

CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 15, 2023

Present:

Joe Colangelo/Business owner
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
Samantha Ulan/ Resident

Caren Demyen/Director
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator

Lavona Patterson/Administrator

Absent:

Tammie Crispino/Business owner
Anthony Durante/Resident

Ms. Demyen called the meeting to order at 8:32am. Announcement made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion to approve July 2023 minutes by Ms. Demyen. Ms. Ulan abstained. Minutes were approved.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Commissioner Kathleen Miller Prunty

- Township passed an ordinance forming a Shade Tree Commission, due to the efforts of Deputy Mayor Curran. The ordinance only refers to trees on public property and will go into effect January 1st. The hope is to have an inventory of trees and a plan going forward. There will be a tree nursery at the Conservation Center.
- The intersection of Walnut and Chestnut has been the scene of a number of traffic accidents. Local groups and Township Departments met about what can be done. In the short-term, shrubbery has been trimmed and LED stop signs have been installed.

CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS – Kristen Mider

- Ms. Mider thanked the sub-committees for their hard work and welcomed Samantha Ulan to the Board.

VICTORIAN LIGHTS – Captain Nazzaro and Detective Handy

- Captain Nazzaro said that the Township is looking into the overhaul of the Downtown Cranford Victorian lights, as they are the town's responsibility.
- Det. Handy said that he has walked around the entire downtown to see where there are outages. Cranford Police has had meetings with EII Electric and the company will work on a plan that they say addresses current issues. Ms. O'Brien thanked those who have followed through on the issue of the Victorian lights.

FINANCE – Kendall O'Brien

- Reviewed the recommended 2024 DMC budget and the SID budget as a percentage of the municipal budget compared to other towns.
- The current budget is around \$180k. There has been a significant growth in the number of events, with sponsorships and ticket sales helping to offset costs.
- Recommendations for 2024
 - Increase money for maintenance and beautification (part-time cleanup help)
 - Additional funds for events, including street closures

- Total increase would be \$86k.
- Mr. Colangelo said that this is the budget that is needed to maintain how the downtown currently functions.
- Mr. LaCorte said more funding is still needed for maintenance.
- Commissioner Prunty said that the SID assessment is not to be used in the place of municipal responsibility.
- Ms. Mider said that there should be discussions about the DPW's responsibility as it pertains to downtown.
- Ms. O'Brien said if there isn't a budget increase, some events would need to be removed.
- The next step includes meeting with property owners.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Caren Demyen

- Office Updates
 - Meet and Greet with Cranford Chamber of Commerce is scheduled for September 26.
 - Business and Property Owner meeting planned on September 19, focusing on storefront displays
 - Working with Topology to finalize café permit application
- Planning to apply for two grants
- Provided an update on movie currently filming in town
- Working with NJEDA on opportunities for Downtown Cranford businesses to get a new website. A number of businesses have applied and one website has already gone live.
- Update on businesses recently highlighted by local media and also provided a social media overview.
- Provided information on future businesses that will be opening and an update on available properties.
- Maintenance
 - Update on the dumpster in Lot 11.
 - Will be getting 2 new bike racks, purchased by FMBA in memory of a resident. The bike racks will be placed by Starbucks on South Avenue and Vanilla Bean Creamery.
 - The liners in the trash cans have been replaced.
- Provided brief recap of events, as well as what is planned for the next few months.

Motion to adjourn at 10:03 am. All in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator