



ARPA Advisory Committee

1315 S. Washington Avenue
Council Chambers – Room 205
989.399.1311
March 23, 2022
MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

ARPA Advisory Committee Chair, Renee Johnston, called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Christina Jones, Renee Johnston, James Hernandez, Jeffrey Bulls, Hurley Coleman, Jr., James Doane, Calvin Talley, Valerie Toney, Kevin Albosta, Grady Holmes, Jr., Fenobia Dallas

Excused: Veronica Horn, Sharon Leaman-Case, Tina Swanton

Absent: Amy Spadafore

Committee member Amy Spadafore entered the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR PERSON:

Chair Johnston called for volunteers to be considered for Vice Chair. Mr. Talley, Mr. Bulls, and Ms. Spadafore volunteered. Mr. Talley was elected as Vice Chair.

LIMIT PUBLIC COMMENTS TO THREE MINUTES:

Moved by Coleman, Jr., seconded by Dallas, to limit each person giving public comments to three minutes.

Ms. Spadafore asked whether the committee would also be limited to three minutes for response. City Clerk, Ms. Santos, clarified that only each person giving public comments is limited to three minutes.

Motion approved.

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Moved by Bulls, seconded by Coleman Jr., to approve the March 9, 2022 minutes.

Mr. Coleman, Jr. wanted official discussion in the public record. Mr. Bulls wondered whether these discussions could be recorded for transparency purposes. City Clerk, Ms. Santos, clarified whether meetings could be recorded. Ms. Santos said that minutes in a meeting are generally on the action a committee takes, not necessarily verbatim. Mr. Bulls repeated concern about not having these discussions recorded. Mr. Coleman, Jr. emphasized the importance of these historic conversations to be recorded or transcribed. Ms. Johnston added that in the meantime, Mr. Aguilar will take as detailed minutes as possible and if there is still a concern, it can be brought up again in the future.

Motion approved.

GUIDEHOUSE:

Mr. Sernick started his presentation by reviewing the “Group Norms.” He then moved on to COVID funding for Saginaw Public Schools. Saginaw Public Schools have received over 100 million dollars in funding from three COVID-related bills.

Mr. Albosta asked whether there is information on how that money was spent or if there is overlap with other funding. Mr. Sernick responded that there is no overlap and that there is no information at the moment on how that money has been spent. Ms. Johnston mentioned that the committee could ask for information from the schools in the future. Mr. Sernick said that he would try to reach out to a school official so they can potentially report to the committee on their funding process.

Mr. Sernick moved on to the survey timeline in the presentation. Mr. Sernick asked for general comments on the survey. Ms. Toney said that there was not a lot of response across the board. Ms. Dallas asked about the distribution process on the survey. Mr. Sernick answered from the slides: paper copies, in-person, city council events, media, neighborhood association groups, etc. Ms. Dallas emphasized increasing ways of engaging the community in the future. Mr. Coleman, Jr. asked whether this committee would be limited to the information present or whether there would be an opportunity for another survey in the near future. Mr. Sernick said that the committee is not limited but said he would make a recommendation on a more effective way to move forward with resources and time available. Ms. Jones, Director of OMB, stepped in to add more information on how the survey was conducted and marketed across the city: 1,000 responses. Mr. Doane asked why the categories in the survey are different from the “buckets” Guidehouse is working with. Ms. Jones stepped in again to say that the city's strategic goals were used and that the city council created those “buckets” with information from the survey.

Mr. Sernick moved on to the results of the Community Survey on ARPA. He then presented the priority groups created by the city council, which are influenced by the survey results.

Mr. Sernick explained a subgroup in preparation for the next activity. He said a subgroup is more general than a project. He emphasized that more specific projects would be possible in the future.

Mr. Sernick explained the brainstorming process. He would divide the committee into five groups: the priority groups. Step 1 would consist of writing subgroups under the five priority groups. Step 2 would consist of grouping similar subgroups together. Then the committee would take a break and review the subgroups. At the end, the committee would review the ideas and see what is missing, if anything. Mr. Sernick would give three minutes per priority group. The brainstorming activity started at 5:40 p.m. and ended at 5:55 p.m.

Mr. Sernick then explained that the committee would now move on to grouping subgroups. Chair Johnston explained what a community venture is: stipends given to corporations to employ individuals such as veterans, etc.

Mr. Sernick told the committee that all these subgroup ideas would be documented:

Health:

- COVID response expansion
- Access to healthy food
- Accessible routine medical health
- Public safety
- Support for health dept.
- Opioids
- Cost issues
- Support for Great Lakes Bay health
- MMR staff support
- School based health
- Bike path
- Mental health access
- Education perspectives for better health
- MIHIA support
- Food desert
- Staffing issues
- Senior support
- Veterans' health
- Substance abuse
- Walking trails accessible
- Mental health & physical connection
- Physical activities

Economic Development:

- Small business incubation/entrepreneur
- Start-up funding
- Locally owned business support
- Downtown investments
- Youth job training
- Small business
- Seed funding
- Sport related attractions
- Placemaking
- Child care
- Expansion of tax free zones
- Parking
- Local ownership
- Multi use areas
- Promote training at high school/university levels
- Arts & culture
- Geographic balanced investment
- Community ventures
- Encourage collaboration with non profits
- Repeal the tax cap
- Develop hardest hit/underdeveloped areas

Housing:

- Homeless reduction
- Affordable housing
- Blight prevention
- Purchasing incentives
- Funding for energy efficient appliances
- More habitat houses
- Housing rehab
- Update change zoning
- Retail amenities
- Energy efficiency
- Tiny homes
- Rehab vacant buildings/schools
- Grocery stores in city
- Neighborhood development
- Quality life enhancements
- Legal issues
- Arts & culture
- Solar/different clean energy
- Market rate housing
- Public transportation
- No rezoning to industrial

Neighborhood Preservation and Beautification:

- Streets/lights
- Orchards
- Youth sports
- Public art
- Neighborhood association
- Community center (one per neighborhood association)
- Capital improvements for parks
- Community gardens
- Parks
- Historic preservation
- Semi annual neighborhood clean ups
- Organized recreation opportunities
- Positive growth in community
- Expand opportunities in parks
- Morley Park community center
- Positive interaction with others
- Free concerts in the parks
- Juneteenth museum
- East side grocery stores
- Structured community garden
- Land bank support

Youth and Family:

- Gov't funded/subsidized
- Under life skills (sewing, cooking)
- Co-op grocery store in east side
- Workforce development programming

- Job shadow opportunities
- Life skills development
- Crime reduction
- Life-style math-training budgets
- Family group opportunities
- Education assistance
- Community higher education involvement
- After school programs
- Faith community connections
- Community centers/conflict resolution training
- Funding recreation programs
- Child care
- Community education center
- Grocery store/food desert
- Arts
- Events & Entertainment

The committee moved on to the grouping process, where the subgroups listed above were organized into similar groups within the priority group. The grouping activity started at 6:00 p.m. and ended at 6:03 p.m.

Mr. Sernick asked questions about subgroup ideas after the grouping activity:

Health:

- No questions/issues about the ideas.

Economic Development:

- No questions/issues about the ideas.

Housing:

- "Legal issues"
 - Mr. Holmes, Jr. talked about the legal system/government on demolition of homes. He advocated for a system on deteriorating houses for a formal process of demolition.

Neighborhood Preservation and Beautification:

- "Land bank support"
 - Mr. Albosta talked about the same issue Mr. Holmes, Jr. brought up regarding home demolitions.

Youth and Family:

- "Gov't funded/subsidized."
 - Ms. Spadafore clarified that the idea is about subsidizing childcare.

Mr. Sernick asked the committee to think about ideas and what might be missing during the break.

Chair Johnston recessed the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Chair Johnston reconvened the meeting at 6:20 p.m. and turned the meeting over to Mr. Sernick.

Mr. Sernick talked about the next steps: Guidehouse will turn these groupings and create concise topics to translate them. He added that at the next meeting, Guidehouse will bring those ideas for the committees' approval. Then Guidehouse will also bring ideas that the committee may have missed. Mr. Coleman, Jr. said that continuing community engagement is missing from these ideas. He added that the personal engagement process is still missing. Mr. Sernick gave an example on funding for community engagement funding. He also added that each member has a responsibility to engage with the community.

Mr. Albosta asked whether there are infrastructure development ideas here. Mr. Sernick reiterated that there is other funding (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) that could be used for such ideas. Mr. Albosta more specifically talked about broadband: telehealth.

Mr. Talley mentioned that he didn't see anything about crime prevention, specifically among the youth. He added that 16–24-year-olds may be specifically under risk. Ms. Castro reminded the committee that crime prevention is an overarching theme and goal for the city council.

Mr. Holmes, Jr. said that there is a school district in the community that has a legal obligation to teach the children. He added that the school district should play a part in this as well, especially with all the funding they have received. He gave conflict resolution as an example. Ms. Dallas added that there might be a gap in the Youth and Family priority group on working with the schools. Mr. Sernick talked about how the committee can reach out to the schools and talk to them about their funding.

Mr. Sernick moved on to the tentative timeline. He reminded the committee that it is a flexible timeline, but that they are on track. He gave the committee the next steps before the next meeting: make a list of groups you are already engaging with/could engage with for community engagement purposes.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Chair Johnston announced that the next meetings will be April 7 and April 27 at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Sernick stated that Guidehouse will finalize the subgroups, provide recommendations on how proposals might be reviewed and scored and that the committee will review, comment, and adjust recommendations.

Ms. Spadafore asked about a consistent meeting schedule after April. Mr. Sernick clarified that after May the committee may not meet, with the committee members out in the community instead.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Members of the public that addressed the committee were Audrey Beatty, Doris Wafer, Marcia Cantu, and Juanita Drake.

Ms. Beatty mentioned her concerns about the ARPA Committee dragging out this process. She recommended that the committee also held meetings in the East side of the city for better community engagement.

Ms. Wafer stated that she came to the meeting to see how things were playing out. She also added that it was interesting to see the committees' subgroup ideas under the priority groups.

Ms. Cantu thanked the committee for allowing members of the public to attend. She concluded by stating that she would like to see the committee members be more cordial to members of the public.

Ms. Drake also thanked the committee for allowing the public to come and see what is going on. She also mentioned that she wants the Saginaw community to be developed.

ADJOURN:

Moved by Bulls, seconded by Dallas to adjourn the meeting. Chair Johnston adjourned the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

Recorded by,

Walter Aguilar
Guidehouse Consultant