

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – APRIL 16, 2021**

Present:

Brian Andrews/Deputy Mayor
Joe Colangelo/Resident
Dennis Concha/Business owner
Tom Connolly/Business owner
Tammie Crispino/Business owner
Anthony Durante/Resident
Paul LaCorte/Property owner
Ashley Legg/Resident
Kristen Mider/Chairwoman
Steve Oliveira/Property owner
Kathleen Prunty/Mayor
Doreen Sayegh/Property owner
Caren Demyen/ Director
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator

Absent:

Ms. Demyen called the meeting to order at 8:33am. Announcement made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion to approve March 2021 minutes by Mr. LaCorte, seconded by Ms. Mider. Mr. Durante abstained. All others were in favor.

CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS – Kristen Mider

- Ms. Mider said that the transition of Rui DeJesus to the DPW is complete. This allows more flexibility in the DMC budget.
- The closure of Eastman Street will not likely be approved. NJDOT was made aware of the closure of the street last summer and said that it's not allowed, due to the street's proximity to North Avenue, which is a state highway. Mayor Prunty reached out to her contact at NJDOT and made the case for closing Eastman. Temporary street closures, such as for a one-time event, are still possible. Ms. Mider also mentioned that the businesses on Eastman have other options, including outdoor fitness classes at parks or using the back parking lot for outdoor dining.
- Mr. Durante said that they have been working on a study looking at the area between Lincoln and Centennial, and Post Office Plaza to come out with a design. Mr. Connolly said that should be a sign to NJDOT that work has started in regards to the effect of this street closure. Deputy Mayor Andrews said he's hopeful that the study will help in the long term, but right now an appeal is needed to the state government in order to have something happen soon.

MAYOR REMARKS – Mayor Prunty

- Recently went to see Lot 3 (behind Swan Cleaners) with DPW Superintendent Eric Wardell. She took pictures and said that some of the maintenance issues there are unacceptable. Currently the lot is being patched to make it safer.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Deputy Mayor Andrews

- The Municipal building will be reopening on Monday.
- In personnel news, the Construction Code Official will be leaving and the township is currently looking for a full-time construction code official.
- The parklets downtown have been approved.
- In regards to North Avenue redevelopment, 3 developers have expressed interest. These plans are non-binding and are a good way for the Township Committee to get ideas. Mr. LaCorte said that it

should be conveyed to developers that the town doesn't want cookie cutter designs. The Mayor replied that the Redevelopment Plan is where the town can set guidelines and people will have input on those guidelines. That will be the first step.

- Ms. Mider wants to make sure that the public stays informed when it comes to redevelopment. The Mayor said that redevelopment meetings are scheduled for the public. Ms. Mider also state that she wants to ensure the DMC Board is heard when it comes to redevelopment. The Mayor said that the DMC will have a seat at the table when it comes to North Avenue redevelopment.
- Deputy Mayor Andrews said the Township Committee is receptive to any ideas from the Board about how to improve public outreach. Mr. Durante said the Redevelopment Planner should emphasize an outreach process.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Caren Demyen **Monthly Project Report**

- Ms. Demyen said that the office is considering a tag line to help market the downtown.
- Provided an update on social media numbers. Social Coordinator Michelle Stavrou spoke about the Barbershop Stories series, which will spotlight the 4 barbershops in town.
- Virtual Restaurant Guide was completed and released. It received great feedback.
- Events recap:
 - Run the DMC will continue through the end of the month.
 - Garden State Film Festival went well, winners had a great time.
 - Spring Hop raised almost \$1500 for CHS Class of 2022.
 - Sweet Escape had a great turnout and businesses were happy with the event.
- Upcoming events include Kentucky Derby festival, Taste of Cranford, Lego Night, and Wellness Week. There will be spring and summer music, and more tables will be added downtown, as well as outdoor games.
- New businesses that have opened or will be opening soon include Little Lotus Yoga Studio, Filo Sofi Art, and a new seafood restaurant. There are new owners at Baron Drugs and Pizzeria Bel Giardino.
- There were ribbon cuttings at Hynes Law Group and MWT Builders.
- In regards to maintenance, the Green Thumb Garden Club has started restoring the fountain at Post Office Plaza. Tim O'Brien will be power washing and sealing the gazebo. The spring and summer planter sponsorships have sold out.
- The gift card program was presented to the Township Committee. The hope is to partner with the Cranford Jaycees and start the program this summer.
- Working with Stefanie at The Artist Frammer on new light pole banners.
- The parklets will have covers this year, in order to give them a more cohesive look. MWT will be constructing the covers and flowers from Dreyer Farms will go on top. Restaurants with parklets will have to cover the cost of the parking spaces (\$4.50/day).

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- Maintenance: Mr. Connolly mentioned a bench near the downtown area is in need of repair. Ms. Demyen said she would check on it.
- Marketing/Business Development: Ms. Legg said Wellness Week will be this summer. Mr. Concha added that activities for Pride Month were also discussed.

Motion to adjourn at 10 am by Mrs Mider. Mr. Colangelo seconded. All were in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator