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By Linda Amerighi at 7:54 am, Dec 06, 2021

Sharon ARPA Advisory Committee
December 02, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes
Draft until approved at the next regular meeting

Sharon ARPA Advisory Committee held a special meeting on Zoom at 4:00pm on December 02, 2021. The purpose of the meeting is to get feedback from committee members on December 1st's community meeting, discuss follow-up actions by incorporating input from the community meeting. The meeting was held in open discussion format.

Committee attendees:

Jill Drew

Tom Bartram

Carol Flaton

Gretchen Hachmeister

Tom Casey

Barbara Prindle

Meghan Flanagan

Donna DiMartino

Sophia Wang

Public attendees:

Brent Prindle

Mary Walters

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm.
2. The proposed meeting agenda was approved without change.
3. **Highlights of the discussion:**
 - a. Feedback on the Resident Survey
 - i. Disappointed with the level of response, 55 responses received out of 1500 households in Sharon makes the survey not statistically significant. Actions need to be taken to get more people to participate. In addition, online survey is preferred over paper form as incomplete data from paper form may impact the quality of the survey result.
 - ii. Further data analysis of the survey response is needed so that a quantitative result can be available for easier reading.
 - b. Committee's plan going forward
 - i. The Committee acts as an information-collection body under the Board of Selectman. The ARPA committee will collect ideas and suggestions, establish criteria to determine those that do/do not meet the U.S. Treasury's guidelines, and provide a list to the Selectmen of all ideas/applications with explanations for why they do or do not seem to meet the U.S. Treasury's rules. Unless directed to do so by the Board of Selectmen, the ARPA Advisory Committee will not provide a ranking of suggested priorities.
 - ii. For those ideas without a clear applicant/advocate, one person from the ARPA committee can take the lead and talk with the people in town knowledgeable about the idea.
 - iii. To maintain transparency, the ARPA committee will define a working process on how to qualify and evaluate input from the community. Jill Drew will draft a proposal and share it with the Committee members for discussion at the Dec. 20 meeting.

iv. The Committee members are considering having a community meeting every 2 or 3 months to engage the public.

c. Other comment

i. Don't commit to spend all the money now. We don't know when/if the pandemic and its effects will end.

ii. Some portion of the total funds should be segregated for possible needs of town residents, to be distributed through either the Sharon Social Service Agent or through the Sharon Community Foundation.

4. **Actions:**

a. Undertake more outreach to increase the survey participation:

i. Write a post on Sharon Community Facebook page,

ii. Ask the First Selectman's permission to send out a Constant Contact email to the town with ARPA survey as the only topic;

iii. Send emails to the Sharon Connect Task Force email list that has 500 subscribers;

iv. Add mention of the ARPA survey to the Hotchkiss Library patron's email list;

v. Put signs in local businesses encouraging residents to fill out the survey;

vi. Post the PDF version of the survey form online so people can access and print out from any place

vii. Communicate with Marshall Miles of Robin Hood Radio to suggest he interview Meghan Flanagan about the preliminary survey results and need for more people to fill out the survey. Could also suggest he do a special program and invite people from the ARPA committees in surrounding towns.

b. Jill will draft a committee working process along with proposed criteria to be used evaluating the proposals/applications from the community.

5. Remarks: Video conference equipment to enable the hybrid meeting at Town Hall will be purchased with other funds from the town. Jill will send specifics to Tina Pitcher and remove equipment from ARPA's consideration list.

6. Meeting is adjourned at 5:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sophia Wang