

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION**  
**BOARD MEETING**  
**MINUTES – MARCH 19, 2021**

**Present:**

Brian Andrews/Deputy Mayor  
Joe Colangelo/Resident  
Dennis Concha/Business owner  
Tom Connolly/Business owner  
Tammie Crispino/Business owner  
Anthony Durante/Resident  
Paul LaCorte/Property owner  
Ashley Legg/Resident  
Kristen Mider/Chairwoman  
Steve Oliveira/Property owner  
Doreen Sayegh/Property owner  
Caren Demyen/ Director  
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator

**Absent:**

Ms. Demyen called the meeting to order at 8:30am. Announcement made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Motion to approve February 2021 minutes by Mr. Durante, seconded by Ms. Mider. Mr. Connolly abstained. All others were in favor.

**CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS** – Kristen Mider

- Ms. Mider congratulated Ms. Legg on the birth of her baby. She thanked Mr. Connolly for his help in regards to the Downtown reopening plan and design of parklets. She believes that the process should be smoother and more cohesive than last year. Ms. Mider also offered her thanks and appreciation to the female downtown business owners in recognition of Women's History Month.
- She reminded the board about the North Avenue Redevelopment meeting on Monday.

**TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS** – Deputy Mayor Andrews

- Mr. Andrews said that there's movement to have downtown maintenance fall under the umbrella of DPW.
- Mr. Andrews said the Cranford Theater drive-in has been approved again for this year.
- The Cranford Community Connection truck parade will take place on Saturday and will drive through the downtown area.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT** - Caren Demyen

**Monthly Project Report**

- Ms. Demyen reiterated that work is being done to move downtown maintenance to DPW.
- Reminded board about North Ave Redevelopment meeting and said that business and property owners were emailed, and handouts were given to businesses on North Avenue.
- Planning on an outdoor business and property owner meet and greet in April.
- Provided an update on social media numbers. Social Coordinator Michelle Stavrou said that they are doing a feature on Women owned businesses for March. In addition, Her Story Walk, created by a group of young girls, spotlights historical women and posters have been displayed in female-owned business windows.
- Downtown job openings have now been added to the website. Virtual Restaurant Guide is in the works.
- Events recap:

- Fire & Ice was very successful. It brought a lot of people downtown and both restaurants and retail stores saw increased foot traffic.
- St. Patrick's Day events included a bagpiper performing at Eastman Plaza, as well as goody bags handed out and Fire Me Up selling gnome kits. Downtown Cranford also partnered with the Green Thumb Garden Club on Catch the Rainbow Scavenger Hunt.
- Upcoming events include Run the DMC, Garden State Film Festival, Spring Hop, Egg Decorating Contest with Pastosa, and Sweet Escape.
- New businesses that have opened or will be opening soon include Filo Sofi and Phoenix Modular.
- Ms. Demyen provided an update in regards to the dentist office that is looking to rent the space on South Avenue where the hardware store was. The Zoning Board felt that the space should remain as retail, though the DMC Board had given a recommendation for approval. The approval is now on hold until the meeting in May. Ms. Mider said that the business owner, Dr. Patel, has made a real effort to incorporate her business into the downtown community. Mr. LaCorte said that parking issues remain downtown and shouldn't be dismissed when it comes to this space or others.
- Deputy Mayor Andrews said that Riverfront developers are looking to convert certain commercial spaces to apartments for a total of 16 apartments. Mr. Durante said this is another example of where it would be helpful to have a Township Planner.
- Mr. Colangelo mentioned that he and Mr. Connolly have rented office space in the upstairs floors of the Cranford Hotel. Mr. LaCorte said that a Planning Board member mentioned to him that they were unsure how the upstairs space at Cranford Hotel was able to change from residential to office space. Mr. Connolly said that Cranford Hotel is part of the redevelopment zone. Ms. Demyen said she'll follow up with Zoning.
- There were two ribbon cuttings that took place in the past few weeks, Tomasello Winery and Blush, and more are coming up.
- We are currently waiting to see if the County will reimburse the office for the cost of parklet barriers.
- Ms. Demyen showed a picture of a sign that could be placed at Eastman Plaza, asking people to refrain from using chalk. Board members felt that the wording could be reworked.
- In regards to maintenance, the Green Thumb Garden Club will be restoring the fountain at Post Office Plaza. Tim O'Brien Painting & Powerwashing has offered to power wash and seal the gazebo.
- The planter sponsorship form has been posted. There are 35 total planters downtown and Baker Bros. will be doing all of the planters moving forward.
- Two upcoming maintenance projects include Volunteer Plaza and a bench sponsorship program.
- The office continues to work on implementing a gift card program.
- Ms. Demyen hopes that the parklet program will be approved at the next Township Committee meeting. Garlic Rose will be leasing 5 spots in Lower Lot 7. The plan is also to close Eastman Street 7 days a week, though that's dependent on NJDOT approval. Mr. Connolly and Mr. Wofsy of MWT are working on the parklet design. Mr. Connolly said they're planning on a design that's consistent and attractive. He's hoping to build a prototype for people to review.
- Businesses have been offered the opportunity to use Township park space for free until they can open at 100% capacity.
- Mr. Andrews said Ms. Demyen and Mr. Robertazzi of Parks and Recreation have put a lot of time into making sure businesses can use the parks. His current priority is the light poles. Engineering and DPW are working together on an assessment of the light poles.

## **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- Business Development: Mr. Concha said the group plans to meet with Marketing since there's overlap between their goals. Mr. Oliveira said North Ave. business owners have reached out to him as they're looking to move but want to stay in Cranford.
- Marketing: Ms. Legg said that Cranford Community Connection would like to collaborate with the DMC. Mr. Oliveira said the Jaycees would like to as well.
- Ms. Demyen said there is a new owner at Baron's. Mr. LaCorte said there continues to be a problem with enforcing signage rules. Ms. Demyen said she'll follow up with the owner of Fettle Market regarding her signage.

***Motion to adjourn at 9:27 am by Mr. LaCorte. Mr. Colangelo seconded. All were in favor.***

Respectively submitted,  
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator