

The Minutes of the **Workshop Meeting** of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **September 14, 2015** at 7:30 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 MAILING THE ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS TO THE CRANFORD CHRONICLE, THE UNION COUNTY LOCAL SOURCE, THE WESTFIELD LEADER, 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 WILL BE TAKEN AT THIS MEETING.

Present: Mayor Andis Kalnins
Commissioner Mary O'Connor
Commissioner Barbara Bilger
Commissioner Robert D'Ambola
Commissioner Thomas H. Hannen, Jr.

Absent: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Kalnins opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Barbara Krause, 20 Pittsfield Street, provided an update of efforts of the Airplane Noise Advisory Board and the New Jersey Coalition Against Aircraft Noise to reduce excessive airplane noise in New Jersey.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Kalnins closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Review Official Meeting Agenda

Payment of Bills

Commissioner Hannen discussed PSE&G costs and explained that the bills list does not indicate the location associated with the utility cost. Requested that Township Administrator Wall follow up with the Finance Department for this information.

Commissioner Hannen also stated that he has concerns with some items included on the bills list and would not be supporting approval of the bills list.

Commissioner Hannen informed the Township Committee that he contacted the Board of Education to discuss the potential for a shared services arrangement for Information Technology (IT) services, due to a continued increase in the Township's costs for an IT consultant.

New Business Building Applications

Mayor Kalnins discussed vacancies in Downtown Cranford and requested that the Director of Downtown Business and Economic Development, Kathleen Prunty, and the Director of Planning and Zoning, Robert Hudak, attend this evening's meeting to discuss the process for new businesses opening downtown.

Ms. Prunty provided the Township Committee with a copy of step-by-step guidelines that are provided to new businesses opening in Downtown Cranford.

Mr. Hudak informed the Township Committee that there are very few new business applications pending before the Planning and Zoning Boards at this time.

Discussion was held as to the current process for new businesses that open in the downtown.

Mayor Kalnins discussed the need to include information regarding the new public portal for construction code permits in the step-by-step guidelines.

Commissioner Hannen discussed property located at North Union Avenue that is vacant and requested clarification as to efforts to have this space occupied.

Ms. Prunty explained that many prospective buyers have expressed interest in the property but the property owner does not want to sell the property. Feels the Township needs to take aggressive action in order for the space to be occupied.

Township Administrator Wall informed the Township Committee that he has contacted the leasing company for the property to discuss the need for maintenance, and to discuss potential uses for the property while it is being marketed.

Mayor Kalnins thanked Ms. Prunty and Mr. Hudak for attending this evening's meeting and feels the Township Committee should receive updates periodically on the process for new business in Downtown Cranford.

Engineering update

North Avenue Station Pedestrian Improvement Project

Township Engineer O'Brien discussed construction in connection with the North Avenue Station Pedestrian Improvement Project.

Commissioner O'Connor informed the Township Committee that a downtown property owner has expressed concern with a reduction in parking spaces in connection with the project.

Township Engineer O'Brien explained that angled parking is not permitted on a state road, which has resulted in three (3) angled parking spaces being reduced to two (2) parallel parking spaces in the area where this downtown business is located. Also explained that changes to this property owner's driveway would occur, which he discussed with the property owner, and the property owner was agreeable to the changes.

Discussion was held as to the need to notify residents that businesses are open during construction.

Commissioner O'Connor discussed an issue with pedestrians crossing North Avenue in areas that are not permitted.

Township Engineer O'Brien discussed efforts to direct pedestrians to the crosswalk. Suggested additional fencing be installed to prevent pedestrians from crossing in unsafe areas.

Commissioner Hannen feels additional fencing could make it more difficult for business owners and suggested the Police Department be contacted for a patrol officer to assist with crossing.

Commissioner O'Connor explained that the Police Department was initially contacted for a patrol officer and it was felt that it was not practical. Feels the matter could be revisited.

Township Engineer O'Brien stated that he would follow up.

2014 Paving Project, Carpenter Place Detention Basin, Municipal Building Parking Lot

Township Engineer O'Brien informed the Township Committee that the 2014 Paving Project, Carpenter Place Detention Basin Improvements and Municipal Building Parking Lot Improvements are complete.

Orchard Brook

Township Engineer O'Brien discussed the status of the Orchard Brook Project and informed the Township Committee that a proposal for the Township Committee's consideration would be available September 28, 2015.

