

The Minutes of the **Workshop Meeting** of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **April 26, 2022** at **6:35 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, Police Chief Ryan Greco, Acting Township 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. Hearing no comments, Mayor Miller Prunty closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

Closed Session

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

Resolution No. 2022-98.9

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

Personnel

- Building Department
- Department of Public Works
- Police Department
- Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Contractual

- Westfield YMCA

- PSE&G

Recorded Vote:

Aye: Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Gareis, Commissioners Andrews, Black & O'Connor
Nay: None
Abstained: None
Absent: None

On motion of Commissioner Black, seconded by Commissioner Andrews and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 7:18 p.m.

The Vine & Oak Tavern Awning Request

Discussion ensued regarding a request from the Vine & Oak Tavern to install an awning at the Walnut Street storefront at 100 South Avenue East which would overhang the Township right-of-way. Commissioner O'Connor spoke about the large amount of traffic. Mayor Miller Prunty spoke about awning dimensions which were law-abiding. Commissioner Andrews suggested that the awning request from the Vine & Oak Tavern be moved to the next Township Committee Meeting.

Escrow and Fees

Township Consulting Planners Greer Patras and Justin Cutroneo were present virtually via video teleconference.

Township Consulting Planner Greer Patras provided a description of escrow and application fees noting that the monies collected by the Township's land use boards pay the professional costs incurred for "work done on the application". Ms. Patras stated that there were some issues with the current escrow and application fees, including that the fees were not in line with market rates and that the Township fees had not been evaluated in at least ten (10) years. Commissioner Andrews spoke about residents who do not expect the actual project costs as the current escrow and fees were not aligned with the current cost of processing an application.

Ms. Greer stated that the proposed escrow and application fees were fair and accurate as well as transparent and predictable. She noted that she had both 1) heard residents' anecdotal experiences with the current fee schedule and 2) spoken to professionals about the proposed escrow and application fees.

Mr. Cutroneo left the Closed Session Meeting (virtually) at 7:30 p.m.

Ms. Patras stated that there were a few major take-ways: 1. The total cost of doing business with Cranford would be the same, but the proposed escrow and fee schedule would be packaged differently; 2) applications had been reviewed for the last five (5) years to develop the proposed changes. Both internal and external processes would be more transparent; and 3) the use of the Township's resources would be improved.

Ms. Patras stated that if an account was overfunded, the monies would be returned to the resident. Ms. Patras then reviewed her April 22nd memo to the Township Committee. Ms. Patras stated that the proposed changes were 1) consistent with Cranford and 2) were good or better than surrounding towns. Ms. Patras stated that if the proposed changes were agreeable to the Commissioners, she would then work with Township Attorney Ryan Cooper to prepare a Township ordinance. Commissioner Andrews stated that the Township's Zoning Department staff spent part of their work time pursuing the requisite escrow and application fees and briefly elaborated. Ms. Greer noted that the applicants seemed to have an issue with the "push and pull" of the escrow and application fee process but not the monies required.

Commissioner Black stated that she would be interested in reviewing other towns' data. Mayor Miller Prunty requested that such data be sent to Township Clerk Donahue.

Review Official Meeting Agenda

Commissioner Andrews inquired about the resolution pertaining to concessions at the Orange Avenue Pool (Resolution No. 2022-13). Township Attorney Ryan Cooper stated that the resolution for consideration at the evening's Official Meeting pertained to extending the concessions contract at the Orange Avenue Pool. He stated that a resolution pertaining to a new concessions vendor at the Centennial Avenue Pool was expected to be considered at the next Township Committee Official Meeting.

Commissioner Andrews inquired if the resolution regarding change orders at 375 Centennial Avenue was the end of the change orders pertaining to 375 Centennial Avenue (Resolution No. 2022-11). Commissioner Black responded that the change order for consideration at the evening's Official Meeting was the largest change order and noted that there was a contingency in the 375 Centennial Avenue budget for change orders.

Township Clerk inquired if the Vine & Oak awning matter should be an Agenda topic on the following Township Committee Meeting. Mayor Miller Prunty responded "yes".

The Township Committee moved to Council Chambers at 7:41 p.m. to conduct the Official Meeting.

On motion of Commissioner O'Connor, seconded by Deputy Mayor Gareis and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 9:14 p.m.

Late Starter - Contractual – PSE&G Approval

Commissioner Black made a motion to adopt the following action "authorize the Township to enter into an agreement with PSE&G to refurbish and upgrade HVAC equipment and lighting at the Community Center". Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion. Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Gareis and Commissioners Andrews, Black and O'Connor voted to approve the motion.

Minute Approval - Closed Session Minutes of January 10, 2022

Deputy Mayor Gareis made a motion to adopt the January 10, 2022 Closed Session Minutes. Commissioner Black seconded the motion. Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Gareis and Commissioners Andrews, Black and O'Connor voted to approve the Closed Session minutes of January 10, 2022.

Closed Session

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

Resolution No. 2022-98.9

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

Personnel

- Building Department
- Department of Public Works
- Police Department
- Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Contractual

- Westfield YMCA
- PSE&G

Recorded Vote:

Aye: Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Gareis, Commissioners Andrews, Black & O'Connor
Nay: None
Abstained: None
Absent: None

On motion of Deputy Mayor Gareis, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 9:25 p.m.

Late Starter – Downtown Management Commission and North Avenue Redevelopment

Commissioner Black spoke about her dissatisfaction with the Redevelopment agreement process Deputy Mayor Gareis inquired if she was referring to the Downtown Management Corporation's (DMC) North Avenue Redevelopment Committee (Committee). Commissioner Black responded "yes". Discussion ensued about the difficulty in members of the Township Committee attending the DMC meetings on a rotational basis. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that she was glad that this matter had been raised. She stated that there was history regarding DMC's involvement (with

redevelopment issues) and briefly elaborated. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that she agreed that the rotation of Commissioner attendance at the DMC North Avenue Redevelopment Meetings was difficult.

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper inquired if the problem was the product or the process. He spoke about the North Avenue Redevelopment Plan adoption. He stated that the DMC was receiving input from stakeholders and professionals. He stated that reports as suggested by Commissioner Black made a lot of sense. Mr. Cooper spoke about how the Open Public Meeting Act (OPMA) affected the DMC review process.

Commissioner O'Connor stated that the North Avenue Redevelopment project was not just a DMC project -- it was a Cranford project. Commissioner O'Connor stated that it seemed members of the DMC had been coached. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that she wanted to go back to the subject of the process. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that the Township was asking the DMC to "weigh in" on the North Avenue Redevelopment Plan. She stated that the DMC had been very active with both the Cranford Crossing and the Riverfront projects. Discussion ensued regarding Committee composition (Commissioner O'Connor), resident input (Deputy Mayor Gareis) and being elected to give her opinion (Commissioner Black). Commissioner Black stated that the DMC was a single-minded organization. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that the DMC was not a single-minded group. Commissioner Andrews stated that the DMC wanted the Commissioners involved with this process and briefly elaborated. Further discussion ensued including a discussion suggestion that only the Township Committee's DMC liaison attend the North Avenue Redevelopment Committee meetings (Mayor Miller Prunty), discomfort regarding the situation (Commissioner Black) and sending the DMC recommendations (Mr. Cooper). Mayor Miller Prunty suggested that the DMC North Avenue Redevelopment Committee attend the Township Committee meetings. Commissioner Black stated that her experience was that the Plan was brought to the Township Committee for a vote. Discussion ensued including discussion as to whether the DMC Committee should attend the Workshop Meetings regularly.

Commissioner Black spoke about the North Avenue Redevelopment Plan, eminent domain and the building height of four (4) stories. Commissioner O'Connor spoke about the North Avenue Redevelopment Plan and stated that it seemed that the Plan's components could not be changed due to the May 11th deadline. She also spoke about her concerns pertaining to eminent domain and the building height of four (4) stories. Discussion ensued regarding the inclusion of eminent domain in the North Avenue Redevelopment Plan and whether it would be utilized.

Deputy Mayor Gareis stated that no one liked the Affordable Housing laws but they keep getting upheld. He stated that decisions have to be made within that paradigm. Commissioner Black stated that she did not have a problem with Affordable Housing. She stated that she had a problem with the North Avenue Redevelopment Plan and stated that the Township did not have to default to the 80/20 proportion of housing, i.e., twenty (20) per cent of affordable housing units.

Discussion then ensued on the 80/20 proportion of market rate and affordable housing units. Township Attorney Ryan Cooper provided an overview of Affordable Housing milestones since 2016. Discussion ensued. Deputy Mayor Gareis spoke about what had to be done to meet the Township's legal obligations and stated that the alternative was worse.

Mayor Miller Prunty stated that she had some reaction regarding the condemnation aspect of the North Avenue Redevelopment Plan. She stated that it was unfair to suggest that the DMC was a rehearsed group of people and briefly elaborated. Commissioner O'Connor spoke about Builder's Remedy lawsuits. Mayor Miller Prunty spoke about the Woodmont project and how its total housing unit increased because of litigation.

On motion of Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Black and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 10:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: April 26, 2022

Patricia Donahue
Township Clerk