Cranford Hotel was repainted and there is new signage at Magick Manor and Lokal Coffee.
 - Social media and website traffic update
 - Recap of ribbon cuttings
- Finance
 - Finance Committee will present to the DMC Board in June.
 - Reviewed the Trust account.
- Update on Capital Budget Projects
 - Enovate is wrapping up counts for the parking study.
 - Streetscape study information will be shared with business and property owners shortly.
- Redevelopment
 - Mr. LaCorte said there may be a need for a marketing plan going forward due to a difficult economic environment.
 - Mr. Cooper said there was a scheduled walkthrough for North Avenue redevelopment area but there were no attendees. He said that as the site is public, people may not have felt a need to attend. The economic situation may be adding to the uncertainty. In addition, there are constraints on North Avenue (number of units, gas station, etc.).
- Maintenance
 - Hanging baskets will be installed soon and 26 baskets will be added.
 - PSE&G installed new Victorian lights under the train tracks.
 - Officer Tim Handy will be leading the Victorian light project, working with EEI. Mr. LaCorte asked about the scope of their work.
 - Post Office Plaza and the train station have been weeded and mulched.
 - A new little library has been delivered and will be installed once it's painted.
 - The paver project is ongoing.
 - Working with Health and Property Maintenance on potential violations regarding dumpsters, weeds, etc.
 - Lot 11's trees were trimmed, old meter stands were removed, and river rocks and plants will be installed.
- Outdoor seating has been put out in public areas.
- Utility boxes were wrapped.
- Gift card update
- Upcoming Cranford Theater events include Dinner & a Movie and Sensory Friendly Day.
- Events
 - Sip & Shop took place last week.
 - Taste of Cranford will take place on May 30.
 - Pride Month is in June.
 - June 10 is Kids Day Out.
- Street closures
 - Ms. Demyen asked the Board for its feedback on street closures and if doing those are a good use of the office's resources.
 - Mr. Colangelo said he felt it would be good to close down a street every now and then so people can see what it's like to have certain areas closed off to traffic.
 - There is a 4-hour minimum to close a street with Jobs 4 Blue.
 - Ms. Mider suggested trying it once and seeing how it goes.
- Mr. Colangelo said that Ms. O'Brien has been great at pushing the budget forward. The Finance Committee plans to present at the next meeting.

Motion to adjourn at 9:45 am. All in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator