

The Minutes of the **Workshop Meeting** of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **April 11, 2022** at **7:05 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 TOWN HALL 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 Kathleen Prunty
Deputy Mayor Jason Gareis
Commissioner Brian Andrews
Commissioner Gina Black
Commissioner Mary O'Connor

Absent: None

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper, Interim Administrator and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Lavona Patterson and Township Clerk Patricia Donahue were present.

Public Comments

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

Members of the Public provided these comments about Parklets:

Ms. Penny Andrews of 7 Harvard Road – stated that she was against parklets and did not want parklets on North Union Avenue.

Ms. Kathy Vastola of 32 North Avenue West – of *Breadsmith* spoke against parklets and noted that with her work at *Breadsmith*, the parklets resulted in a shortage of parking. Ms. Vastola stated that deliveries were made more difficult, including deliveries for flour and eggs. She stated that seven (7) parking spots would be lost with the parklets' installation and stated the parklets were a problem for businesses and tenants.

Mr. Vincent Savinelli of 28 Eastman Street – of *Vinny's Pizza* and the *Yale Terrace Brewing Company* stated that product costs had doubled. He stated that the installation of the parklets "helps us pay our bills" and elaborated.

Mr. Peter Merrigan of 26 Eastman Street – of the *Yale Terrace Brewery* spoke about the dramatic increase in prices including the price for grain. He stated that the installation of parklets help his business. Mr. Merrigan then spoke about parking.

Mr. Alan Valenti of 102B North Union Avenue – of *Playa Bowls* stated that parklets bring in business and elaborated. He stated that his business neighbor, Franco, who shared his parklet, wanted Mr. Valenti to speak on his behalf. Mr. Valenti stated that Cranford saved them and spoke about how Mayor Miller Prunty and Ms. Caren Demyen assisted him.

Ms. Judy Swick of 36 North Avenue – of *Chapman Brothers* spoke about her parking concerns. She stated that parklets took away from parking.

Ms. Penny Andrews of 7 Harvard Road – inquired if parklets were to be used for food pickup. She inquired if the Township had to follow the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the New Jersey American with Disabilities Act regulations. She stated that the Township’s parklets weren’t being “done” correctly. Ms. Andrews stated that there should not be parklets on North Union Avenue.

Mr. Alan Valente of 102B North Union Avenue – spoke about the utilization of parklets on South Street in Morristown.

Ms. Penny Andrews of 7 Harvard Road – stated that the streets were wider in Morristown.

Ms. Cindy Capodice of 312 Retford Avenue – of *Strands Hair and Wig Salon* spoke about parking. She inquired whether parking could be turned over more quickly.

Ms. Caren Demyen, Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) Director – spoke about the upcoming Parking Study.

Other Public Comments:

Ms. Rita LaBrutto of 104 Arlington Road – spoke about the proposed North Avenue Redevelopment Plan and stated that four (4) stories were too much for the area. She recommended a building height of two (2) stories. She stated that the Township could not leave this type of decision to a Judge’s discretion.

Mr. Christos Zavolas of 29 Union Avenue North - of *Ambeli Greek Taverna* stated that Cranford had become the envy of Union County. Mr. Zavolas noted that “we are always here for Cranford” and briefly elaborated. He stated that COVID had introduced Cranford to European eating. Mr. Zavolas stated that he was seeking the Township’s assistance and stated that they needed high volume in order to survive. Mr. Zavolas stated that restaurant owners need the volume and asked that other business owners understand.

Commissioner O’Connor inquired about North Union Avenue, specifically the pedestrian traffic as it pertained to the sidewalk and blacktop.

Mr. Christos Zavolas of 29 Union Avenue North – of *Ambeli Greek Taverna* spoke about Cranford restaurants and the various scenarios.

Ms. Caren Demyen, Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) Director – spoke about the Township’s authorization of a Streetscape Improvement Plan Study.

Ms. Penny Andrews of 7 Harvard Road - stated that people picking up “take-out” orders parked in front at her establishment.

