

CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – OCTOBER 15, 2021

Present:

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

Ryan Cooper/Township Attorney

William Kurzenberger – Topology
Brandon Boffard – Iron Ore
Josh Sternberg – Iron Ore
Josh Mann – Iron Ore

Rita LaBruto/Resident – 104 Arlington
Barry Mazza/Resident – 205 Walnut
Jake Sheppard/Resident - 109 Retford Ave.

Absent:

Anthony Durante/Resident

Ms. Demyen called the meeting to order at 8:33am. Announcement was made that the meeting was posted as required by law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion to approve September 2021 minutes by Ms. Mider. Minutes were approved. Mr. Colangelo abstained.

CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS – Kristen Mider

- Ms. Mider said that the Pink Out was a big success. It received great feedback from business owners and the public.
- Ms. Mider and Ms. Demyen met with Wonder. The company is eager to work with the DMC, and they can collaborate with them once they're officially part of the SID. Wonder will potentially be leasing the Kilkenny property.
- The DMC Board will be hearing from Iron Ore at this meeting, and Ms. Mider reminded the members of the guidelines and purpose of the presentation. There is a time limit but she would be happy to forward additional questions.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Deputy Mayor Brian Andrews

- Mr. Andrews stated that there are limits to shaping the South/Chestnut redevelopment. There is a focus on resolving the flooding issue.
- This is the chance for the DMC Board to give feedback.
- The Township Committee is currently working on scheduling another discussion with Topology and business and property owners on North Avenue

Ms. Demyen introduced Brandon Boffard, Josh Sternberg, and Josh Mann from Iron Ore.

JOSH STERNBERG FROM IRON ORE

- Mr. Sternberg stated that Iron Ore's first development was 109 Walnut Avenue, where Ani Ramen is located. The company is also redeveloping where Wells Fargo was on South Avenue.
- Mr. Sternberg said that the area of the South Avenue redevelopment is from the parking lot of Kilkenny House to High Street. He presented renderings which showed 2 retail pads, 55 residential units, and parking underneath. The projects will include 20% affordable housing.
- Iron Ore is focused on mitigating flooding in that area, and has success with the system they implemented in 109 Walnut.
- Iron Ore is planning on a potential 2023 start for the project.
- Walnut Avenue will probably be the first of the 2 developments. They plan for it to be a 3 story building that will be a transitional development containing 39 units. This building will be skewed more to 2 bedrooms.
- Resident Mr. Mazza brought up his concern regarding traffic on Walnut, as well as flooding. Mr. Sternberg said that Iron Ore is looking for ways to improve and mitigate flooding. Mr. Mazza also asked if any of the housing will be designed for seniors. Mr. Sternberg said that they recognize that there are people who are selling their homes but want to stay in their community.
- Township Attorney Mr. Cooper said that the Township Committee recognizes that there is a lack of variety when it comes to housing. The affordable housing plan helps with housing stock in Cranford.
- Mr. Colangelo asked if any of the curb cuts will be eliminated on the South Avenue development. He said that would be beneficial for that area. Iron Ore said that they will be eliminating two curb cuts that are currently there.
- Ms. Demyen said that one of her concerns is about the current businesses in the area that will be redeveloped and where they will go. Iron Ore stated that they have provisions in their agreements and have been talking to those tenants and keeping them informed.
- Mr. Connolly wants to make sure the building fits in with the aesthetic in town. Iron Ore said they're looking to bring in a contemporary look.
- Mr. LaCorte asked about Cranford's actions on flooding. Mr. Cooper said the town is in the process of engineering causes and solutions. Development in downtown will lead to flooding improvements. Deputy Mayor Andrews said that the Township Committee is working on solutions and they know something must be done. Mr. LaCorte said that the retention system in place at 109 Walnut definitely helped flooding during Hurricane Ida.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Caren Demyen

Monthly Project Report

- Ms. Demyen said the office hosted its first one-on-one meetings between UCEDC and business owners.
- There is a new Zoning officer for the Township, and meetings have already been held with her regarding ways to make things more efficient.
- Ms. Demyen met with Topology regarding signage issues. Mr. LaCorte asked about the enforcement issues regarding signage. Mr. Andrews said that he believes the issue was that Zoning wasn't aware of what's enforceable.
- Renna Media ad went out last week and they've heard of some success from business owners.
- Social media continues to grow.
- Ms. Demyen provided an overview of events that took place. Scarecrow Stroll is currently going on and a number of events will be taking place in October.
- The office was approached by a Ghost Tour company and Ms. Demyen will be seeing if they would be a good fit for Downtown Cranford.
- Upcoming holiday events include horse and carriage rides, carolers, etc.
- Ms. Demyen provided an update on new business openings and vacancies.
- Ms. Demyen said about 45 businesses are signed up for the Downtown Cranford gift card program, which should launch mid-November.
- Parklets will all be removed by November 1st and a plan has to be made for the parklets for next year.
- Ms. Demyen provided an update on the archway that will be in one of the alleyways.

- Ms. Crispino brought up the garbage area behind Fire Me Up and said it's not enclosed and has become extremely messy. Ms. Demyen asked her to send over pictures which can be forwarded to the Health Dept.
- Mr. Concha asked about the dumpster issue by Avenue East and Old City. Ms. Demyen said she's spoken to Property Maintenance about it. One of the issues is that the driveway isn't completely paved so garbage often spills out when haulers remove it.
- Ms. Demyen asked those who are property owners to remind their tenants not to use on-street parking so customers can use those spots, especially during the holidays.

Motion to adjourn at 10:11 am by Ms. Mider. Mr. Colangelo seconded. All were in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator