

The Minutes of the Workshop Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **July 12, 2021 at 7:01 p.m.** remotely and by electronic means.

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 Miller Prunty
Deputy Mayor Brian Andrews
Commissioner Jason Gareis
Commissioner Thomas H. Hannen, Jr.*
Commissioner Mary O'Connor

Absent: None

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper, Township Clerk Patricia Donahue and Township Consulting Engineer Jacqueline Dirmann were present.

Commissioner Hannen arrived at 7:08 p.m.

Public Comments

Mayor Miller Prunty stated that the Township Committee would now hear Public Comments. She noted that the Township Committee may not directly respond to each member of the public's remarks, but would respond to questions and comments raised that night at a later time.

Ms. Barbara Krause of 20 Pittsfield Street inquired about the Township of Clark's recent decision to ban cannabis. Mayor Miller Prunty spoke about the recently-introduced Township ordinance pertaining to cannabis. She stated that Cannabis Legislation Working Group would present a recommendation to the Township of Cranford on how to move forward with cannabis legislation. Commissioner O'Connor stated that the Township's proposed cannabis ordinance would give the Township time to make a decision regarding cannabis matters, i.e., it gave the Township a holding period. She noted that if we didn't move forward with the proposed ordinance, the Township would be forced to follow the State's cannabis legislation.

Mr. Brian Lopez of 29 Wade Avenue inquired why members of the public couldn't ask questions during a public meeting. Administrator Cryan stated that he would respond to Mr. Lopez that day or the following day regarding questions raised. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Mark Zucker of 19 Pershing Avenue spoke about a recent article which appeared in the Star Ledger. He stated that the article covered the experience of a municipality in New England dealing with the cannabis matter. Mr. Zucker spoke briefly about cannabis legislation in New Jersey. Commissioner Gareis commented that he too had seen the article and briefly elaborated.

Ms. Phyllis Kivett-Howard of 5 Burnside Avenue inquired about the new Splash Pad's (at Orange Avenue Pool) funding and the location of the Splash Pad. Ms. Kivett-Howard inquired whether chairs could be moved to the Orange Avenue Pool. Mayor Miller Prunty asked Administrator Jamie Cryan to work with Mr. Robertazzi to get more chairs moved to the Orange Avenue Pool. Commissioner Hannen stated that the installation of the Splash Pad was recommended by Recreation Director Steve Robertazzi as a way to draw more people to join the (Orange Avenue) Pool. Chief Financial Officer Lavona Patterson stated that the cost of running the Township's three (3) pools totaled \$1.7 million and the membership revenue in 2020 was approximately \$600,000. Ms. Patterson spoke about how the State of New Jersey's (COVID-19) financial administration programs and guidelines shape the Pool's financials. Ms. Kivett-Howard stated that she was confused how the Township could spend approximately \$300,000 on a Splash Pad. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that a Splash Pad installation has proven to bring in more

membership revenue. Ms. Kivett-Howard requested that a pickle ball playing area be installed at the Orange Avenue Pool.

Ms. Gina Black of 34 Columbia Avenue stated that she agreed with Ms. Kivett-Howard's request to install a pickle ball playing area at the Orange Avenue Pool. Ms. Black requested that representatives from the Cranford swim teams be included in the newly-formed Pool Planning Committee

North Avenue Gateway Redevelopment Community Input Plan

Ms. Annie Hindenlang of Topology NJ LLC (Topology) presented a plan that would seek Cranford community input for the North Avenue Gateway Redevelopment Plan. She stated that proposed public engagement would include use of a drop box, access to an on-line (quick) survey and access to an email named "redvelopment@cranfordnj.org" Ms. Hindenlang stated that representatives from Topology would be 1) conducting "drop-in" sessions at community events such as Township festivals and at the Train Station and 2) conducting structured Town Hall session(s.) She spoke about meeting with various Township groups such as the Downtown Management Corporation (DMC,) the Green Team, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee and the Cranford Jaycees. Mayor Miller Prunty suggested that the Topology representatives also meet with business owners. Ms. Hindenlang asked for input on groups to meet with and events to attend. Discussion ensued including discussion on how residents could reach Topology, i.e., small paper "giveaways" with Topology contact information (Mayor Miller Prunty,) QR codes (Commissioner O'Connor) and pencils stamped with the drop-box address (Commissioner Gareis.)

2020 Township Annual Audit

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Lavona Patterson spoke about the Township's Summary of 2020 Audit Report. She noted the difficult times faced by the Township during 2020 due to the Coronavirus public health crisis. Ms. Patterson stated that the Township's 2020 Audit Corrective Action Plan only had one (1) recommendation. Ms. Patterson thanked the Township employees for their work which resulted in a very good audit review and report and allowed the Township to maintain their excellent profile. Commissioner O'Connor thanked CFO Patterson and her staff.

"Rails to Trails Union County" Advocacy Group

Deputy Mayor Andrews and resident Jay Stevens provided an overview of the "Rails to Trails" program. Commissioner Hannen inquired about the purpose of the Trail. Mr. Stevens responded that the Trail program would allow members of the public to bike on the trails within Cranford or bike from town to town. Commissioner Hannen inquired about the cost of maintaining the trails and noted the presence of poison ivy on trails in the area. Mayor Miller Prunty inquired if a civic group would maintain the trails.

Review Official Meeting Agenda

Commissioner Hannen asked Township Attorney Ryan Cooper to explain the resolutions on the following evening's Official Meeting Agenda, specifically Agenda item numbers 5, 6 and 7 (Resolutions No. 2021-246, 2021-247 and 2021-248) which pertained to an award to Community Grants Planning and Housing (CGP&H,) adopting a Township Affordable Housing Affirmative Marketing Plan and adopting a Township Market to Affordable Housing Plan respectively. Township Attorney Ryan Cooper provided information on the resolutions and what they meant for the Township.

Closed Session

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

Resolution No. 2021-98.18

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

- North Avenue Gateway Redevelopment Area – Topology NJ LLC

Personnel

- Clerk’s Department
- Department of Public Works
- Administration Department
- Zoning Department
- Collective Bargaining
- Police Department

Legal

- Legal Update
- Cell Tower Litigation
- Eastman Street Pedestrian Mall
- 750 Walnut Avenue Redevelopment Plan
- Lot 7 Dumpster Contract

Minute review

- Closed Session Minutes of May 24, 2021

Recorded Vote:

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

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

On motion of Commissioner Hannen, seconded by Commissioner Gareis and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 9:36 p.m.

Late Starter - South Avenue and Chestnut Street Redevelopment Plan

Deputy Mayor Andrews suggested that the Township seek more community engagement regarding the South Avenue and Chestnut Street Redevelopment area. Commissioner Hannen stated that Iron Ore Properties received approval from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) regarding an issue before the Township had considered the matter. Mr. Cooper noted that Mott MacDonald was expected to make a recommendation to the Township this month regarding the storm sewer matter. Discussion ensued regarding approaching Topology about conducting community involvement practices for the South Avenue and Chestnut Street area.

Late Starter – Mayor’s Correspondence

Commissioner Hannen requested that Mayor Miller Prunty notify the members of the Township Committee when sending important correspondence.

On motion of Deputy Mayor Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Hannen and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Donahue
Township Clerk

Dated: July 12, 2021