

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – OCTOBER 11, 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 September 2019 minutes by Mr. Colangelo, seconded by Mr. LaCorte. All were in favor.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Maisonneuve

- Commissioner Maisonneuve mentioned that the Township is still looking for qualified candidates for the engineering position as well as the head of DPW. He mentioned that the engineering job may be hard to fill since private sector jobs pay more. He is also concerned that Joanne Westcott, DPW administrative assistant, has also put in her notice. Ms. Greely asked about the status of the movie theater. Ms. Legg said they are planning to open the second week of November and the biggest reason the family decided to reopen was because of community support. Mr. Bailer mentioned that the owners are open to a lot of different ideas.

CHAIRMAN REMARKS – Anthony Durante

- Mr. Durante suggested bringing in a planner to the township. Mr. Durante and Mr. Bailer spoke with Ms. Murray of the planning board who is in agreement. Letters are drafted to the township committee and they are waiting to get put on the agenda. Mr. Durante suggested checking out Post Office Plaza to see the great work being done.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Gabe Bailer

Monthly Project Report

- Mr. Bailer mentioned that the work is progressing at Post Office Plaza. The landscaper knows the dates for Scarecrow Weekend and is doing his best to make sure everything gets completed in time.
- The base of the website is completed. Ms. Stavrou and Ms. Demyen are working on the content as well as updated photography. Hoping to have it finalized by the end of the year.
- Darcy is working on the Strategic Plan document and it should be finalized today. She will then start the Business handbook and have the hopefully wrapped up shortly.
- We are under 3% for vacancy rates.
- Mr. Bailer gave an update on the SID violations. There were 26 violations last month and as of today 15 have complied. Mr. Bailer will do one more warning and then it will go through the zoning violation process. Commissioner Maisonneuve mentioned going over best practices with the businesses. Mr. Bailer

mentioned on October 22nd, we will be hosting a business meeting at Annealed with a person that does window display. Ms. Mider suggested making sure to suggest businesses who are in violation attend the window display meeting. Mr. Connolly brought up the violations for Bel Giordino as well as the Cranford Hotel who now has four signs on their building. Commissioner Maisonneuve reminded Mr. Bailer about having a checklist to give to business and property owners to help make guidelines more clear. Mr. Connolly wanted to know if there was another way to go about it. Mr. LaCorte mentioned getting it on the website once it's up and running.

- Scarecrow Weekend is coming up. Over 90 scarecrows have been registered and will go up on October 16th. Friday evening is the Scarecrow Stroll along with a face painter, Candy Stop and DJ. Saturday will include the Howl-o-ween parade, face painter, paint a pumpkin, sand art, and music. Sunday will include an Apple Baked Goods contest, costume catwalk, paint a pumpkin, sand art and more.

NEW BUSINESSES

- Burger IM will be open in the next few days.
- 104 North Union will be a catering business. They are hoping to open up by November.
- Lure Lash will be at Cranford Crossings – permits have been submitted and it is in the finalized stage.
- Le Petit Temptation location – a French macaron bakery will be taking that spot over and they are in the permit stage.
- Tablespoon Café location will now be a Moroccan restaurant and they are in the process of getting established.

BOARD COMMITTEES

- Application Review Committee – Mr. Durante mentioned that they finished the review of the sign ordinance and they will now be moving on to adjusting the actual language in the ordinance.
- Business Development - Ms. Sacco will be meeting with Mr. Bailer to review the new packet as well as ideas for attracting new businesses, communicating with incoming businesses, etc...
- Maintenance – Mr. Connolly mentioned there are a few new street lights are out. Mr. Bailer mentioned there are 25 lights out currently. Commissioner Maisonneuve mentioned that these problems will keep happening until the lights get completely redone by an electrician. Mr. LaCorte asked what was wrong with them and suggested hiring a licensed contractor to investigate what is going wrong. Commissioner Maisonneuve said he will bring it up at the next meeting and give everyone an update. Mr. Connolly also brought up the dumpster. Mr. Bailer said that the owner from the Garlic Rose will take over the lease of the parking spaces. He also mentioned that the Township may suggest to remove the dumpster and fence completely. Mr. LaCorte made a motion to remove the dumpster and Ms. Mider seconded it. All were in favor.
- Marketing – Mr. Durante asked how are we communicating with our property owners, is it effective, and if there are other ways that we can reach out. Mr. Durante feels that we need to understand what our resources are and if they are working. Mr. Bailer said there is a 30% email open rate from the emails sent out to property and business owners. Mr. O'Donovan brought up that everyone should be given a packet. He suggested having a meeting where all department heads could be present and explain to people the procedures of opening a business in Cranford. Ms. Demyen suggested sending out the packet certified mail to all the property owners to ensure that they receive it. Mr. LaCorte felt that it would be a good solution. Ms. Mider suggested doing a step before that with contacting the owner to set up a meeting and give them a packet. Mr. Needle said that the property owners are making an investment in the town and feels that perhaps we are losing sight of the fact that we need to be in it together. The focus should be on being more customer friendly instead of adversarial. Mr. Bailer said that he will come up with a check list so it's in the SDL as well as a one page informational piece that can go out to the business and property owners via email. The goal is to have it by next month.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Mr. Durante mentioned that Darcy is finalizing the strategic plan and that it looks phenomenal. As soon as it's completed he will send it out to the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

- Commissioner Maisonneuve pointed out that there will be a new display screen so we will not have to set up the projector.
- Regarding the 2020 budget, Mr. Colangelo said that the Board has done a great job spending down the budget in a way to make the Downtown a better place. Between the wifi, upgrades to Post Office Plaza, new bike racks, and more to help spend down the surplus that was carried over the past two years. The timeline is to get the budget in order between now and the end of the year. Between now and February all capital improvements need to be planned and organized. Mr. Colangelo suggested trying to get one capital improvement a year.
- A few of the changes include the cost of the wifi, removal of the holiday guide, increasing events and increasing landscaping.
- Mr. Colangelo suggested trying to do more sponsorship opportunities. He suggested trying to build a budget with \$5000 of sponsorship opportunities. He would also like to work on growing our email list which is currently 2500.
- Commissioner Maisonneuve suggested continuing to look into being a not-for-profit. Mr. Bailer said that he will check in with Lavona Patterson regarding this.
- Suggestions were brought up to possibly expand the SID.
- Discussed the 2020 budget and reviewed the line items. Potential decreases in line items like office supplies and increases in events. Reviewed potential sponsorship ideas.
- Mr. Durante asked if there was a way the United Way sign could be taken down.

RESERVES

- Mr. Bailer brought up potential idea of adding uplighting to Eastman Clock. Mr. LaCorte generously offered to purchase the lights. We are waiting on a quote from the electrician.
- Suggestions were also brought up to add bike racks throughout town. Mr. Durante suggested painting the fountain at Post Office Plaza.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS

- Mr. Bailer went over the areas that would be getting new holiday lights (over 14000 lights). Lights will be going up on 11/24 at 11am. Ms. Mider suggested that we donate hot chocolate and donuts from Dreyer's.

Motion to adjourn at 10am by Mr. LaCorte. Ms. Mider seconded. All were in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Caren Demyen, Administrative Assistant