Downtown Paver Repairs

Township Engineer O'Brien discussed paver repairs in Downtown Cranford and informed the Township Committee that a notice to bidders would be advertised next week.

Municipal Building Renovations

Township Engineer O'Brien discussed renovations to the Municipal Building and stated that the project is complete with the exception of punch list items. A meeting with the contractor to finalize these remaining items has been scheduled.

2015 Paving Project

Township Engineer O'Brien informed the Township Committee that bids for the 2015 Paving Project are scheduled for receipt next week.

North Avenue Sanitary Sewer

Township Engineer O'Brien discussed the North Avenue Sanitary Sewer Project and explained that the Township's portion of this project is complete.

555 South Avenue East, Starbucks, 239 Cranford Avenue

Township Engineer O'Brien discussed his recommendation to return bid guarantees for development projects that are complete, which include 555 South Avenue East, Starbucks and 239 Cranford Avenue.

Twin Oaks

Township Engineer O'Brien discussed the status of the Twin Oaks Development project.

CRS Program

Township Engineer O'Brien discussed the status of the Township's participation in the Community Rating System and explained that a meeting with a regional specialist has been scheduled for November.

Road Resurfacing-Elizabethtown Gas Company

Township Engineer O'Brien informed the Township Committee that the Elizabethtown Gas Company has completed its paving projects.

Part-time Engineer

Commissioner D'Ambola discussed the suggestion for a part-time engineer and feels it is an issue that should be reviewed every six (6) months to determine if it is necessary.

The Township Committee was agreeable to Commissioner D'Ambola's suggestion.

Commissioner Hannen discussed former Deputy Mayor Aduato's request for clarification regarding billing for engineering services and requested an update concerning this matter.

Township Engineer O'Brien stated that a report was submitted to Township Administrator Wall.

Township Administrator Wall to forward the report to the Township Committee.

Proposed tree ordinance

Commissioner D'Ambola discussed the latest version of the proposed tree ordinance and revised regulations which are less restrictive than those that were originally proposed.

Discussion held.

Commissioner Hannen requested clarification as to whether this ordinance would allow enforcement on county properties.

Township Attorney Dabulas to follow up.

Further discussion September 28, 2015.

Pepperidge Tree Memorial

Commissioner D'Ambola discussed a proposed memorial for the Pepperidge tree, which includes a nursery for the new growth and a pavilion to display a section of the Pepperidge tree's trunk. Also discussed proposed markings of historic events on the tree's rings.

Tina Helmstetter, member of the Tree Advisory Board, requested clarification as to those involved with the selection process for the Pepperidge tree's memorial.

Commissioner D'Ambola informed Ms. Helmstetter that he has been working with the Chairman of the Tree Advisory Board, the Superintendent of Public Works, the Recreation and Parks Director, Historic Preservation Advisory Board, and Commissioner O'Connor on this project.

Ms. Helmstetter stated that she was unaware of the plans for the memorial and residents have expressed concern that they have not been asked to participate in the process.

Commissioner D'Ambola discussed announcements and notifications through TV35 and the Township's website for suggestions and input by residents for the memorial. Also discussed a suggestion box for the memorial that was located at the Community Center for a period of time. Informed Ms. Helmstetter that only a handful of suggestions were received, and all were considered before a decision for the memorial was made.

Ms. Helmstetter informed the Township Committee of her contact with foresters to discuss the new growth from the Pepperidge tree and explained that it would take time for this growth to mature, and the growth should not be moved.

Recycling Contract

Township Administrator Wall discussed the bids received for the collection and marketing of recyclable materials. Explained the cost difference between single stream and separated materials and informed the Township Committee that the service for separated materials would be more costly. Also discussed options as to the term of the contract.

The Township Committee was agreeable to single stream service for a term of five (5) years.

Resolution authorizing the contract to be adopted September 29, 2015.

Proposed Mandate Re: Direct Deposit

Township Administrator Wall discussed recently enacted legislation that would allow municipalities to mandate direct deposit for employee's pay effective January 1, 2016. Explained the benefits of the mandate, which include cost savings and a reduction in paper. Also explained that mandating direct deposit would resolve potential payroll issues that could occur if Township offices are closed on a payday because of weather emergencies.

