

**TOWN OF WALLINGFORD
WALLINGFORD ARPA APPLICATION REVIEW COMMITTEE
129 Center Street (HUBCAP)
Wallingford, CT 06492**

**Tuesday, March 7, 2023
6:30 p.m.**

UNAPPROVED DRAFT OF RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Due to the lack of a flag, the Pledge of Allegiance was waived. Members in attendance were Mike Brodinsky, Craig Fishbein, Robert Fritz, Robert Gross, Jacqueline McNamee, Jesse Reynolds, and Amy Walsh. A quorum was declared.

Discussion and possible action regarding the Committee's next steps and plans for future evaluations of grant applications and other procedural and administrative matters.

Mr. Brodinsky recapped ideas discussed at the last meeting, including:

1. Reaffirm the vote on the Grange application, and
2. A motion to pause review of non-profit applications.

Mr. Brodinsky suggested forging ahead with business applications and stated that we might be able to complete the list by mid-April. He distributed the list of remaining business applications in their scrambled order. He proposed reviewing 11 at the March 16th meeting and 12 at the March 21st meeting. Then can schedule two more meetings in the first half of April. At that point, we can assess where we are with the non-profits. He invited comments on that proposal.

Mr. Reynolds stated that he would like to get back to doing all the applications. If it is what the group wants, he is agreeable to doing the business applications. He asked if we could get them done faster and that he is willing to meet more.

Ms. McNamee stated that people have been waiting. She'd like to get them all done, including the non-profit applications.

Mr. Gross stated that he doesn't have a problem reviewing them quicker, as long as there is time to prepare. If we have some direction before April, we can start putting non-profits into the meeting agendas.

Mr. Fritz stated that he will go along with the group. We were tasked with evaluating these applications independently, knowing that the Council is going to do what they want to do. He noted that it was always possible that our recommendations would be overturned. He added that he wants to review all the applications. He agreed with moving ahead quicker but doesn't want to meet late into the night.

Ms. Walsh agreed with moving as quickly as possible while balancing other commitments. She would like to get the business list done as soon as possible and added that it is easier to focus on one type at a time. She stated that she thought that we can get this list done in three or four meetings.

Mr. Fishbein stated that he looks at all the applications in one pile. The recent ethical concerns don't overshadow the concern that our work is all for naught. He quoted from the Council meeting agenda backup for the agenda item that was withdrawn. "The ARPA Committee makes recommendations to the Council. All we asked of the committee was to make sure there was no fraud and that there was legitimate loss and need due to COVID." He noted that that is not true. If that is the criteria why are we spending so much of our time on this? He wants to just get it done. He has had a lot of conversations about this. Individuals were willing to overturn our recommendations without listening to the recording of the meeting. He noted that he liked one of the applications that the Committee denied that night and could have changed his vote to ensure it passed since the score was close. He didn't because it wouldn't be fair to the other applicants. He added that the process is that the Mayor is supposed to make the funding recommendations to Council and the Council is overstepping. He admitted that he doesn't know how the committee can go forward.

Mr. Brodinsky summarized that no one disagrees with forging ahead. He noted that we currently have March 16, 21, and 22 scheduled for meetings. He asked for input on possible dates and how to avoid long meetings as well as back-to-back dates. He asked if four meetings in a month is okay or if there should be more. He proposed March 16 and 21 and two dates in April or do you want more?

Mr. Reynolds stated that our good faith efforts are being called into question. He stated that he is a volunteer. He wants to get them all done because these people need help. Four meetings in a month would be fine.

Ms. McNamee stated that it will be hard to add more dates and that she prefers not to go past 9:30 pm. We already have the 16th, 21st, and 22nd on the calendar. She is willing to add dates in April.

Mr. Gross stated that he was okay with meeting more, but not too condensed. He agrees with going as quickly as we can and encouraged the group to not give up. We should continue to do what we are doing.

Mr. Fritz stated that he can do an extra date but not back-to-back. He suggested trying to keep discussions on point and move more quickly. Four meetings in a month are okay but no more than two a week. He suggested keeping the next two meetings in March and seeing how many we can get through. We need to just do our job. Mr. Fritz agreed to one meeting a week.

Ms. Walsh agreed that back-to-back would be tough, and agreed that she could do two a week.

Regarding the March 16th meeting, Mr. Brodinsky noted that he will be out of town and doesn't know if Mike Glidden will be in attendance. Mr. Fishbein suggested limiting the discussion to 9 applications that night. The consensus was to go ahead with the next 9 applications on the list on March 16th. Mr. Brodinsky asked for a volunteer to chair and stated that Mr. Regan has volunteered. The consensus of the group was to accept Mr. Regan's offer.

Mr. Brodinsky suggested striking the 21st because the next night is a scheduled meeting. Mr. Brodinsky proposed doing the next 12 from the list in the meeting on March 22nd. Mr. Fishbein noted that he will need to recuse himself for two of the applications on the list for that night (Tee it Up and Parent and Parent).

Mr. Brodinsky asked for availability the week of March 27th. The consensus was that March 29th was a good date for a meeting. He canvassed for dates in April and the group agreed on April 3rd and April 18th. He agreed to reach out to the absent members to check their availability as well. He summarized that these meetings will be to review the business applications first before non-profits. He then asked if there are any objections. Hearing none, he suggested that in April we can decide how to proceed.

Mr. Brodinsky reported that the final version of the Op-Ed was shared with the committee this afternoon. He thanked the committee members for their input. If agreed, he will submit it tonight and will put the committee members' names on it. He stated that he has already spoken to Mr. Bonamico and Mr. Regan. Mr. Glidden said no. All present said yes. The consensus was that Mr. Brodinsky should list himself as chair.

Mr. Brodinsky asked for a discussion of the article that was in the paper today.
Mr. Gross noted that it was not completely factual but that we should let it be.
Mr. Fritz stated there was nothing nefarious in the article and there is nothing we can do about it.
Mr. Reynolds stated that it could have had a better headline.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:15 pm.

Made by Mr. Brodinsky

Seconded by Mr. Gross

There being no objection, the meeting was adjourned.