Meeting minutes of Town Council on 10-18-2022

As reviewed, approved, and accepted by the Town Council on November 1, 2022

There being a quorum, Mayor Ruspi called the special meeting of the Town Council to order at 7:31p.m. The meeting was held using video conferencing. Council Members Charles Bradsher, Tom Burke, Amy Koval and David Preusch were present. The Clerk, Assistant Clerk and the Chairs of the Historic District Commission, Planning Commission, Parks and Trails Task Force and one guest were also present.

Mayor Ruspi opened the meeting by thanking everyone who has worked on the ARPA process. He offered a special thanks to Council Members Burke and Koval for the time they have spent attending meetings and preparing reports.

Mayor Ruspi said letters soliciting input on the use of ARPA funds were sent to all Laytonsville residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations in February. Fifty-three responses were received, and a thorough review process was completed. Like items were combined, items that are not within the town’s purview or achievable with the amount of funds available were set aside. A list of several items that would positively impact the greatest number of residents was previously given to the Council for their consideration. Mayor Ruspi said he would like to see if there are any items on the list that the Council is willing to proceed with approving. He emphasized that the list is not exclusive, and all items may still be considered.

Mayor Ruspi introduced Anne Wolf, President of the Laytonsville Historical Center, and asked her to share her proposal for the installation of wayside interpretive signs in the town. President Wolf explained how she believes the town would benefit from the installation of historical signs. She reviewed some of the proposed locations and the reasons for placing signs in these locations. Mayor Ruspi said the sign ordinance will need to be reviewed to see if there are factors that need to be considered. He stated if this project is approved by the Council, he does not want to manage the project and would like the Laytonsville Historical Center to be responsible for the production and installation of the signs. There was agreement that the signs should be confined within town limits and that if the signs are placed on town property the town will be responsible to repair or replace if damaged. Council Member Burke explained how this project is related to ARPA guidelines. Council Member Preusch thought fewer signs would be more appropriate. There was consensus that the project would be beneficial to the town, that five, smaller signs would be sufficient and that there should be advice and consent from the Mayor and Council on the project. Chair Hendricks said signs are covered by the historic area work permit process and, while he cannot think of a precedent for this type of sign, the Historic District Commission might care about the location of signs in the historic district. President Wolf thanked the Mayor and Council for their time and said she will work with her team to prepare another proposal for the Mayor and Council’s consideration.

Council Member Koval stated ARPA funds must be allotted and accounted for by December 31, 2024, and the funds must be spent by December 31, 2026.

Additional items on the list of proposed projects were discussed. A donation to the Laytonsville District Volunteer Fire Department was tabled as the information Mayor Ruspi requested has not been received.

The costs related to the town parade and the picnic were considered. The cost estimates were based on previous expenses and could change if an event were canceled due to weather. Council Member Koval suggested these items could be removed from the list. Chair Hendricks asked if expenses from the 2022 parade could be reimbursed. Mayor Ruspi said these expenses could be reimbursed as they fell within the designated period.

Mayor Ruspi shared that he is in the process of getting estimates for repairs to the sidewalks and for the installation of bollards on two paths. He also stated he has received an estimate to replace the walkway, the patio, and the porch behind the Town Hall. The current estimate is approximately $30,000 and he will bring this item to the Council at another meeting.

The warranty and estimates for repair options for the pond at Jones Farm Park were deliberated. It was determined that an estimate for repairs should be obtained from another company. Council Member Preusch agreed to solicit an estimate from another company.

Mayor Ruspi pointed out that a procedure will need to be established if the Council approves the item to test the drinking water for town residents. Factors to consider include: who will be eligible, what will the water testing include, and how will the process work. Council Member Preusch offered to work on this project.

Mayor Ruspi said he has invited representatives from the Laytonsville Lions Club Foundation to present information on the proposed community center at the November Council meeting.

Adjournment: Council Member Koval made a motion to adjourn at 9:19p.m. Council Member Preusch seconded the motion. ***Unanimously approved.***

Respectfully submitted,

Joy Jackson
Assistant Clerk
October 18, 2022