

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

**Present:**

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

Kathleen Prunty/Mayor  
Ryan Cooper/Township Attorney  
Annie Hindenlang/Topology

Dawn Beresford/Resident  
Ralph Brunette/Resident  
Rita LaBrutto/Resident

**Absent:**

Ms. Demyen 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 June 2021 minutes by Mrs. Mider. Minutes were approved.

**CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS** – Kristen Mider

- Mrs. Mider said the previous night downtown was bustling, between Lego Night and music at the clock.
- She said Ms. Demyen was making progress on the dumpster in Lot 7.

**TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS** – Deputy Mayor Andrews

- Mr. Andrews offered Township Committee updates. Frank Genova has been hired as the head of the Building Department. Jason Bottcher from Zoning has resigned, and the Township will be contracting with a firm to make sure there's not a gap in service.
- In regards to Eastman Street closure, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor will have a call with NJ DOT to figure out the next steps. Umbrellas have gone out and they hope to see people using the area.
- For Redevelopment, Mr. Andrews feels that more needs to be done on the South Avenue side in regards to public engagement and input. He also wants to make sure that the DMC Board is involved, and that the Township Committee overall is as transparent as possible.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT** - Caren Demyen

**Monthly Project Report**

- Ms. Demyen walked around downtown with Property Maintenance officer John Cleary.
- In regards to business communication, the office is working on putting together a meeting schedule for fall, as well as ideas for business education meetings.
- Business updates
  - Staffing is still a concern for many business owners

- Closures: Spoonful Masala and Fettle Market
  - Sweet n Fancy will be getting new owners.
- A table of contents has been added to the Downtown Cranford Restaurant Guide.
- Congressman Malinowski visited downtown businesses who received PPE support.
- Plastic bag ban goes into effect May 2022, and straws by request starts November 2021.
- June was the Take Pride event. Overall it went very well. Business owners and community members were very appreciative.
- Coming up: Wellness Week, Restaurant Week, Rock Yoga, Plein Air, and more.
- Events including Storytime, Yellow Brick Road promotion with Cranford Theater, and Sidewalk Sale, were successful.
- Already looking forward to the fall, with a number of events planned around The Scarecrow Stroll.
- New businesses:
  - Better Me Juicery, Red Crab, Vine & Oak Tavern
- 4 benches have been ordered as part of the bench sponsorship program
- Eastman Street closure
  - Umbrellas and cornhole games have been added
- Maintenance updates
  - Post Office Plaza was weeded and mulched this past week.
  - New tops have been ordered for garbage cans.
  - The dumpster area in Lot 7 was power washed by Marc from The Garlic Rose. The fence should be repaired by the end of the summer, and the new garbage hauler should start September 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - 59 light poles currently out.
  - Light poles will be painted shortly, as well as the bollards by Cranford Hotel.
- Annie Hindenlang of Topology was introduced by Township Attorney Ryan Cooper. Mr. Cooper asked her to speak about the intended outreach program for North Avenue, South Avenue, and Chestnut (Wells Fargo drive-thru).

#### **TOPOLOGY PRESENTATION: South Ave. and Chestnut Street Redevelopment Plan – Annie Hindenlang**

- Ms. Hindenlang outlined the community outreach plan which includes drop-in outreach at events, community meetings, and online to get public feedback and input.
- North Avenue project has less parameters being imposed which allows for more flexibility.
- Ms. Hindenlang explained the Redevelopment Designation Process. The area was designated as "area in need of rehabilitation" by Township Committee on March 30, 2021.
- Draft of plan lays out a number of public purposes, including promoting economic development, expanding housing options, and reducing traffic impact. The first draft also includes the Permitted Principal Uses of the land.
- Topology is looking for feedback from the DMC Board on building design, open space, and existing streetscaping standards that should be met.
- Mr. Cooper added that there will be 5,000 SF of new retail. In addition, there will be 37 units on Chestnut Street, which is considered a Downtown transition zone.
- Mr. LaCorte asked if the EF Britten building is in the rehabilitation zone. Mr. Cooper said it is not. The South Avenue component of the proposed project allowed the town to remove Myrtle Street and the EF Britten building.
- Mr. Durante thanked Ms. Hindenlang for the presentation. He asked if there's a way to utilize the redevelopment plans so they include more open space as well as maintain the street wall.
- Ms. Mider agreed with Mr. Durante and said she's been hearing concern from the community about the loss of public space. Addressing that community concern is important, and if there's a way to have public space on the south side, that would be great.
- Mr. Cooper said the projects will allow for a more unified front, as there won't be as many curb interruptions.

- Ms. Demyen asked if the meeting dates will be publicized. Mayor Prunty said that the meeting dates will be on the Township website, shared on social media, and included in newsletters.
- Mr. LaCorte said that the biggest problem in the downtown is maintenance. He reiterated that he's in favor of redevelopment, but maintenance needs to be taken care of.
- Mr. Durante added that wide sidewalk space should be emphasized, as many downtown sidewalks are currently narrow.

### **Public Comments**

- Ms. Beresford (706 Lexington Avenue) asked for clarification on what sub-district 1 encompasses.
- Ms. LaBrutto (104 Arlington Road) asked if South Avenue buildings will be the same height as Riverfront. Ms. Hindenlang said that the height will be maxed out at 55, which is similar to the rest of downtown. She was unsure as to the exact height of Riverfront but will look into it.
- Mr. Durante asked if open space can be incorporated into the Municipal Building. Ms. Hindenlang said it's a possibility.
- Ms. LaBrutto wanted to make sure that it's 8 units of affordable housing on North Avenue. Ms. Hindenlang said that's correct. Ms. LaBrutto asked if nearby residents have been notified, and Ms. Hindenlang said they have been. Ms. LaBrutto asked about the podium parking on South Avenue and where it would be located. Ms. Hindenlang answered that the podium parking locations will be on Chestnut and South Avenue, and both will be wrapped, screened from public view.

***Motion to adjourn at 10:08 am by Mrs. Mider. Mr. Durante seconded. All were in favor.***

Respectively submitted,  
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator