

Minutes of the ARPA Funds Working Group (Filed Subject for Approval)

May 19th, 2022, by Zoom

Attending: Mary Campbell, Briana Carvalho, Karen Gifford, Wes Higgins, Chris Parkin, James Sanders, Julia Pemberton

The meeting was called to order at 5.02 pm by Chair Higgins.

The minutes of the May 12th, 2022 meeting were reviewed.

Motion to adopt minutes (K. Gifford, J. Sanders) Adopted by unanimous vote 6-0

Georgetown Village Restoration Inc. began a presentation led by President Ralph Bosch , Vice President Lisa Devine , and Secretary Kate Perry. They noted the significant negative impact Covid had on many business's in Georgetown. Improved recognition of the business district from installation of signs on the roads leading to the town center has been under discussion for many years. GVRI is proposing the installation of five large wooden signs and several smaller metal signs with a total cost not to exceed \$15,000. In response to questions from Working Group members George indicated the requested amount would cover placement of the signs and maintenance would be funded by the GVRI. Approval by the Police Department is already in hand and he will check with zoning on the design of the signs.

Michael D'Agostino, Chair of ER presented a request to fund the replacement of a water cooling tower at Barlow. The bid is for just over \$77,000, and Mike indicated this price will likely increase after the bid expires on June 1st. He indicated that the time period to act on the bid is short and he would make available ER9's reserve capital funds only if he was assured of repayment by the towns. Easton Board of Selectmen have recommended to their Board of Finance the use of ARPA funds at \$48.47% or \$37,551. Julia indicated her support of efforts to save taxpayer's monies but was not certain a repayment using ARPA funds complied with the ARPA rules.

Chair Higgins proposed to the Group that in the future the agendas would provide clarity as to the proposals to be considered each week to aid the preparation of the outside organizations. He also proposed to circulate comments received from the public in email form to the working group as an addendum to the minutes. Chris stated he preferred a public comment period. Higgins noted the difficulty comment periods present when meeting times are limited as some speakers are not able to speak or complete their thoughts. Mary, Briana, Jim and Karen supported the addendum approach.

Adjourned 5.51 pm (K. Gifford, J. Sanders)

Submitted by Wes Higgins

Addendum: Public Comments Received thru 5/22/2022

We wish to record our support for the use ARPA funds to permit the construction of 2 dedicated Pickleball courts when the town tennis courts are resurfaced. The sport is growing fast, it involves men and women on an equal footing, and can be played almost all year long. To have 2 courts made especially for the game, rather than being overlaid on basketball or tennis lines would be a great addition to the town's limited public athletic facilities.

Please vote YES.

Bob and Bezo
Robert Morton
P.O. Box 16
274 Poverty Hollow Road
Redding Ridge, CT 06876 USA

I write in strong support of using ARPA funding for designated pickle ball courts at the Community Center. It has been wonderful to see so many people - so many different ages and abilities - come together to play this sport. Clearly the restrictions during COVID showed the importance of outdoor facilities that can be accessed by our residents.

Thank you for the work that you are doing.
Jean Rexford
580 Redding Road

I am writing to suggest that 2 pickleball courts be added to the already approved renovations of the tennis courts at the elementary school. The Town can use ARPA funds, and this will make the courts have more capacity. By combining the two projects into one space, it will save money and create a nice mixed use facility.

Eric Einstein
15 Deacon Abbott Lane South

Hello ARPA Committee Members.

Please support the ARPA allocation of funds to build 2 new pickleball courts at the Redding Community Center. Pickleball is the fastest growing sporting activity in the United States and is rapidly growing here in Redding. There are now 100+ registered pickleball players, many who play year-round at the Redding Community Center. New dedicated pickleball courts would not only help Redding's growing pickleball community but also enhance the town's physical assets.

I am a resident of Redding and an enthusiastic pickleball player. Please support the ARPA allocation of funds to build 2 new pickleball courts. Thank you.

Kind regards,
David Durie
Topstone

Dear Committee - we are writing to express support for two new dedicated pickleball courts in Redding. We were very pleased with the vote to replace the tennis courts and add pickleball lines which was passed earlier this month. Robin and I are avid pickleball players and we believe the addition of two dedicated courts would be a great addition to Redding as we have a large and growing pickleball community. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,
Bruce and Robin Ives
163 Gallows Hill Road
Redding, CT

Dear Members of the ARPA Committee,
First of all I want to thank you all for your hard work in representing our lovely town of Redding,CT. As a citizen for 40 years, I am so happy to see the passing of the tennis courts.
I am writing to request that you support the application for the two designated Pickleball Courts. As a realtor for 15 years, I have to express how Pickleball Courts are one of the hottest commodities in towns across the US. When showing properties last fall in Fairfield County, my client was shocked to see that we were having a pickleball tournament and she ended up participating.
When I shared that we are having a tournament this year to agents in my Westport Compass office, they couldn't believe how progressive our town is and a couple are planning on participating. It shines a whole new light on Redding.

Pickleball is fantastic for all. As a former teacher for 38 years in Weston and Greenwich, and now a player in town, I see how the game supports the social and emotional development of all generations. How often do you see 8 year olds playing on the same court as 70 year olds and having a blast? Then, in between games they sit down together and actually have a conversation about life! Pickleball is bringing families and the community together organically. We can all benefit from more courts and the opportunities afforded by playing together.

Thanks so much for voting yes for the two courts! You work hard for our town and I really appreciate your work!

Have a great day and hopefully I'll see you on the courts soon.

Warmest regards,
Peggy Jorgensen, Compass

Dear Finance Committee members,
Thank you for your time and dedication in handling the finances for the Redding community.
Please support the additional two pickleball courts in this vote. As a pickleball player, I am watching the momentum of the sport growing and the lack of available courts. I have also seen an increased usage in the use of the tennis courts for tennis in the past few months. I support the addition of the two additional dedicated courts so that we can make Redding another pickleball hub of social activities.

Best regards,
Karin Russo
49 Great Oak Lane

I understand there's a meeting tomorrow about dedicated pickleball courts. This would be a great addition for our town and residents of all ages. It's been such fun playing and meeting new people in town. I hope to see you and Gil out there one of these days!
Let's hope this gets done in addition to the tennis courts.

Thank you,
Joanne Bryant

Good morning,

I am writing to show support for the construction of two dedicated pickleball courts in Redding. As a tennis and pickleball player, I was thrilled by the recent Town vote to approve the reconstruction of the RCC tennis courts, but I think we should use ARPA funds to complete the project in a way that supports Redding's long term growth.

Pickle is a game for all ages and most importantly, abilities. The game is fun, addictive, and you don't need any special skills to start playing. Unlike tennis, golf, or most other sports, pickleball was designed so that all ages and abilities could play together and have fun immediately, without hours and hours of learning and training.

Having dedicated pickleball courts in Redding will attract new residents. Having dedicated pickleball courts in Redding will provide a new gathering spot for seniors to get outside and get moving. Having dedicated pickleball courts in Redding will provide young children new activities to do with their parents. Having dedicated pickleball courts in Redding will provide young adults in Redding a new place to gather and compete. Having dedicated pickleball courts in Redding is the right move for the town to take NOW.

Thank you,
Elizabeth Sager
144 Umpawaug Rd
Redding CT 06896

Hello,

I'm sending this email to express my support for 2 dedicated pickleball courts.

The new tennis courts will go a long way to providing a place where Redding families can congregate. But given the popularity of pickleball- 2 dedicated pickleball courts - will further increase the use and can even be a source of revenue as well (tournaments/addition summer camps etc.

It's an additional upfront expense that has the potential to be a longer term source of revenue for the town.

But most importantly, the residents have an opportunity to get to know each other which is needed in today's divisive environment.

Regards,
Jan Parry
69 Farview Farm Rd

I strongly support the inclusion of 2 dedicated Pickleball courts to the renewal of tennis court project. As a senior person who has lived in town for over 50 years, I was pleased to get acquainted with the game through the Pickleball initiative started last year and have had opportunity to learn and play indoors at the community center this winter. I have met more residents than I have in the years since my children exited the Redding schools. During the winter the Senior Center sponsored a time dedicated to senior play. I am pleased the tennis courts will be redone and hope the awareness of the popularity of the game, particularly for seniors will convince you all of the worth of including the dedicated courts in the upcoming project!

Myrna Robinson Pickleball has become very popular in Redding! I strongly support the addition of the two dedicated courts to the tennis court reconstruction. This was originally intended as part of the proposal that was voted on and passed. Please approve the addition of these courts, as it will be the most cost effective for the town, and provide a needed recreational improvement for the pickleball enthusiasts of Redding.

Sincerely,
Donna and James Dekle
162 Picketts Ridge Road

Good afternoon,

I am reaching out to you as chair of the ARPA Committee to express concerns with some of the recent and upcoming ARPA requests. It was brought to my attention at various town meetings that funding for pickleball courts at the community center and architectural changes to the community center would be proposed near term.

With respect to the pickleball courts, while they are nice community feature, I do not believe that they are within the spirit of the ARPA mandate. They do not respond to public health or economic impacts of COVID-19, they do not support public sector hiring, they do not streamline premium pay for essential workers, this not a water, sewer, or broadband infra project and this project was not subject to non-completion due to revenue loss. Further, the town is investing over half a million dollars to install new, high tech tennis courts that will be lined and provide space for the game of pickleball to be played, which should provide adequate capacity for the small percentage of the town that plays the game.

With regard to the architectural plans, including a retractable wall, that is being requested for the community center. These larger scope projects outside of general maintenance should be held until a broader scope study of the facility is completed, which will allow the community to understand that we are applying funds to the highest and best use for the refurbishment of the facility, that will meet the needs of more than the narrow membership of the Heritage Center. I would hate to see an expensive project completed only to be redone, at greater cost to the community upon completion of the study.

Thank you for your consideration of the above,
Carolyn Baker
15 Indian Hill Rd
Redding, CT 06896