Township Attorney Dabulas suggested that employees who do not participate in direct deposit be contacted and informed of the upcoming mandate, as some may not have a bank account.

Township Administrator Wall discussed plans to contact employees that do not currently participate in direct deposit.

The Township Committee was agreeable to implementing the mandate for direct deposit. Official action to be taken September 29, 2015.

Minute approval – Closed Session Minutes of August 10, 2015

On motion of Commissioner O'Connor, seconded by Commissioner D'Ambola and passed, the Closed Session Minutes of August 10, 2015 were approved by the indicated vote of the Township Committee.

Recorded vote:

Aye: Mayor Kalnins, Commissioners O'Connor and D'Ambola

Nay: None

Abstained: Commissioners Bilger and Hannen

Absent: None

Minute approval – Closed Session Minutes of September 8, 2015

On motion of Commissioner O'Connor, seconded by Commissioner D'Ambola and passed, the Closed Session Minutes of August 10, 2015 were approved by the indicated vote of the Township Committee.

Recorded vote:

Aye: Mayor Kalnins, Commissioners O'Connor, D'Ambola and Hannen

Nay: None

Abstained: Commissioner Bilger

Absent: None

ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

Township Administrator Wall provided an update of the following:

- Discussed efforts to automate certain permit processes where possible;
- Informed the Township Committee that the migration of the Township's email to an in-house server is expected to be completed within the next few weeks;
- Informed the Township Committee that the installation of backup servers is complete and explained that another attempt to encrypt Township files was successfully prevented because of the new backup servers.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS**Commissioner O'Connor**

Commissioner O'Connor discussed the Historic Walk through Cranford to be held September 20, 2015 and invited all to attend.

Mayor Kalnins

Mayor Kalnins discussed an upcoming meeting of the Mayors Council on the Rahway River Watershed.

Mayor Kalnins also informed the Township Committee that a presentation regarding the Township's new website design is scheduled for the Workshop Meeting of September 28, 2015.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Kalnins opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Barbara Krause, 20 Pittsfield Street, discussed an issue with animal control services regarding the removal of dead animals from private property.

Mrs. Krause also discussed the proposed tree replacement ordinance and asked if the current version has been reviewed by the Tree Advisory Board.

Commissioner D'Ambola explained that the latest version of the ordinance is based upon Jackson Township's tree replacement ordinance, and confirmed that it was reviewed by the Tree Advisory Board.

Mrs. Krause discussed the need for a forester as per the provisions of the proposed tree ordinance and expressed concern with retaining Maser Consulting's tree expert for this service.

Mrs. Krause discussed the installation of new street signs on certain roadways and expressed concern with the possible replacement of Cranford's traditional street signs.

Mayor Kalnins informed Mrs. Krause that street signs are being replaced by Union County on county roads only.

Mrs. Krause discussed the fire that occurred in Avalon and proposed legislation pertaining to "light construction".

Fire Chief Czeh informed Mrs. Krause that he would be attending a meeting concerning this subject on September 18, 2015.

Mrs. Krause provided the Township Committee with flood control documents that former Township Engineer Greg Sgroi had retained. Discussed Mr. Sgroi's efforts with respect to flood control during his tenure as Township Engineer and suggested these items be put on display in the Engineering Department.

Tina Helmstetter, 70 Burnside Avenue, discussed her concerns with the Tree Advisory Board (board). Feels the board is not transparent because there are no minutes kept and members are not updated on items that were discussed if they were absent from a meeting. Also feels members of the board should be required to take urban forestry classes.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Kalnins closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

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

Resolution No. 2015-105.29:

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:

Contractual

- Interlocal Services Agreement-Construction Code Services
- MDTV Property
- Legal services
- FEMA Elevation Project
- Memorial Field

Labor Negotiations

- Teamsters Local 469 (white collar)

Legal

- CDA v. Township of Cranford
- Edan Ben Elazar v. Macrietta Cleaners, Inc.
- Liquor license transfer

Minute Review

- Closed Session Minutes of August 10 and September 8, 2015

Personnel

- Various Departments

Recorded vote:

Aye: Mayor Kalnins, Commissioners O'Connor, Bilger, D'Ambola and Hannen

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

On motion of Commissioner D'Ambola seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 11:25 PM.

On motion of Commissioner D'Ambola, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 11:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tara Rowley, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Dated: September 14, 2015