

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION  
BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES – DECEMBER 17, 2021**

**Present:**

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

Kathleen Miller Prunty/Mayor  
Lavona Patterson/Finance Director  
Graham Petto/Topology

Kendall O'Brien/Resident – 26 Burchfield Ave.  
Jake Sheppard/Resident - 107 Retford Ave.

**Absent:**

Dennis Concha/Business owner

Ms. Demyen called the meeting to order at 8:30am. Announcement was made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Motion to approve November 2021 minutes by Mr. Durante. Minutes were approved.

**CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS** – Kristen Mider

- Ms. Mider thanked the staff and the Board for their hard work.

**TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS** – Deputy Mayor Brian Andrews

- Mr. Andrews thanked the staff and Board. He stated that there have been improvements in regards to the street lights.
- The focus of the Township Committee is moving to redevelopment in the Downtown (South Avenue and North Avenue gateway). He would like the DMC office and Board involved and to receive their input.

**MAYOR REMARKS** – Mayor Kathleen Miller Prunty

- Mayor Prunty said Cranford is fortunate to have this DMC Board and staff. She feels strongly that the DMC needs to be involved in redevelopment and believes a sub-committee should be formed. Ms. Mider wants to make sure that if the sub-committee is formed, that its role as an advisory board is clear. Mayor Prunty reassured the Board that will be the case.

**UPDATE ON SIGN ORDINANCE** – Graham Petto (Topology)

- Mr. Petto thanked the sign committee members of the DMC.
- There are currently sign requirements in 3 different sections of Cranford documentation (DMC guidelines, Special Improvement ordinance, and land development chapter).
- The biggest issue from a Zoning perspective is that the Zoning Officer is not empowered to enforce design standards.
- Recommendations from the Sign Committee include removing references to Victorian style, establishing standard letter height, adding temporary signage standards, and stronger language regarding sidewalk signage.

- Ms. Mider asked who will be responsible for maintaining this, and Mr. Petto said it will be up to Zoning to approve and enforce.
- Mr. LaCorte wants to make sure that the reference to Victorian style is removed and that the guidelines will be enforceable.
- Mr. Petto said the next steps involve drafting up new language and then going over it with the Township Attorney. The Planning Board will also review it before being adopted by the Township Committee.

#### **BUDGET REPORT** - Joe Colangelo, Director Caren Demyen

- Mr. Colangelo reviewed the Administrative Operations section of the budget.
- Ms. Demyen went over the costs for the Downtown Cranford gift card program, most of which is covered in the processing fee.
- In regards to Events, Ms. Demyen expects that the sponsorship goals will be similar in 2022. Businesses have seen growth in foot traffic due to the increase in events.
- There was discussion about planning ahead for the events to make sure that there is help in regards to volunteers.
- Mayor Prunty said that the DMC budget has been flat for about 14 years and that in her opinion there's a need for bringing on part-time help. The department's success contributes to the value of the town.
- Lavona Patterson, Director of Finance, said that if the assessment is going to be raised the DMC Board needs to decide what the budget should be.
- Board members said they'd like to review the assessment of similar downtowns to see how Cranford compares.
- Mr. Colangelo said his concern is that prices are increasing so the money doesn't go as far as it did years ago.
- In regards to Maintenance and Horticulture, Mr. Durante said regular weeding, mulching, and replacement of trees are needed. Ms. Demyen also added that the cost of the holiday wreaths has increased. Ms. Demyen said that any additional funds added to the budget would need to go to Horticulture and Maintenance.
- Mr. Colangelo said the next step is to do a detailed breakdown of Horticulture and Maintenance and put a dollar value on it.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT** - Caren Demyen

- Ms. Demyen spoke about the growth of social media over the past year.
- The digital holiday shopping guide was released. It may be reevaluated for next year as it involves a lot of time from the office staff.
- Ms. Demyen provided a recap of recent events including Small Business Saturday, caroling, Holiday Lights Night Out, Horse and Carriage Rides, and more.
- \$5,000 in Downtown Cranford gift cards were already sold and over 100 businesses have signed up for the program.
- Ms. Demyen asked the Board members to think of items to add to the 2022 wishlist and of any capital budget requests they want.

***Motion to go into closed session. All were in favor.***

***Motion to adjourn at 10:10 am. All were in favor.***

Respectively submitted,  
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator