

**CRANFORD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 17, 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
Ashley Legg/Resident
Kristen Mider/Chairwoman
Steve Oliveira/Property owner
Doreen Sayegh/Property owner
Caren Demyen/Director
Michelle Stavrou/Social Media Coordinator

Graham Petto/Topology

Jake Sheppard/Resident, 107 Retford Ave.

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 July 2021 minutes by Mrs. Mider. Minutes were approved.

CHAIRWOMAN REMARKS – Kristen Mider

- Mrs. Mider thanked everyone for their help and assistance after the flood.
- She said the gift card program was presented to the businesses and the hope is that it will launch in mid-October.
- The fall banners will be going up soon.
- Board member Ms. Legg will be moving and therefore she'll be resigning from the DMC Board.

Ms. Demyen introduced Graham Petto from Topology. She had met with him earlier in the week regarding signage issues in the downtown.

GRAHAM FROM TOPOLOGY

- Topology is currently functioning as Zoning in Cranford. They're interested in quick solutions regarding signage.
- They want to make sure that change of use approvals also receive signage information. Topology wants to receive feedback from the DMC Board.
- Ms. LaCorte said he wants to make sure the signage ordinance is enforceable as in the past the violations haven't been followed through on. Ms. Demyen said that she's hoping to have Application Review Committee meet with her and Graham.
- Mr. Colangelo said it's important to reach out to prospective business owners early. Ms. Durante added that the ordinance should be easy to read and comprehend, and the process should be streamlined.

TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER REMARKS – Deputy Mayor Brian Andrews

- Mr. Andrews offered Township Committee updates. The recovery from the flood has been taking up most of the Township Committee's time. They're trying to help business owners and residents with support.

- The committee is in the homestretch in regards to hiring a Zoning officer and hopes to provide an update at a later date.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Caren Demyen

Monthly Project Report

- Ms. Demyen reviewed the businesses affected by Hurricane Ida: TC Graphics, Riverside Inn, Dovetails, Track 5, and Kilkenny House. Many businesses donated to Cranford Family Care and held donation collections.
- Mr. LaCorte said that the township must address flooding, especially near High St. Deputy Mayor Andrews said that the Township is doing a flood study.
- Ms. Demyen said the office is working with UCEDC on workshops and 1-on-1 meetings with business owners. A business and property owner meeting was held on September 14 at The Garlic Rose. There will also be an upcoming ad with Renna Media that promotes downtown events and includes ads from downtown businesses.
- Ms. Demyen provided an update on upcoming filming taking place downtown, and also on the social media statistics.
- Successful events that took place in the past two months include Wellness Week, Summer Sounds, and Storytime. Upcoming events include Cranford Day, Pink Out, Scarecrow Stroll, Small Business Saturday, and more.
- There are sponsors for the holiday tree lightings.
- Ms. Demyen provided an update on New Businesses, Current Vacancies, and New Owners. In addition, Woof Gang is planning to add more grooming space.
- Cranford Theater is reopening on September 24th.
- Gift card program should launch mid-October. Businesses will need to sign up to take part.
- New banners will be put up shortly.
- Ms. Demyen reviewed the 2022 Capital Budget wish list which includes landscaping, paving, and updated electric and lighting.
- Ms. Demyen recommended that the SID tax should be increased. It hasn't been increased in many years, and the cost of everything else has gone up. Mr. LaCorte voiced his support for increasing the tax.
- Ms. Demyen said the DMC Board needs to vote on Holiday Parking. This year it would be November 26 and 27, as well as December 10-24. Ms. Mider voiced her support for free parking and said the public has said before that they really like it. Mr. Concha said that it's essential to help bring people downtown during the holidays. Mr. Durante said that he feels the cost of parking is so low that providing free parking isn't essential. Mr. LaCorte made a motion to keep the free parking. Motion passed with Mr. Durante voting nay.
- Deputy Mayor Andrews provided information on upcoming Redevelopment sessions with Topology. They will be engaging community groups first, and then the general public.
- Ms. Demyen said Deputy Mayor Andrews would like to close North Union for an event.
- Deputy Mayor Andrews said he's heard from residents that they would like to have a street temporarily closed, similar to other towns. He said there are a few options to make this happen, including augmenting an existing Downtown Cranford event, doing a new event, or having another group sponsor an event. He encouraged the DMC Board to think about it.
- Ms. Demyen said that there are a few businesses who don't like having the street closed.
- Ms. Mider and Mr. Durante said that if something like this was going to happen, a plan should be in place. They suggested doing it during a less busy time of year. Mr. Concha said that when the street was closed for Celebrate Cranford it seemed to go over well.

Motion to adjourn at 10:14 am by Mr. LaCorte. Mr. Durante seconded. All were in favor.

Respectively submitted,
Michelle Stavrou, Social Media Coordinator