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

Closed Session

On motion of Commissioner O’Connor, seconded by Commissioner Black and passed, the following resolution was adopted by roll call vote:

Resolution No. 2022-98.8

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
- North Avenue Redevelopment Area

Personnel

- Collective Bargaining
- Fire Department
- Department of Public Works
- Salary Ordinance

Contractual

- Centennial Avenue Fitness Center Operations

Recorded Vote:

Aye: Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Gareis, Commissioners Andrews, Black & O’Connor

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

On motion of Mayor Miller Prunty, seconded by Commissioner Black and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 8:42 p.m.

North Avenue Redevelopment Area

Township Consulting Planner Annie Hindenlang and Township Consulting Affordable Housing Counsel Michael Edwards were present virtually via video teleconference. Township Consulting Redevelopment Attorney Michael Ash was present.

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper provided an overview of the North Avenue Redevelopment Plan (Plan) process. He stated that a Request for Proposal (RFP) would occur during the year,

but the Plan's adoption deadline was May 11, 2022. Mr. Cooper stated that two (2) specific business owners on North Avenue were eager to see the Plan move forward. Commissioner Black inquired about flood zone language in the Plan. Commissioner O'Connor stated that she was also concerned about flooding. Mr. Cooper responded that appropriate wording would be placed in the Redevelopment Agreement. Commissioner O'Connor requested that clauses be added to the Redevelopment Agreement regarding 1) a maintenance bond pertaining to flooding and 2) the number of proposed housing units could not change.

Commissioner Black spoke about her concerns regarding parking. Mayor Miller Prunty responded that the Township would be embarking on a parking study. Ms. Hindenlang spoke about the standard parking dimensions of 250 feet to 300 feet. She noted that in addition to public parking spots, private property could be utilized. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Edwards stated that the Township had an agreement with the Fair Share Housing Center. He stated that the Township was at the end of a very long process and noted that the Township needed to fulfill its obligation. He stated that the Township needed eight (8) more units. Commissioner Black requested the definition of "satisfy". Mr. Edwards stated that the Plan had to be adopted by May 11, 2022.

Commissioner Black stated that the design standards from the Plan had been "cut and pasted" from the 750 Walnut Avenue Redevelopment Plan. She inquired about the "detailing" of the Plan. Ms. Hindenlang responded and noted that the described design standards were from the South and Chestnut Plan and would ensure high quality. Discussion ensued.

Parklets 2022

Downtown District Management Corporation (DMC) Director Caren Demyen was present.

Ms. Demyen spoke about the proposed establishment of the temporary use of parklets. Mayor Miller Prunty inquired about Municipal Lot No. 7. Referencing the comments made by Ms. Vastola, Mayor Miller Prunty requested that the DMC work with the Police Department on the delivery issues. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Andrews stated that the two (2) leading questions regarding this matter were the maintenance of the parklets and whether owners should pay for the parklets. Ms. Demyen responded. She spoke about the maintenance issue and stated that each owner had to sign an agreement.

Commissioner Black spoke about civilian tickets, her concern regarding North Union Avenue, and stopping metered parking during the parklets' period. Referencing a stop to metered parking, Deputy Mayor Gareis spoke about a revenue loss. Ms. Demyen stated that efforts were made to educate drivers and stated that parking had been through a 180 degree change in the past two (2) years.

Commissioner O'Connor stated that occupancy no longer seemed tied to parklets. She stated that we had to look out for the businesses, i.e., train the drivers. Ms. Demyen noted that despite the sentiment that Cranford was doing well, some businesses would probably close.

Commissioner O'Connor inquired if the Township could use space in Municipal Parking Lot No. 1 for use by Uber drivers. Ms. Demyen responded that Commissioner O'Connor's request could be reviewed. Ms. Demyen stated that nearby municipalities were utilizing parklets. Interim Administrator and CFO Patterson spoke about the timing of the Parking Study and the Streetscape study.

Township Curbing Policy

Township Consulting Engineer Jacqueline Dirmann was present virtually and via teleconference.

Mayor Miller Prunty asked members of the Township Committee if they had any curbing questions for Ms. Dirmann. Commissioner Black inquired if a decision tree should be drafted. Commissioner Black inquired if more decisive curbing policy wording should be drafted. Ms. Dirmann inquired if Township Attorney Cooper could assist her with such work. She spoke about the mixture of road conditions in Cranford.

Ms. Dirmann left the Workshop Meeting at 9:27 p.m.

Referring to the proposed Curbing Policy, Commissioner Black requested clarification for the word "predominant". Township Attorney Ryan Cooper stated that "predominant" would mean fifty (50) per cent. Commissioner Black responded that the wording of fifty (50) per cent should be utilized. Township Clerk Patricia Donahue inquired whether the proposed curbing policy would be instituted through an ordinance or a resolution. Mr. Cooper stated that the policy would be instituted through a resolution which he would draft with Ms. Dirmann's assistance and stated that such resolution would be distributed.

Summer Hours and Hours of Operation

Interim Township Administrator and CFO Lavona Patterson spoke about a summer hour schedule for Municipal employees. She stated that summer hours had been in effect since 2018. Ms. Patterson stated that the summer hours would occur on Fridays between July 1st and Labor Day Weekend.

Ms. Patterson proved a quick overview of the proposed hours of operation, specifically moving the Municipal employee start time from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Commissioner O'Connor stated that change would be good for both employee retention and morale. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that she would prefer an 8:30 a.m. start time instead of a 4:00 p.m. close time.

Commissioner O'Connor suggested an 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. work day for Municipal employees. Committee consensus was reached that the Municipal employee work day would change to 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mayor Miller Prunty inquired whether a resolution was needed

for the hours of operation change. Township Attorney Ryan Cooper stated that he would look into this matter.

Review Official Meeting Agenda

Township Clerk Patricia Donahue stated that resolutions updates had been emailed to the Township Committee earlier that day regarding Resolution No. 2022-184 (pertaining to the resignation of Firefighter Hurewitz), Resolution No. 2022-195 (pertaining to an Environmental Commission grant application with the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC)), and Resolution No. 2022-199 (pertaining to a grant application with the Union County Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund). She stated that the Finance Department had sent an updated Bill List.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Andrews stated that gas work would be starting again on South Avenue.

Public Comments

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

Ms Rita LaBrutto of 104 Arlington Road – spoke about page 18 of the Redevelopment Plan. Township Attorney Ryan Cooper stated that the members of the public had selected the pictures. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that there were standards in the Redevelopment Plan. She said the DMC would have a role in this matter.

Mr. Paul LaCorte, Chair of the Redevelopment Subcommittee – stated that he “heard” both the Commissioners’ concerns and Ms. LaBrutto’s concerns regarding the North Avenue Redevelopment Plan. He stated that the Township was fortunate to have a historical architectural firm at their service and they would be utilized. Mr. LaCorte requested questions be brought to him. He stated that their main goal was to communicate. Mr. LaCorte stated that there were parking concerns and spoke about Mr. Anthony Durante’s expertise in such field. He spoke about the Township’s May 11th deadline. Mr. LaCorte stated that the Subcommittee was “here to help”. He stated that the Township would end up with a very good project.

Ms. Judy Swick of 36 North Avenue – of *Chapman Brothers* spoke about the unused commuter parking lot in the Township Lot on North Union Avenue.

Mayor Miller Prunty responded that the Township would look into this.

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

Closed Session

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

Resolution No. 2022-98.8

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:

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Personnel

- Collective Bargaining
- Fire Department
- Department of Public Works
- Salary Ordinance

Contractual

- Centennial Avenue Fitness Center Operations

Recorded Vote:

Aye: Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Gareis, Commissioners Andrews, Black & O'Connor

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

On motion of Commissioner O'Connor, seconded by Commissioner Black and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 10:25 p.m.

On motion of Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Donahue
Township Clerk

Dated: April 11, 2022