

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 20, 2019**

Present:

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
Margaret Sacco/property owner
Gabe Bailer/Director
Caren Demyen/Administrative Assistant
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator
Rita LaBrutto

Absent:

Joe Colangelo/resident
Barry O'Donovan/business owner

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 July 2019 minutes by Mr. Durante, seconded by Mr. LaCorte. All were in favor.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Maisonneuve

- Commissioner Maisonneuve mentioned he has spoken with the other commissioners on the SID ordinance the Board is working on and let them know that things are progressing.

CHAIRMAN REMARKS – Anthony Durante

- Mr. Durante thanked everyone for attending the meeting and hoped that everyone had a great summer. Mr. Durante brought up the issue of development and feels that we need to be more proactive about what we can control. He feels that we need a town planner who can focus on issues as a whole. Mr. Durante and Mr. Bailer are going to meet with Kathleen Murray regarding this (Planning Board) to craft an approach to make a formal request to the Township Committee. Commissioner Maisonneuve encouraged the Board to follow through on this. Mr. Needle wanted to give his feedback on his experience as a developer. He said that it has taken 5 months to get the engineer to review the plan of a minor subdivision and feels that the town needs to fix the departments that are here. Commissioner Maisonneuve agrees that the engineer is overloaded and understands everyone's frustration. His concern is making sure the town can find the right people for the position. Mr. LaCorte says for the right price, we can hire someone that can provide quality work.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Gabe Bailer

Monthly Project Report

- Mr. Bailer wanted to change the date of the October meeting for the 18th due to a Downtown New Jersey meeting. Everyone was in agreement for Friday, October 11th at 8:30am.
- SID and Zoning violations – Mr. Bailer expressed that there is confusion. There are two different ordinances – one for the SID and the other for zoning. Mr. Bailer compiled a list of 34 businesses and also wrote violation letters to these establishments. He said that there is a lot of things that have to be worked out. For example, in zoning your window can only be covered up to 20% meaning it has to be affixed to the window. With the example of the Young Nails storefront, their blinds are not affixed to the window so it is not a violation. Whereas at Hilltop, it is affixed so it is a violation. Mr. Bailer went to each establishment to

Speak with the owners before sending out a letter. Five businesses already complied and many of them are quick fixes. This will be an ongoing project.

- HBO was a positive experience – we received a lot of positive feedback. The downtown was packed both nights. A lot of the businesses received interruption pay. Mr. Bailer said that the crew told him they have never seen a town react so positively. HBO agreed to extend the fence next to Eastman Clock – it is installed and they are putting up the finishing touches. Ms. Sacco mentioned that the HBO crew was very easy to work with and polite. She did mention that she received feedback that the crew from Kidz Bop was very inconsiderate and had a bad attitude. Mr. Bailer suggested having the town create an ordinance where there is a permit fee because he feels that they are going to keep coming to town to film. Mr. LaCorte mentioned to make sure that the property owners are notified and that they are also given copies of proof of insurance.
- Utility box art was installed. Mr. Bailer thanked Ms. Mider, Ms. Stavrou and Ms. Demyen for their help. There were over 30 submissions and the winner was a Cranford resident. The installation took over 6 hours.
- Capital budget request – there is \$50,000 for pavers and painting the light posts. The light posts will be a spring project since an RFP has to get done. Currently getting quotes on pavers on South Avenue by TC Graphics as well as the strip of grass on North Union.
- Social media meeting at Witchbaby – The owner, Chelsea, is a wealth of information. Fourteen businesses attended. Working on a business meeting for October with an interior designer who does window displays.

