

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 15, 2019**

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
Barry O'Donovan/business owner
Margaret Sacco/property owner
Gabe Bailer/Director
Caren Demyen/Administrative Assistant
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator

Absent:

none

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 October 2019 minutes by Mr. Colangelo, seconded by Mr. LaCorte. Mr. Durante asked Ms. Demyen to adjust the members present since Rita LaBrutto was accidentally listed. All were in favor.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Maisonneuve

- Commissioner Maisonneuve mentioned that there hasn't been any updates regarding redevelopment on North Avenue. Trying to focus new development to the Downtown area rather than residential. Regarding 750 Walnut, they are trying to pass 250 townhomes which Commissioner Maisonneuve feels is the right decision. Development can only occur where there is an area to be developed. Mr. Connolly's concern is where the DMC can get involved and if they can get involved. Commissioner Maisonneuve feels that there will be more discussion on this especially with Kathleen Prunty getting elected to the Township Committee. He also suggested bringing in a planner so the town doesn't get gobbled up with development. Mr. O'Donovan's concern was not knowing the development that was being planned for South Avenue since his building is located there. Commissioner Maisonneuve said that the plans are only at the beginning stages and the developer is working with the Township Committee. Commissioner Maisonneuve thanked Mr. Bailer for his help with Pierre on his new store opening on Eastman. Mr. LaCorte said that it was important that the DMC is involved at the ground floor with every development with the downtown. He feels that the DMC will take the hit if it goes bad. Mr. Colangelo agreed with Mr. LaCorte asking if the DMC is to be involved or is our job to keep the lights on and run Scarecrow Stroll. Mr. LaCorte feels that the DMC needs to be involved immediately. Mr. Connolly asked to see the plans and Commissioner Maisonneuve said that they are not to be shared right now. Mr. O'Donovan asked Mr. Bailer if the stores going on Walnut Avenue have contacted the DMC office, and he said no.

CHAIRMAN REMARKS – Anthony Durante

- Mr. Durante passed on chairman remarks and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Gabe Bailer

Monthly Project Report

- Mr. Bailer reviewed the business checklist sheet as well as an information piece on why to go to Downtown Cranford and how the DMC can assist in the process.
- Zoning is redoing the permit application and adding a checkbox for the Special Improvement District. Going through the process of a new building permit as well. The information pieces will be going out to all business owners.
- Post Office Plaza is complete – Mr. Bailer feels that it worked out well. He would like to coordinate a ribbon cutting with Small Business Saturday and invite the businesses to take part.
- Scarecrow Stroll was a success – the event was extended throughout the weekend starting with the Candy Stroll on Friday. It continued with face painting, pumpkin painting, sand art and the Howl-o-ween event on Saturday. Sunday was rained out but the Apple Baked Good Contest continued with 17 participants.
- The movie theater is open and Mr. Bailer felt that there was great support from the Township Committee members on the importance of getting it back open. Coordinating on future events including a Frozen 2 stroll and Holiday movie series.
- 28 SID violations, 15 have complied. The remaining will now get a notice of complaint from the Zoning Department.
- Upcoming events include the Frozen 2 Stroll on 11/23 and hair braiding/face painting at the theater on 11/24. November 30th will be Small Business Saturday – the office has created a passport so customers can get it stamped when they make their purchases. Businesses were extremely generous and we were able to create 16 baskets of prizes for people to win. There will also be a smores bar, hot chocolate and Santa. Holiday Shop will be December 13-15th. There will be a Holiday Window Decorating contest – there are 18 stores signed up.
- Cranford won the #1 Downtown for the second year in a row.
- Ms. Mider suggested making sure we have extra garbage cans for events or have someone that can dump the extra garbage.
- Holiday lights will be going up on November 24th. 20,000 lights have been purchased. Jaycees and Newcomers will help put lights up at Eastman Clock and Post Office Plaza. Tree lighting is 11/29 and lights were provided to make sure it matches other areas.

NEW BUSINESSES

- The new macaroon business came to the DMC in regards to painting his building. Based on the ordinance the DMC can't decide on the color but the business owner agreed to paint it a lighter shade of pink.
- Oasis Restaurant is going to go where the old Tablespoon restaurant was – Moroccan cuisine. The owner came to the DMC and they discussed the awning and it will be replaced with a sign. Mr. Bailer hopes they will be opened in a month.
- Burger IM opened – there was a little hiccup in the beginning but the owner is excited to be in Cranford.
- Venue 104 will be open and excited to be part of the community – Franco Vitella Catering.
- Lure Lash will be open on 2 South Avenue. There was a delay in the process due to zoning but they now have their permits.
- A La Mode Creamery left in the middle of the night and the space is now open.

BOARD COMMITTEES

- Application Review Committee – Mr. Durante mentioned sign applications that have come in.
- Business Development - Ms. Sacco mentioned that there is nothing to report. Mr. Durante asked Ms. Sacco if she could read through the checklist carefully in case changes need to be made.
- Maintenance – Mr. Connolly asked an update about the lights. Mr. Bailer said they haven't been fixed yet. Posts will get painted next year. Dimmers have been installed. Mr. Connolly and Mr. Bailer met with the owner of Sub-o-logy and the owner agreed to send a plan of a garbage enclosure. Mr. Connolly also asked about the alleyway lights that are out by the bakery. Tree

surrounds were ordered and will be delivered in the spring. Mr. Connolly also asked about the peace plaque and if it will be replaced. Uplighting was proposed for Eastman Plaza and it came in about \$7k which we do not have reserves for. Pole foundations at Eastman Plaza have been removed.

- Finance – Mr. Bailer went over the budget and what has increased/decreased. There will not be a holiday guide but a holiday postcard which will be mailed to homes in Cranford and Westfield. There have been some questions about residential properties paying the SID tax. Mr. Durante said that in 2014 an ordinance was passed that resident homes do not have to pay a SID tax. Mr. LaCorte and Mr. O'Donovan did not recall this decision. Mr. Connolly suggested we look back on the minutes to confirm. Many members suggested that we look into seeing how to get it changed. Mr. Colangelo said that we want to work on sponsorship opportunities as well as look into getting our Capital Improvement requests like an alleyway improvements, parklet, etc... Mr. LaCorte made a motion to approve the budget, Mr. Colangelo seconded it. All were in favor.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Mr. Durante passed around the document for the Strategic plan. He is happy with it and feels that it is 95% there.

NEW BUSINESS

- Mr. Bailer introduced Erik Hastrup as the acting director of the DPW. The Board introduced themselves to Erik and wished him the best of luck. Commissioner Maisonneuve's advice is to make our requests as part of the Capital Improvement budget regarding lights, etc... Mr. Mider suggested that we need to go to Township Council meetings to share our concerns and that the squeaky wheel gets the grease.
- Ms. Sacco asked if there was a plan for the holiday lights. Mr. LaCorte said that in his business they plan the holidays in June.
- Mr. Bailer presented Mr. Connolly with his Scarecrow Stroll trophy.

Motion to adjourn at 9:45am by Mr. LaCorte. Ms. Mider seconded. All were in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Caren Demyen, Administrative Assistant