

Town of Richmond ARPA Committee Minutes for the meeting of June 8, 2022

Members Present: Cara LaBounty, Jay Furr, Jeff Forward, Molly Dugan, Sacha Mailloux

Members Absent: Josh Arneson, Connie Bona, Linda Donovan, Rebecca Starks

Others Present: Duncan Wardwell, Assistant to the Town Manager, Kendall Chamberlin, Water and Wastewater Superintendent

Call or Order: 4:00pm

Welcome: Furr

Public Comment: None

Additions or Deletions to Agenda:

Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

Receiving input from ARPA Committee members on focus group targets and Schedule

Furr: How do we help identify different groups? I will share some of the groups that Josh and I talked about. Who should we be meeting with and how to schedule timelines?

Dugan: This is funding about the effects of the pandemic so we should talk to older people. Not only do they deal with age but isolation. We do not want to solely rely on the Senior Center. There is also the Sterling House, Richmond Terrace, and Hale and Hearty. I feel like the housing crisis impacts all ages. Richmond is expensive even for people who are already here.

Furr: So, we would want to reach out to different groups who are looking for housing.

Forward: We could talk to the Housing Committee.

LaBounty: Our Town Plan is three years old, and they did a lot of outreach for what was wanted. How we spend our money is already outlined in the Town Plan. We should revisit the Town Plan. The Town Plan already provides a lot of guidance as we have invested many resources into that data. Some of the same questions we need answers to were answered three years ago. I want to hear from the residents and not just committees.

Dugan: I am concerned about affordable housing and Richmond is an especially expensive place to live for all ages. I do not think there is a particular group as it is widespread among the population.

LaBounty: The reappraisal process suggests that people are paying on average \$200,000 above face value. Therefore, the people coming into our Town have more financial means. If our appraised value goes up that much, then we are going to lose a lot of residents. Richmond is becoming the recreational path for a lot of Vermont. We need to hear from the community that does not come to committees or are

vocal. I want to find ways to outreach to different groups. Focus lately has been so focused on recreation. We need to listen to the parts of the community that does not take part in committees and such. We should post on Front Porch Forum, explain what ARPA funds are. There are also issues with increased drug use and we should talk to Richmond Rescue about NARCAN use and youth dealing with mental health issues

Furr: We are going in circles on the survey, but we want to talk to people as well. We can use Front Porch Forum or the chalkboard at the Town Center.

LaBounty: We would want to explain the ARPA funds while also recognizing some of the information from the Town Plan.

Furr: And before we send out formal surveys. The genius of Sacha's infographic it cuts to the point and is simple. We can provide links if they want more information.

Forward: Let's use Front Porch Forum to link to the graphic with a simple blurb.

Furr: Some people think that the ARPA money is first come, first serve.

Mailloux: I am thinking of the best way to talk to everyone. Thanks for the resources and ideas from our members. There are probably different ways to reach out to different groups. We can use a Farmers Market informational table. How much would it take to send the infographic through postage mail? I estimate it would be about \$1,500 to send out to 1,600 households. It should also include the businesses and business employees. We should look at low-income populations.

Forward: I think of this money as relief for businesses or individuals. I also think of legacy projects that will last longer. I can think of at least four different people who might be in immediate need. I see a small focus group with the local pastors, Our Community Cares, and Richmond Foodshelf. I see Riverview Commons as an important place to reach out. I like the idea of a mailing as a 2-5% return on a direct mail is a good indicator of success in letting everyone know we exist.

Mailloux: We can preface the mailing with a Front Porch Forum post.

LaBounty: Would you be open to other non-profits that serve our community?

Forward: Yes. I think non-profits like Cathedral Square might have some ideas on how to deal with the affordable housing issues in our community.

LaBounty: We have a substance abuse problem in our community that are not talked about. I talked to Richmond Rescue, and they shared statistics about NARCAN at homes. We are looking at youth dealing with mental health issues along with drug issues. I think we can open up to more areas.

Furr: We should be talking to the youth directly.

LaBounty: I think we can use social media tools to reach out to different groups. We can use a youth in our community to help create a reach out campaign.

Furr: We could use the Town's bulk mail permit. We should talk to a group of elementary, middle, high school students but with some savvy youth leaders. All Together Now is a group we should talk to about improving quality of life. We could also use the infographic on the Times Ink.

Forward: We should review the Town Plan as it is a great resource. The Town has changed due to the pandemic. Next meeting, we could change the infographic for a mailing and Front Porch Forum.

Furr: We should also include the Howard Center.

LaBounty: I can draft a Front Porch Forum post we can bring to next meeting. The first four pages of the Town Plan provides a lot of good information.

Review and discussion of infographic

Mailloux: I will share my screen to make any changes to the infographic. Do we want to put this on a postcard or full sheet of paper?

Forward: I like an oversized postcard. This looks perfect for the front size, and we could put the Front Porch Forum post on the back side.

Furr: I think a 6” by 8” postcard is what I am thinking about.

LaBounty: Celebrate Richmond Vermont sent out something that fits into a Town of Richmond standard envelope.

Mailloux: I changed to font type on top to match the bottom. The back side will include spelling out the ARPA acronym.

Furr: We could not constraints to how people respond through a Town website link or a Google Form.

LaBounty: We are not including the survey before reaching out to talk about what the survey might include. Why can't we start accumulating input before we develop questions? It can be an email address so we can start collecting suggestions.

Mailloux: I think there is value in it. So it will read “to make suggestions and for more information go to:”

Furr: We could have an email link or a form box. The landing page should be simple, brief, and not much more than the Front Porch Forum post.

LaBounty: We are not just gathering data, we are making recommendations to the Selectboard.

Next steps

Furr: One of our tasks is to create a scoring system. Cara will write us a Front Porch Forum blurb. Duncan and I will follow up with website changes. We need to have a destination mailbox for these suggestions. We need to hear from those people who were not here today. Anything else for the next time? Everyone go look at the Town Plan (<http://www.richmondvt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2018-Richmond-Town-Plan.pdf>).

Next meeting

ARPA meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 4-5 pm.
Next meeting on June 22nd

Adjourn at 5:00 pm

Chat:

00:23:06 Molly Dugan, she/her: sorry my computer just randomly shut down and did a restart!

00:40:44 Molly Dugan, she/her: Champlain Housing Trust s well

00:41:51 Molly Dugan, she/her: and those substance abuse issues have gotten worse with Covid I believe.

00:43:30 Molly Dugan, she/her: Howard Center