NEW BUSINESS

- Le Petit – owner sold the business due to illness. A French bakery will be going in.
- Burger IM is finishing up their construction and should be open in a month or two.
- Tablespoon Café closed their restaurant. Mr. Bailer is following up with the owner – supposedly a Moroccan restaurant may be going in.
- Construction right next to Sofie's – it will be a spa. They just received a stop work order since they do not have permits.
- On North Union, construction on the Old City building has started.
- Upcoming events – this Saturday is the Paint Out with the Artist Framers. Mr. Bailer is working on displaying art in businesses. Sunday is Music at the Clock event with the Love Handles and Alden Street. Scarecrow Stroll has over 30 submissions so far. We will be doing an entire Scarecrow weekend with face painting, painting pumpkins, sand art, Howl-o-ween, and more. Ms. Sacco mentioned last year she ran out of 150 chocolate bars and could have easily doubled what she gave out. Mr. Bailer asked for sponsors and Mr. LaCorte, Ms. Greeley and Mr. Needle agreed to sponsor.
- Post Office Plaza landscaping will begin next week – landscaper will start with the bluestone and then the electric and planting. Mr. Connolly suggested having uplighting on the trees at Eastman.

BOARD COMMITTEES

- Application Review Committee – Mr. Bailer mentioned that there is nothing flagged that we need to review.
- Business Development - Ms. Sacco mentioned there is nothing new to report.
- Finance – Mr. Durante mentioned that we are planning the budget next month for 2020. If there are capital requests we want to make we should start thinking of them.
- Maintenance – Mr. Connolly asked if all the lights are working. Mr. Bailer is working on a final list with Steve Wardell from the DPW. Mr. Needle asked for an update on the curbing by his building on North Union and Mr. Bailer said he will get an update from Mr. Wardell. Mr. Connolly asked for a status on the garbage behind Lot 7. Mr. Bailer said that one of the business owners may pay the \$1600 fee per year so the other businesses can put their own cans behind their buildings. Mr. Bailer has spoken with Administrator Cryan to try to get this resolved. Ms. Mider asked about the fence outside Subology to close off their garbage. Mr. Connolly asked about the line painting in Lot 7 – he said it's not complete. Mr. Bailer said he will follow up for an update. Tree surrounds are ordered and paid for. The vendor is delayed in shipping so it will be a spring project. Mr. LaCorte mentioned getting rid of the fence around the dumpster and doing a free-standing structure so it is more attractive.
- Marketing – Ms. Legg suggested a slow launch for the logo and suggested putting something on the website about it to make it a learning point. Ms. Legg also suggested doing something on

social media to highlight it like Instagram polls. Ms. Demyen and Ms. Stavrou have been working on the website and will hopefully have a final draft in a few weeks. A suggestion was brought up about doing business spotlights. Ms. Stavrou mentioned she was looking to start them up again. Mr. Bailer brought up that we will be doing a holiday postcard rather than the holiday guide we have been doing for a few years. Also looking into doing a holiday bag to give out during Small Business Saturday.

STRATEGIC PLAN

- Mr. Bailer reviews the strategic plan – there were four goals to promote a vibrant downtown environment, prioritize safe and accessible active mobility, provide parking that meets the needs of future uses and empower our government to proactive plan for the future. Mr. Bailer went through to mention which ones were completed, in progress, or not completed.
- Mr. Bailer suggested looking into how to become a not-for-profit so we are eligible for more grants. Ms. Mider also asked how to formalize the Downtown Arts Council. Mr. Bailer said he will look into it as well as check in with the Township Committee, Finance and the Administrator.

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

- Mr. Bailer is setting up a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce, Newcomers Club and Jaycees. The Chamber is talking with National Tree Company to see what are options are for lights. The goal is to outline where we need to put lights and to make sure everything corresponds. Ms. Sacco feels that the Board should provide oversight so everything is consistent throughout town. A list of purchases that need to be made and locations will be ready for the October meeting.

MOVIE THEATER

Commissioner Maisonneuve mentioned they are thinking of starting a sub-committee to meet with the owner of the movie theater to see what he is willing to do. More to come.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Ms. LaBrutto mentioned that it was nice to sit through the meeting to see all of the positive things going on. Regarding the movie theater, she felt that if the town owns the property you would have more control over what can go there. Ms. LaBrutto mentioned it's not the first time that she has heard of engineering issues. She did mention that the Belgian blocks not going on 109 Walnut and the property on South Avenue is a disappointment. Belgian blocks are a staple of the town for the past 30 years.

Motion to adjourn at 10am by Mr. Needle. Mr. Connolly seconded. All were in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Caren Demyen, Administrative Assistant