

The Minutes of the Workshop Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **May 10, 2021 at 7:03 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, Administrator Jamie Cryan, Township Clerk Patricia Donahue, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Lavona Patterson and Township Consulting Engineer Jacqueline Dirmann were present. Fire Chief Dan Czeh and Fire Lieutenant Matt Lubin were present.

Public Comments

Mayor Miller Prunty opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing no comments, Mayor Miller Prunty closed the public comment portion of the meeting

Road Project Status and Schedule

Township Consulting Engineer Jacqueline Dirmann gave an overview of the road projects in Cranford. She specifically spoke about the road projects at 1) Retford Avenue, 2) Brookside Place, 3) Makatom Drive, Indian Spring Road, Morningside Place and Orchard Street, 4) James Street as well as 5) the Elm Street Drainage Project. Ms. Dirmann then spoke about the upcoming roadway paving expected to be undertaken by the Gas Company, the 2021 Capital Roads project and the Burnside Avenue and Edgar Avenue Drainage projects.

Ms. Dirmann spoke about the upcoming New Jersey Department of Transportation grant application which was due on July 1st.

Mayor Miller Prunty and Deputy Mayor Andrews inquired about specific roads in Cranford. Deputy Mayor Andrews inquired about broken street lights.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) Work at Lenape Park

Mr. Steve Jandoli of the Environmental Commission was present.

Mr. Jandoli provided an overview of the proposed Rehabilitation of the Lenape Park Dam project. A handout provided by Mr. Jandoli included this description: “Union County has been directed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to make repairs to the Lenape Park dam. Union County is required to do this work.” Mr. Jandoli stated that the proposed work would involve the removal of hundreds of trees.

Mr. Jandoli stated that the Environmental Commission was seeking three (3) things in regards to the proposed work:

- the elimination of/or the reduction of the project’s requirement to eliminate trees and vegetation growing fifteen (15) feet “out from the toe of the embankment slope” (as per Mr. Jandoli’s hand out;)

- beginning the Project one (1) month later (i.e., July instead of June.) As per Mr. Jandoli's handout, the prime nesting season for the songbirds in Lenape Park occurs in June;
- compensation for the removal of hundreds of trees in the park. Mr. Jandoli's handout noted the benefits of trees: "flood control, clean air, carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat benefits."

Discussion ensued as to whether the Township had received notice of this project, planting of trees elsewhere in Cranford and the project's scope as it pertained to Kenilworth and Cranford. Commissioner Hannen stated that project work could be expected in the future at Riverside Drive. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that she would reach out to both Kenilworth's Mayor and the County of Union regarding the Project Work at Lenape Park. Commissioner Hannen suggested that County Open Space funding be utilized for reforestation.

Memorial Day Parade

Deputy Mayor Andrews spoke about the upcoming Memorial Day Parade plans. He stated that the Parade would follow its normal route. Deputy Mayor Andrews noted that the Parade participants would be limited to organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) and the Fire and Police departments. Deputy Mayor Andrews spoke about the Scouts' decreased participation in the Parade due to the social distancing guidelines in place. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that the Cranford High School Marching Band would also participate in the Parade. She spoke about the ceremony which would follow the Memorial Day Parade. Commissioner Hannen inquired about how the Governor's recent announcement regarding a limit of 500 participants at outdoor events pertained to the Parade, specifically the expected number of bystanders

Fireworks Display in Nomahegan Park

Commissioner Gareis spoke about a teleconference (meeting) held that morning which he attended regarding a proposed Fireworks Display in Nomahegan Park. He stated that the meeting participants included the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Fire and Police Department representatives. Commissioner Gareis noted that there were issues about the Nomahegan Park Fireworks Display prior to the Coronavirus public health crisis (i.e., space) as well as issues about the Fireworks Display associated with the Coronavirus public health crisis (i.e., managing spectators). He spoke about legitimate concerns regarding the Fireworks Display and making the event safe. Further discussion ensued regarding the financing of the Fireworks Display. Commissioner Hannen noted that the Park is "blanket-to-blanket" on the evening of the Fireworks Display. He noted that while the event was "nice-to-have," Commissioner Hannen inquired whether it was a must-have event? Discussion ensued. Lieutenant Lubin spoke about moving the date in 2020 which resulted 1) in the Township's ability to get more law enforcement assistance and 2) less attendance at the Fireworks Display.

