

The Minutes of the **Workshop Meeting** of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **April 8, 2024** at 7:01 p.m.in Room 108.

THIS MEETING IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE “OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT” AS ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY E-MAILING THE ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS TO THE WESTFIELD LEADER, THE UNION COUNTY LOCAL SOURCE, THE STAR LEDGER, AND TAP INTO CRANFORD, BY POSTING SUCH ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE ON A BULLETIN BOARD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING RESERVED FOR SUCH ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THE FILING OF SAID NOTICE WITH THE TOWNSHIP CLERK OF CRANFORD. FORMAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN AT THIS MEETING.

Present: Mayor Brian Andrews
Deputy Mayor Terrence Curran
Commissioner Paul A. Gallo
Commissioner Kathleen Miller Prunty
Commissioner Gina Black

Absent: None

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper, Business Administrator/CFO Lavona Patterson and Township Clerk Patricia Donahue were present. Fire Chief Dan Czeh and Battallion Chief Brian Ingraham were present.

Public Comments

Mayor Andrews opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Ms. Christine Esposito of 11 Behnert Place – referencing the 750 Walnut Avenue construction site, thanked the Members of the Township Committee for certain positive changes; requested the conversion of Behnert Place to a dead-end street; provided examples in Cranford and in Westfield in which streets had been converted to dead-end streets; distributed a rendering of a Complete Street; provided photos of traffic in the area and a mound of dirt; spoke about a recent accident on Walnut Avenue; further elaborated about traffic matters in her neighborhood.

Mayor Andrews, Commissioner Black and Deputy Mayor Curran responded to Ms. Esposito’s remarks.

Ms. Angela Leary of 4 Behnert Place – spoke about the high-speed vehicle traffic on Walnut Avenue; requested Police Department assistance for the area; stated that with the windows closed in her home, she could hear truck traffic.

Mr. David Berke of 6 Behnert Place – stated that he supported his neighbors’ comments; spoke about traffic in the area; stated that he was unable to make a left onto Behnert Place; requested that the process begin as soon as possible; stated he was afraid for what may happen.

Ms. Laura Tarulli of 206 Manor Avenue – referencing Casino Avenue, stated that she was pleased to hear from Business Administrator/CFO Lavona Patterson that she had received the specified maps; spoke about the number of storms in recent months; stated that the Township Consulting Engineer (Kevin Boyer) had recently visited her neighborhood; requested assistance; stated her belief that the Birchwood development had caused problems; stated that things were getting worse.

Mr. Will Thilly of Cranford – inquired about Ordinance No. 2024-06 pertaining to 102-104 and 106 South Avenue West;

Mayor Andrews and Mr. Thilly discussed whether Mr. Thilly had been disruptive in previous Meetings. Mr. Thilly inquired whether there would be a Public Comments section associated with the Public Hearing of the Ordinances at the Official Meeting. Commissioner Black responded.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Andrews closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

Girl Scout Junior Troop No. 40334 -South Union Avenue – Halloween Trick or Treating

Girl Scout leaders Sydney O'Hagan and Stacy Craig and scouts from Girl Scout Junior Troop No. 40334 were present.

Each of the Girl Scouts read different parts of a request pertaining to the closing of a portion of South Union Avenue, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., on Halloween evening. They noted that they had collected signatures in the South Union Avenue area which supported the closure of South Union Avenue on Halloween night. Discussion ensued including discussion regarding forwarding the Girl Scouts' request to the Complete Streets Committee and the Police Department, utilizing temporary garbage containers for the street closure, the extent of the street closure on South Union Avenue and organizing a Bake Sale to underwrite candy distribution. Mayor Andrews requested that the Girl Scouts forward the petition to the Township.

Cranford Dixie Giants Documentary Project

Cranford High School Teacher Christine Szeluga and Cranford High School Student Daniel Argasinski were present.

Ms. Szeluga spoke about recent fundraising which would allow some Cranford High School students to make films, including a documentary about the Cranford Dixie Giants baseball team. Student Daniel Argasinski spoke about installing a bench to commemorate the Cranford Dixie Giants baseball team. Discussion ensued regarding some of the footage expected in the documentary and Ernest Tyree and his home. Committee consensus was reached to move forward with the project.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection-mandated Amended Ordinances

Township Consulting Engineer Kevin Boyer spoke about three (3) ordinances whose consideration and adoption were mandated by the State of New Jersey. He stated that the ordinances had to be adopted by July 2024. Mr. Boyer spoke about matters which would be affected by these ordinances, i.e., tree removal, salt storage and stormwater. Deputy Mayor Curran stated that the Shade Tree Commission would work to have the mandated tree ordinance processed separately.

Regulations for Distributing Unsolicited Advertising Circulars and Newspapers on Private Property

Commissioner Black stated that she had reached out to the circular vendor, via email, regarding the distribution of unsolicited advertising as a violation of the Township Code (ordinances). Discussion ensued regarding the mechanism to stop the described distribution. Township Attorney Ryan Cooper stated that he would look into the matter and provide an update at the following evening's Conference Meeting. Committee consensus was reached to work to end the unsolicited advertising circulars and newspapers.

Amending the Shade Tree Ordinance

Deputy Mayor Curran stated that amending the Shade Tree Ordinance had just been addressed by Township Consulting Engineer Kevin Boyer (during the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection-mandated Amended Ordinances) section of the Agenda.

Amending the Recreation Fees Ordinance

Business Administrator/CFO Lavona Patterson stated that the proposed fee changes did not require amending the Recreation Fees Ordinance (Ordinance No. 2022-26).

New Jersey Historical Commission Membership Fee (Historical Preservation Advisory Board)

Mr. Steve Price and Mr. Jeffrey Pistol, members of the Historical Preservation Advisory Board, were present.

Discussion ensued regarding 1) the benefits of membership in the New Jersey Historical Commission, i.e., seminars and training, 2) no budget assigned to the Historical Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB) and 3) the small amount of the membership fee. Ms. Patterson noted that membership fees were not paid for other volunteer groups. Mr. Pistol spoke about the HPAB work with the historic preservation element of the Master Plan and noted that such work, done by an outside professional, would have cost \$30,000 to \$40,000.

Committee consensus was reached for the Township to underwrite the New Jersey Historical Commission Membership fee for the Historic Preservation Advisory Board.

Cranford Pools Update

Ms. Patterson and Deputy Mayor Curran provided an update about the Cranford Pools and specifically spoke about the clean-up of the Mechanical Room and the Summer Camp trailer, the renovation of the bathrooms at the Cranford YMCA, a ribbon cutting event scheduled for April 24th at the Cranford YMCA, the recent marketing mailings pertaining to the Cranford YMCA and the Outdoor Pools and a membership update. Commissioner Black inquired about Cranford YMCA revenue figures. Deputy Mayor Curran noted that the gas utility bill was very high.

Closed Session Minutes – March 19, 2024

Commissioner Black made a motion to adopt the March 19, 2024 Closed Session Meeting Minutes. Deputy Mayor Curran seconded the motion. Mayor Andrews, Deputy Mayor Curran, Commissioner Gallo, Commissioner Miller Prunty and Commissioner Black voted to approve the Closed Session Meeting Minutes of March 19, 2024.

Public Comments

Mayor Andrews opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Ms. Laura Tarulli of 206 Manor Avenue - requested an update on the Rahway River.

Mayor Andrews spoke about dredging, dikes and the Army Corps of Engineers. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Black requested that Mayor Andrews coordinate a meeting with all of the Members of the Township Committee and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Ms. Loretta Smith of 21 Oneida Place – inquired about the New Jersey-mandated ordinance pertaining to trees. Mr. Cooper responded. Ms. Smith spoke about the removal of large and old trees. She inquired about how the pool membership figures of today related to the same point in time in 2023. Ms. Smith inquired about inspections at 750 Walnut Avenue as well as the berm and expected opening date for the apartments at 750 Walnut Avenue. Discussion ensued.

Don Smith of 21 Oneida Place – provided comments about Affordable Housing obligations including Affordable Housing matters in the municipalities of Clinton and Chatham.

Mayor Andrews stated that he appreciated Mr. Smith's feedback and would discuss Affordable Housing obligations at an upcoming Official Meeting.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Andrews closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

Closed Session

On motion of Commissioner Miller Prunty, seconded by Deputy Mayor Curran and passed, the following resolution was adopted by roll call vote:

Resolution No. 2024-95.8

BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee will go into closed session to discuss the following, the minutes of which will be released at some time in the future at the discretion of the Township Committee:

Legal

- Legal Update
- Cell Tower Litigation
- 750 Walnut Avenue
- 28 Columbia Avenue
- Business (Office) Park Zoning

Personnel

- Fire Department Staffing
- Department of Public Works
- Tax Collector's Department
- Building Department

Minute Review

- Closed Session Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2024

Recorded Vote:

Aye: Mayor Andrews, Deputy Mayor Curran, Commissioners Gallo, Miller Prunty and Black
 Nay: None
 Abstained: None
 Absent: None

On motion of Commissioner Miller Prunty, seconded by Commissioner Black and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 10:15 p.m.

Christian Flag at the Municipal Building Flagpole

Mayor Andrews stated that based on legal counsel received, he would recommend that the Township continue its policy of not accepting flag requests. Discussion ensued. Mayor Andrews suggested that the Township not accept requests to display flags on the flagpole in front of the Municipal Building. He stated that the Clergy Council did not support the display of the Christian Flag. Commissioner Black voted against Mayor Andrews' proposal to not accept requests to display flags in front of the Municipal Building. Mayor Andrews, Deputy Mayor Curran, Commissioner Miller Prunty and Commissioner Gallo expressed their support for Mayor Andrews proposal to not accept requests to display flags on the flagpole in front of the Municipal Building.

750 Walnut Avenue Update

Deputy Mayor Curran stated that 750 Walnut Avenue updates could be accessed on the Township website. Discussion ensued regarding the "mound of dirt", signage, converting Behnert Place to a dead-end street, requesting the Police Department's assistance in assessing traffic matters and whether certain street changes should be delayed until after the opening of the 750 Walnut Avenue complex.

Review Official Meeting Agenda

Mayor Andrews and Township Clerk Patricia Donahue reviewed the Proclamations which were scheduled to be read at the following evening's Official Meeting as well as expected attendees associated with the Proclamations. Township Clerk Patricia Donahue stated that a resolution had been added to the Official Meeting Agenda pertaining to going to bid for the Hanson House Roof Replacement Project.

Business Administrator/CFO Report

Business Administrator/CFO Lavona Patterson provided updates on these matters:

- Local Public Health Shared Services Proposal
- Bulk Waste Collection Services Bid
- Union County Improvement Authority - Fire Apparatus funding
- The Guy Borges Memorial Drive dedication
- The Township Budget

Commissioner Report

Commissioner Miller Prunty briefed the Township Committee about the County of Union Footbridge renovation project (between Riverside Drive and Balmiere Parkway).

On motion of Commissioner Black, seconded by Deputy Mayor Curran and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 10:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: April 8, 2024

Patricia Donahue, RMC
Township Clerk