

**Town of Richmond ARPA Committee
Minutes for the meeting of June 22, 2022
Via Zoom**

Members Present: Josh Arneson, Jay Furr, Connie Bona, Jeff Forward, Molly Dugan,

Members Absent: Rebecca Starks, Sacha Mailloux, Linda Donovan, Cara LaBounty

Others Present: Kendall Chamberlin

Call or Order: 5:00pm

Welcome by Furr.

Public Comment:

Kendall Chamberlin: The Committee should be aware that there is a timeline for the money to be spent and there may be delays in securing engineers.

Jeff Forward: We have until the end of 2024 to commit the money and until the end of 2026 to spend the money.

Connie Bona: Are you thinking of engineers that the Town could hire or reviews from the state?

Chamberlin: Both

Bona: Are we going to do a survey after the focus groups?

Furr: I don't feel we have closed the door on a survey. We have been making this fairly complicated and a lot of this is my fault. We should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

Follow up on status of mailing to residents

Furr: At the end of the last meeting Cara and Sacha were going to send out a draft. Sacha says he needs to do some work on this to then get it out to the committee. The draft also needs to include the focus group schedule and directions to a form on the Town website. The Selectboard approved funding for the mailing. We can finalize this at the next meeting.

Bona: What will be on the form on the website?

Furr: We have gone between two extremes, from a survey to getting a first pass of ideas. The form would outline the final rule of ARPA and gather their ideas. We can also include items that are prohibited.

Dugan: The only downside of that approach is that we had discussed the spirit of the money is to help people. If we only outline what it cannot be used for then it may get away from the original intent of the money. In my mind we were always going to do a survey.

Furr: We don't want to get away from the general purpose of the funds.

Forward: I've been thinking that the two types of projects I'd like to see are to 1) Compliment relieve to people who have been impacted by COVID, such as rent relief and 2) Legacy projects that will last a lifetime.

Furr: We will get a lot of feedback but those two categories make sense. We probably will hear a lot of feedback about building a community center. But perhaps we can add something to the Town Center that could serve in this capacity.

Forward: We are still a ways away from deciding on designs for the Town Center.

Bona: We actually could do some things like a beech party if businesses participated and it benefited them.

Dugan: This would not only stimulate businesses but it would also create community and belonging.

Furr: We want to get input and we want to put some constraints on it per the rules but we also want to be open minded to ideas and we can work to see if they fit into the guidelines.

Forward: Can we let Jay, and Cara and Sacha finalize the mailing?

Furr: We could but I would like to still have the Committee review the mailing and the form prior to sending it out.

Discussion of dates, times, and locations for community meetings

Furr: There did seem to be some on the Committee who wanted to hold a meeting at Riverview Commons. I talked about this with Linda and she said that having a meeting there would make them feel like they are not part of the community. I do see her point. We had also talked about ideas of places to have other meetings and I would think the Library and the school would be a good idea. Also, one of the Senior Centers would be a good location.

Forward: I would like to do the meetings outside.

Furr: We could use the bandstand at Volunteers' Green.

Forward: Behind the Library, or outside at the middle school. We could have a brief presentation but maybe not a powerpoint presentation. This is an opportunity to be different from the typical Town meetings.

Furr: We could have a table at the Farmers Market.

Forward: We may not have to have this all figured out for the mailing. The schedule may come later.

Furr: We want to have the mailing completed by the end of the month. We would then try to have a meeting at the band stand, when would be the best time for that? A weekend morning or a mid-week evening?

Forward: I still think we should consider Riverview Commons. We have a responsibility to reach out to moderate and low income residents and there is a density there.

Bona: I feel we should meet there. If people do vent about other problems it may still spur ideas for spending ARPA money.

Dugan: I am also supportive of trying it. I appreciate Linda and Cara's opinions but I feel what we are doing is very genuine to reach out.

Furr: We could plan a meeting at Riverview Commons for noon on a Saturday.

Forward: How about September 10 with a rain date on Sept. 11?

Consensus was noon on September 10 would work.

Furr: Booth at Farmers' Market is subject to availability. We should pick a date for Volunteers' Green meeting.

Chamberlin: You could do it at 7pm on a Friday after the Farmers' Market.

Furr: How about a Wednesday at 5:30 or 6:00pm.

Forward: We could do Monday or Tuesday to not compete with local restaurants.

Furr: Tuesday would be better for me.

Forward: I would suggest Sept. 6 or 13.

Furr: I think Sept. 13 for the Volunteers' Green meeting would be good.

Consensus was to just do ice cream at these events and not hot dogs or hamburgers.

Discussion of update to Selectboard

Furr: We can provide updates on the mailing and the meetings.

Forward: We may ask for a budget from the Selectboard for outreach so we do not have to go back to the Selectboard each time we need money.

Furr: I think asking for a promotions budget would be a good idea.

Bona: They may want to know what our approach will be with the focus groups.

Forward: I think we are still developing that.

Discussion of ARPA Committee meeting times

Furr: I have heard that meeting later in the evening may be good.

Bona: I thought we initially picked this time because it worked for people.

Furr: I think we should table this until we have more voices here.

Arneson: There had been discussion of re-structuring the Committee and eliminating the seat for the Finance Director.

Consensus was to keep the Finance Director on the Committee.