Deputy Mayor Andrews stated that surrounding towns would be hosting fireworks events. He stated that Cranford should try to do it, noting that this was a way to bring "us back." Further discussion ensued regarding the Firecracker Race, the burden on our public safety personnel, the Governor's communication regarding such events, whether a smaller Fireworks Display should be considered and whether an alternative and free event could be conducted in Nomahegan Park. Mayor Miller Prunty suggested a test poll with members of the Township Committee. Commissioner O'Connor stated that the Township Committee should re-visit the Fireworks Display matter next year and noted that it can't be a safe event at this point in time. Commissioner Gareis stated that he was "torn" but suggested that the Township hold off another year. Citing the COVID-19 public health crisis, Commissioner Hannen stated that he was opposed to the Fireworks Display this year. Deputy Mayor Andrews suggested that the Township "get to yes." He stated that he understood the strain on the First Responders but suggested that the answer should be "yes" for the Fireworks Display. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that in the interest of public safety, she would opt for holding off on this year's Fireworks Display. Mayor Miller Prunty suggested that the Township Committee discuss the Fireworks Display matter again at the following evening's Conference Meeting. Lieutenant Lubin noted that the change of date alternative worked well in 2020.

750 Walnut Avenue Redevelopment Plan Community Meeting

Mayor Miller Prunty spoke about the May 6th Town Hall Meeting regarding the 750 Walnut Avenue Redevelopment Plan. She noted that the presentation was information and good questions were asked. Commissioner Hannen stated that there were some illustrations presented on May 6th that he had never seen before. A brief discussion ensued.

Underground Utility Incident at Manor Avenue and Casino Avenue Update

Lieutenant Matt Lubin spoke about the previous week's utility incident at Manor Avenue and Casino Avenue (adjacent to Casino Brook.) He noted that a sub-contractor struck an underground electric line which resulted in the release of di-electric fluid. Lieutenant Lubin spoke about the effect of the residents in the Manor Avenue and Casino Avenue including the needed and expected lawn excavation of four (4) residents' lawns. Lieutenant Lubin noted that a lot of resources had come to this area during the crisis. He stated that that mediation was still occurring and recovery efforts were expected to occur for several weeks. Administrator Jamie Cryan noted that PSE&G had been very responsive to this situation.

Review Official Meeting Agenda

Commissioner O'Connor requested that Jason Quinones' proclamation be moved to the May 25th Official Meeting Agenda. Township Clerk Patricia Donahue stated that at the following evening's Official Meeting, the Municipal Budget and Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) Budget's public hearing would be held. She noted that the vote considering the adoption of both budgets would not occur at the following evening's Official Meeting (due to State of New Jersey required Review requirements.)

Minute Approval - Closed Session Minutes of March 30th April 13th and April 26, 2021

Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Andrews and Commissioner Gareis voted to approve the March 30th Closed Session Minutes. Commissioners Hannen and O'Connor voted against ("Nay") approval of the Closed Session Minutes of March 30th.

Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Andrews and Commissioners Gareis and O'Connor voted to approve the April 13th Closed Session Minutes. Commissioners Hannen voted against ("Nay") approval of the Closed Session Minutes of April 13th.

Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Andrews and Commissioners Gareis and Hannen voted to approve the April 26th Closed Session Minutes. Commissioner O'Connor voted to abstain from the vote pertaining to the Closed Session Minutes of April 26th.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner O'Connor - In regards to the consideration of the Closed Session Minutes, Commissioner O'Connor stated that she had a responsibility to the people of Cranford. Commissioner O'Connor stated that the considered Minutes do not reflect what occurred in the Closed Session Meetings.

Commissioner Hannen - Commissioner Hannen stated that he had met that day with Department of Transportation Commissioner Gutierrez-Scaccetti regarding the proposed Eastman Plaza. He stated that Commissioner Gutierrez-Scaccetti stated that a street could not be closed fifty (50) feet within a highway. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that she wished she had known that Commissioner Gutierrez-Scaccetti was in Cranford that day. Deputy Mayor Andrews stated that he was concerned. Commissioner Hannen responded that he learned at 10:45 a.m. that day that she was available to meet with him (after reaching out to her ten (10) days prior.) Commissioner Hannen stated that he represented Cranford's best interests. Mayor Miller Prunty requested that Deputy Mayor Andrews and Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) Director Caren Demyen check into this situation on the following day. Commissioner Gareis stated that it would have been "great" to have known about the meeting with the Commissioner.

Deputy Mayor Andrews - Referencing the Underground Utility incident at Manor Avenue and Casino Avenue, Deputy Mayor Andrews commended the efforts of the First Responders and PSE&G.

Closed Session

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

Resolution No. 2021-98.14

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

- Legal Update
- OPRA Processing

Contractual

- Riverfront at Cranford Station

Personnel

- Building Department
- Clerk's Department
- Fire Department

Minute review

- Closed Session Minutes of March 30th, April 13th and April 26, 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 Gareis, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 9:50 p.m.

On motion of Commissioner Gareis, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Donahue
Township Clerk

Dated: May 10, 2021