

The Minutes of the **Workshop Meeting** of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **May 9, 2022** at 7:00 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 Kathleen Prunty  
Deputy Mayor Jason Gareis  
Commissioner Brian Andrews  
Commissioner Gina Black  
Commissioner Mary O’Connor

Absent: None

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper, Administrator Jamie Cryan, 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.

### **South & Chestnut Redevelopment Agreement**

Mr. Brandon Boffard, Mr. Josh Mann and Mr. Josh Sternberg of Iron Ore Properties LLC were present.

Mr. Josh Sternberg introduced Architect Alvelino Martinez.

Mr. Martinez spoke about the proposed building at 201 Walnut Avenue, specifically about the proposed development plans including number of duplex units (eight), the parking, landscaping, alternating colors façade, flat roof and row house “look”.

Mayor Miller Prunty inquired about the door entryway and whether such doors would go directly into the units. The architect responded that the doors would go directly into the units. He then spoke further about the “look” of the units towards High Street, i.e., the facades would utilize more siding and less brick. Mr. Martinez spoke both about fence plans and the planting of holly trees.

Discussion ensued including discussion regarding back siding and paint colors(Commissioner Black), balconies and façade (Commissioner O’Connor), traffic flow (Deputy Commissioner

Gareis), the Police Traffic Unit's input and whether the Unit agreed with the proposal (Mayor Miller Prunty), parking spaces (Commissioner Black), total number of units (Commissioner O'Connor), gates (Mayor Miller Prunty), stormwater data available for planning (Commissioner Black), Civil Engineering work (Mr. Boffard), cost (Commissioner Black), the increased cost of building due to the flood management conditions (Mr. Mann), the proposed agreement and the Township's expected contribution (Commissioner Black) and contingent factors affecting the project's progress (Commissioner Black).

### **Cranford Sign Ordinance**

Mr. Graham Petto of Topology NJ, LLC and Caren Demyen, Downtown District Management Corporation (DMC) Director were present.

Mr. Petto introduced himself. He stated that he had partnered with DMC Director Caren Demyen since September 2021 on the sign ordinance matter. Mr. Petto summarized the proposed changes. Ms. Demyen stated that the proposed changes would assist businesses outside of the Downtown area as well as sign manufacturers and sign installers. Discussion ensued regarding the number of non-conforming signs in the Township (Commissioner O'Connor), the exemption of temporary signs (Mr. Petto), enforcement (Deputy Mayor Gareis), the notification to business owners regarding non-conformance (Mayor Miller Prunty), DMC's feedback regarding the proposed sign ordinance (Deputy Mayor Gareis) and fees (Commissioner Black).

### **Late Starter – Zoning Map**

Administrator Jamie Cryan inquired about work pertaining to a new Township Zoning map. Mr. Petto stated that an interactive map tool had been created which combined flood information and zoning information into one map.

### **Escrow Fees Ordinance**

Graham Petto of Topology NJ, LLC was present.

Mr. Petto spoke about proposed escrow and application fees and referred to the backup materials in the Agenda package which included surrounding community application and escrow fee information. Discussion ensued regarding how the proposed changes would be more efficient for the professional staff (Mayor Miller Prunty) and the refunding of unspent escrow monies to the applicant if a balance remained (Mayor Miller Prunty).

Consensus was reached among the members of the Township Committee to move forward with the preparation of ordinances which would 1) amend the Township's current sign design standards and 2) amend the Township's current application and escrow fees.

### **Vine & Oak Tavern Awning Request**

Administrator Jamie Cryan spoke about a retractable awning request for Vine & Oak Tavern. He explained that the Township Committee had to approve awnings which were over four (4) feet.

Discussion ensued regarding 1) Vine & Oak Tavern's interest in an awning which would cover outdoor tables and 2) if the Township Committee reached consensus to move forward then this matter would be moved to the Zoning Board. Commissioner Black stated that the area in discussion was too busy and included street lights. Township Attorney Cooper stated that the request was preliminary and inquired if the Township Committee had an "appetite to move forward". Mayor Miller Prunty stated that she did not have an interest in an awning which would go beyond what was permitted.

### **Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) Update**

Cranford RVSA Commissioner Chris Kolibas was present. Various RVSA staff were present including Executive Director James Meehan, Engineer John Buonocore and Treasurer Karen Musialowicz. The RVSA representatives distributed two (2) handouts which were titled: 1) Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority Budget Trending and 2) Cranford Components of Yearly Operating Portion.

Mr. Kolibas provided an introduction to the "RVSA Update" Agenda topic. Executive Director Meehan provided a RVSA status, and specifically spoke about supply chain issues, the co-generation system, health benefits increases and labor cost increases. Mr. Meehan stated that Cranford's proportion of the total RVSA flow was ten (10) per cent and elaborated about Cranford's usage. Mr. Meehan then spoke about an upcoming special project partnership with Waste Management

Mayor Miller Prunty noted that a Township Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) project should assist with the Township's usage. Mr. Meehan stated that Cranford's systems should be "tightened up" and suggested the adoption of a specific type of ordinance. Chief Financial Officer Patterson stated that Cranford had experienced a contribution increase of twenty-one (21) per cent. Mr. Buonocore and Ms. Musialowicz spoke about RVSA billing and average daily flow. Mr. Cryan inquired how the Township could guard against an increase of twenty-one (21) per cent. Discussion ensued. A RVSA representative suggested that the Township conduct an I & I study.

Commissioner Andrews inquired about the other municipalities' increases and whether they were as large as Cranford's increase. Deputy Mayor Gareis inquired about an aging system and why its usage went up and down. A RVSA representative spoke about the factors that affect a decline in a municipality's usage, i.e., 1) the fixing of pipes and 2) companies leaving a municipality, and referenced Woodbridge in such example.

Ms. Patterson spoke about the Township's increase of twenty-one (21) per cent and stated that the Township needed some guidance. She inquired about the top five (5) or ten (10) things to stop the increases. Discussion ensued regarding the adoption of an ordinance which could positively impact Cranford's contribution. Ms. Patterson inquired about the size of the RVSA budget and the sources of the RVSA budget. Ms. Musialowicz responded that the budget was assessed at twenty-nine (29) million dollars and encompassed eleven (11) municipalities.

Mr. Buonocore reviewed three (3) lines, specifically, assessments to members, debt service and operating expenses. Ms. Patterson stated that a twenty one (21) per cent increase was a large

increase. Commissioner Andrews stated that RVSA 's expenses went up and Cranford took a larger piece of the increased costs. Mr. Meehan stated that 1) Cranford's I & I needed to be improved and 2) the Township's flow had increased. Further discussion ensued including discussion regarding variable costs and capital costs.

### **375 Centennial Avenue Update**

Mr. Jeffrey Curry, Project Manager of DMR Architects was present.

Mr. Curry stated that the project work at 375 Centennial Avenue was eighty (80) per cent complete. He spoke about the delivery of lighting scheduled for that week. Mr. Curry stated that once the lights were received, the floor work could begin. He stated that the painting could start during the following week. Mayor Miller Prunty inquired about the netting. Further discussion ensued regarding lacrosse play to begin after the installation of the netting, netting and painting costs to be allocated to the reserve account, the expected open date (July or August), lighting, floor installation, floor surface (uneven versus flat) and a request for a timeline (Commissioner Black) and project work calendar (Commissioner Andrews). Mr. Curry then spoke further about the floor, lockers, clearing of the brush and back board installation. He stated that the bathroom work was completed, the furnace was installed and the lobby work was completed. Discussion ensued including discussion about the facility's open date.

### **Repeal of Cranford's Single Use Plastic Bag Ordinance**

Mr. Cooper stated that the enactment of the State of New Jersey law regarding single use plastics became effective on November 4, 2022. He stated that this law (P.L. 2020, c. 117) superseded any municipal ordinance concerning the prohibition of single-use plastic bags. Mr. Cooper stated that consideration of Cranford's repeal of the Township's 2019 single use plastic bags ordinance would be considered at the following evening's Official Meeting through the first reading (introduction) and consideration of Ordinance No. 2022-14.

### **Pay to Play Ordinance**

Mr. Cooper stated that to prepare for the "Pay to Play" ordinance memo and discussion, he reviewed 2021 Township Committee candidate campaign finance disclosure information. Mr. Cooper inquired 1) how the members of the Township Committee would like to move forward with a "Pay to Play" ordinance and 2) what parts of the proposed ordinance they did like.

Commissioner O'Connor stated that vendors were missing from the report, specifically Johnson Controls. Commissioner Black stated that the presented information was incomplete. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that members of the Township Committee should review the compiled information.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed "Pay to Play" ordinance including discussion about Maplewood's Pay to Play ordinance, "dark" money and Super PAC's (political action committees) (Commissioner Andrews) and the length of the look-back period (Administrator Cryan). Mr. Cooper spoke about 1) other Union County municipalities and "Pay to Play"

practices and 2) the State of New Jersey statutes pertaining to “Pay to Play”. Commissioner Black requested a copy of such State statutes. Mr. Cooper responded that such statutes encompass many books. Commissioner Andrews inquired about the timing of the ordinance process.

### **Review Official Meeting Agenda**

Mayor Miller Prunty stated that the Clerk’s office would add as a “late starter” to the Official Meeting Agenda a resolution pertaining to a contract change order to Tri-Form Construction, Inc. for additional improvements (netting) for the renovation of the Recreation Center at 375 Centennial 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 – inquired if there were any initiatives to bring in business to the Office Park. She then inquired about Affordable Housing at Chestnut Street, specifically whether there was supposed to be a Group Home. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. William Thilly of 22 Bloomingdale Avenue - inquired what the picture of South Avenue and Chestnut Street would look like in ten (10) years.

Referring to the proposed sign ordinance, Mr. Thilly inquired if the town would look boring.

Mr. Thilly stated the he agreed with the Township Committee regarding the Vine & Oak awning matter.

Referring to the RVSA, Mr. Thilly stated that the Township paid for the mistakes of RVSA. He spoke further about RVSA pipes, rates and usage. Mr. Thilly inquired if the Township could move to a new sewage provider.

Mr. Thilly spoke about what he perceived as excuses made by Mr. Curry regarding the Recreation Center Facility (Facility) at 375 Centennial Avenue. He commented and inquired about the Facility’s lights and flooring.

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. 2022-98.10**

**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
- Property Inventory
- South Street and Chestnut Avenue
- 750 Walnut Avenue

Personnel

- Collective Bargaining

Recorded Vote:

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

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

On motion of Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 10:43 p.m.

On motion of Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 10:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Donahue  
Township Clerk

Dated: May 9, 2022