

Minutes of Belvidere Planning Commission Meeting

January 13, 2022

Meeting convened at 6:40 PM and adjourned at 7:46 PM. This was an in-person and ZOOM hybrid meeting.

Members present via ZOOM were Deb Baker, Ken Adams Jr., Fran Leavitt (meeting host), Mary Hysick, and Kathy Marchant. Ken was the in-person BPC member at the Town Clerk's Office.

Motion by Deb to accept the minutes of the December 9, 2021, meeting as written; second by Mary; motion carried; Ken abstained.

ARPA Funds Committee discussion:

- Discussion opened with Kathy informing group that she had created wording for a draft mailing to the town's residents. Ken suggested that the Planning Commission should first resolve to accept the Selectboard's invitation to serve on the ARPA steering committee and offered the following resolution: *The Belvidere Planning Commission resolves to accept the Selectboard's invitation to serve on the ARPA funds Steering Committee, effective 1-13-2022.* Consensus to accept the resolution and inform Selectboard of same.
- Further discussion raised unanswered questions regarding the operation of the steering committee, and how best the BPC might serve in its role on this committee. For example, should the steering committee create a mission statement and elect its own officers; should Belvidere's steering committee inquire how our neighboring towns are working to identify projects for their ARPA funds; should a mailing be sent to our residents inviting them to serve on the steering committee, or rather just solicit project ideas from them.
- To find answers to these questions Fran volunteered to research the governance of a steering committee such as ours with VLCT, Kathy volunteered to inquire with the planning commissions from neighboring towns, and Ken volunteered to inquire with neighboring selectboards.
- Kathy offered a summation of the evening's discussion thus far that the BPC 1) reach out to neighboring towns to see how they are progressing with identifying ARPA projects 2) that we do our best to understand what the possible types of ARPA funded projects are 3) that we continue to develop a mailing to Belvidere's residents
- As the discussion was nearing a close, Fran reminded the group that VLCT has created an overview of the ARPA funds federal guidelines, which is available on the VLCT website; Kathy reminded group that according to LCPC, some of our projects may also qualify for grant funds other than ARPA, and therefore we should target ARPA specific projects; Kathy also suggested that the steering committee's goal might be to identify 5 projects in town and present them to LCPC for advice as to their ARPA specificity; Ken suggested that the steering committee should hold a few more meetings to develop a solid understanding of its purpose and operation before public outreach begins, and that in future the steering committee might include a "member, or members, at large" from town. Deb suggested that Ken should report to the SB at their January 19th meeting on tonight's discussion and ask the SB to organize another joint meeting with the Planning Commission soon.
- The group then briefly brainstormed on project ideas:

- Kathy - use ARPA funds as “seed money” or start up capital for a future project, or as a match to leverage another type of available grant (Ken informed group that the SB had inquired about using ARPA as a match and according to Seth Jensen (LCPC) it was not possible at this time)
- Mary – use ARPA funds to bring cell phone service to Belvidere
- (Unsure who originated this idea) – use ARPA funds to loan money for a future project (public or private?) in town
- Ken – use ARPA funds to replace lost revenue to the non-profit Belvidere Community Club (Club members have already posed this question to the SB and LCPC - according to Seth from LCPC this currently qualifies)
- Mary – use ARPA funds to similarly replace lost revenues for private businesses in town not already qualifying for other Covid relief funding
- Deb – use ARPA funds to aid in reopening Tallman’s Store (Deb stated that understandably Belvidere’s ARPA receipts would not be enough to buy the business outright)

Other business:

- Fran informed the group that the Lamoille North School District has approved the mold remediation at the Belvidere Central School, and the project will be an expense of the school district.

Motion to adjourn at 7:46 by Deb, second by Kathy; motion carried

Next regular meeting scheduled **February 10, 2022, 6:30PM – 8:00PM**, at the Belvidere Town Clerk’s Office, and likely to include a ZOOM hybrid.