

CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – JUNE 18, 2021

Present:

Brian Andrews/Deputy Mayor
Joe Colangelo/Resident
Dennis Concha/Business owner
Tom Connolly/Business owner
Paul LaCorte/Property owner
Ashley Legg/Resident
Kristen Mider/Chairwoman
Steve Oliveira/Property owner
Doreen Sayegh/Property owner
Jamie Cryan/Administrator
Rita LaBrutto/Resident
Mike Venditti/Resident
Caren Demyen/ Director
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator

Absent:

Tammie Crispino/Business owner

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 May 2021 minutes by Mrs. Mider, seconded by Mr. Oliveira. Mr. Durante abstained and the rest were in favor.

CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS – Kristen Mider

- Mrs. Mider thanked the Board for their help with the parklets. She said that the parklets look great, though there have been a few complaints about the loss of parking.
- Thanked Mr. Durante for serving on the North Avenue Redevelopment Committee.
- Thanked Ms. Demyen for doing events that bring people downtown.
- Remarked that there have been a number of ribbon cuttings recently, which shows that Downtown Cranford is where people and business owners want to be.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Deputy Mayor Andrews

- Mr. Andrews stated that the process of North Avenue redevelopment has started. Topology has been appointed as the planning agency for the project. Mr. Andrews emphasized that this is the first step in the process and it's going to take some time. The first draft from Topology is expected by August.
- Fireworks will take place in Cranford on July 2.
- Mr. Durante said that the redevelopment submissions were high level. Ms. Demyen said that the Downtown Cranford office hopes to have another meeting with business owners in July about North Avenue redevelopment.
- Mr. LaCorte said that more information is needed on parking. Mr. Cryan replied that the Township is ready to move ahead on a parking study, but wants to make sure that parking is returning to normal first.
- Mr. Venditti asked if the Swan Cleaners building is going to be addressed. Mr. Cryan said that he believes the redevelopment plan may eventually expand to across the street.
- Mr. LaCorte said that Swan Cleaners needs to be knocked down, and that the other business owners in the area also need to be treated respectfully.

- Mr. Colangelo said that he doesn't feel that the DMC Board was given enough information ahead of time and doesn't see an improvement in the rollout of the North Avenue redevelopment plan compared to last time. Mr. LaCorte said that the issue is lack of communication, as well as miscommunication.
- Ms. LaBrutto said that she believes the North Avenue Redevelopment Group is too small. She didn't understand why the plans weren't scored on their financial impact to the town. She also thinks that Swan Cleaners or the MDTV building should be the first priority.
- Mr. Cryan replied that the scoring of the plans was a way to get the conversations started. None of the plans would be considered exactly as submitted and emphasized that the community will be involved in the process.
- Mrs. Mider suggested having Ms. Demyen added to the North Avenue Redevelopment Committee. Mr. Durante added that the public process will help guide what's going to happen. Mr. Andrews said that he hopes this leads to productive dialogue.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Mr. Venditti brought up the issues with the dumpster in Lot 7. In his opinion, Grand Sanitation is the main cause of the problem and he believes the town should terminate the contract. The interim solution he proposed is changing the hauler, as he worries that pulling the dumpster would hurt the business and property owners who currently use it.
- Ms. Demyen asked for permission to change the hauler. Mr. Cryan said that this issue had been going on for too long, and in his opinion the dumpster should go.
- Ms. Demyen said that the owners of The Garlic Rose and Martin Jewelers would like to maintain the dumpster. Her recommendation is to get a new hauler who would be able to pick up the trash Monday through Friday.
- Mr. Oliveira said that as a building owner there, he would be willing to try out a new hauler for six months. Mr. Andrews said that he would be willing to try a new solution for a shorter period of time.
- Mr. LaCorte suggested calling Waste Management, then had to sign off at 9:45.
- Mrs. Mider asked for a vote on hiring a new hauler with a definite time line. All present but Mr. Colangelo voted yes. Ms. Demyen said she'll reach out to the property owners, and Mrs. Mider asked that something be put in writing with those businesses.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Caren Demyen

Monthly Project Report

- Reminded Board of upcoming vacation for Ms. Demyen and Mrs. Stavrou, and that the Municipal Building currently has summer hours.
- Social media followers continue to grow.
- "Day in the Life" series kicked off this month with Marino's and received great feedback. The next featured business will be Perrotti's.
- Upcoming events include music at Eastman Plaza, 21 Acts of Kindness, and more.
- Take Pride in Downtown Cranford is going on all month.
- The Taste of Cranford was a big success.
- 30th Anniversary of Eastman Plaza was held, as well as a recognition of Ellen Ramer's 45th year of working at Martin Jewelers.
- Held 5 ribbon cuttings last month.
- The Post Office Plaza fountain restoration is complete.
- Ms. Demyen will submit a resolution to the Township Committee in July for the gift card program processing fee. She is also waiting for an update from a potential sponsor.
- 2 sponsored benches have been ordered.
- The office is working with the DPW to make sure the flowers are watered.
- Starting today, by request of the Township Committee, Eastman Street will be closed through October 31st. Ten picnic tables will be placed there and umbrellas will also be added at a later date.
- Garbage in the downtown is now being picked up on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday, and the revised schedule seems to be an improvement.

- Ms. Demyen will be submitting a resolution to the Township Committee in July to award the light pole painting project.
- Board asked that MWT build planters for the new concrete barriers on Eastman Street so the parklets have a consistent look.

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

Respectively submitted,
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator