

Committee of the Whole Meeting

June 22nd, 2022

Held at Village Hall Council Chambers

Called to order 5:36 by Mayor Traore

Mrs. Kray motioned to excuse Mr. Dunman. No objections

Agenda given

American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) was discussed.:

Part of the master parks plan

Part of a grant written (and not funded) originally in 2019)

Committee, (herself and Mr. Sickels) reached out to residents via:

- Email
- social media,
- Newsletter
- Village website
- public meetings
- Village Marquee

Ms. Graora asked about the surveys and demographics. asked for those surveys, **Ms. Traore indicated that she would provide them to this committee via email.** It was further shared that the committee was herself, Mr. Sickels, with residents Scott Muscatello and Stacy Bahr also in attendance.

Ms. Gierz asked about the delay in sharing this information, no response given.

Mr. Moran asked about using the money for the current residents sharing that there appeared to be less than a dozen residents using the dog park.

Mrs. Kray asked about the Home Maintenance grant and how useful additional funds would be to homeowners struggling to stay in their homes. Each year we see an increase of residents using the grants as it becomes more publicized.

Mr. Dunman's information was shared via his memo. See attachment

Ms. Graora asked about the numbers listed on the grant. Mr. Dunman's memo to council echoed similar statements.

Specifically:

Could the \$219,000 be split differently. Would Ms. Traore consider allocating more money to the Home Maintenance Grant and less to the dog park?

Ms. Traore shared the following:

This grant was the culmination of her hard work and her personal relationship with our County Council Representative, Mr. Pernell Jones. She shared no one had a problem with the amounts until now and that she has received no negative feedback about the amount of money allocated for the dog park. Ms. Traore remains steadfast in her grant application and declined to move on adjusting the amounts.

Ms. Graora pointed out that several entities applied for grants including Arts Councils. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library etcetera. Ms. Traore clarified that there are different levels to the ARPA grant: Communities get one and other entities get a separate one. Her rationale included her assertion in the grant that the dog park is an amenity that will encourage new residents to move to the Village. She mentioned again that the grants referenced by Ms. Graora were Tier one grants for the arts etc., and were in fact a different level of monies from the government. She further stated that the same people apply for and utilize the grants every year, which is legal under the current ordinance.

The mayor explained that the additional \$ 81,000 for parking is not in place and we would be looking for a source for that as well as the \$ 40,000 matching funds for the Home Maintenance Grant. The following was also clarified: the grant states that service and housing jobs will be retained by this grant the mayor explained this was the same Grant from 2019 that was applied for but not awarded.

Ms. Giersz reminded members that:

The space once available for parking is no longer available.

Kathy Edwards Park is in desperate need of repairs, especially to the fence line and equipment. Ms. Traore indicated that many of the people using Kathy Edwards Park were from out of the village. Ms. Giersz reiterated that the park is used by many residents and could benefit from some repairs. Ms. Giersz indicated that the fence at Kathy Edwards Park is falling down it can no longer be repaired and thought the money would be better spent in that area.

Ms. Graora asked if the dog park would be a community build and Ms. Traore indicated we were not there yet.

Future Grant legislation was Bill's item and was tabled until Bill is able to attend the meeting.

Ms. Traore explained they went after State money but did not receive any as the pandemic realigned many requests. Mr. Jones has discretion to spend six million dollars and the money is to be split between the 10 communities in his district.

Ms. Traore explained there were public meetings, a survey online, social media, attempts to ask about this Grant and received nothing but positive comments. Each council member shared exactly the opposite that their communication from residents included displeasure with the amount of money for the dog park that is used by so few residents. Council would rather see the money split differently. That was categorically dismissed by the mayor.

Mr. Moran shared his concerns about the money for the grant felt a better use for the grant would have been home maintenance program.

A question was asked about where the remaining \$40,000 match would come from. Ms. Traore is exploring first suburbs grant funding and she is optimistic about obtaining the additional money needed for the home maintenance portion in place.

As an aside, in documents the dog park is referred to as the Washington Park Dog Park. The current signage indicates it is the Newburgh Heights Dog Park and not the Washington Park Dog Park. This may need to be addressed.

Future Grant Legislation was Mr. Dunman's item and was tabled until he could be present.

The second agenda item was **fire department and police department educational** requirements. A lively discussion ensued regarding different scenarios; making it voluntary for rank-and-file members but mandatory for supervisors, increasing the amount of time allotted to ensure that folks have an opportunity to obtain their training, and or getting rid of the requirement altogether.

Council made no decision. Mr. Dunman's opinion was read as what type of training. Council agreed to continue their research and be ready for discussion at the next council meeting. Ms. Traore shared that she gets compliments on the police department all the time. She further stated that that racism is not erased by education and that there are PhD's who are racist. Mrs. Kray responded that the opportunity for open-minded people who are in education to interact with other people can only help to broaden their minds and perspective and hopefully alleviate prejudices and racism.

Meeting security was discussed considering the new Concealed Carry Permits. Concerns were raised about people coming into the meeting with handguns. Mr. McConville shared that as a public building that is not permitted. Ms. Giersz also wanted to know what safety protocols were in place for the day-to-day village business. Ms. Traore would not entertain any type of locked building. She advocates for open and transparent government; she does not want people being wanded as they come in or forced to enter through a metal detector. She further indicated that this is not new for her as a black woman. She is used to feeling afraid.

Ms. Giersz asked if the glass in front of the administrative offices was bulletproof. Mr. Moran said it was not. Ms. Traore does not want to deploy an officer for each council meeting as there are staffing issues currently. It was also noted that Chief Majoy or his designee attended all council meeting and would be readily able to call for assistance. Council members may reach out to Chief Majoy for his feedback.

A discussion ensued regarding discharging of certain **fireworks** and how to get the word out that legislation passed to outlaw discharging of those types of Fire Works in Newburgh. **Ms. Traore agreed to:**

- get with a printer (Brother's) to send out a mailer which will include other items e.g., senior movie nights, and fall fest save the date
- to place it on the Marquee
- to have it on the village web page
- to have the information available on social media.
- Place it in the Neighborhood News

She also offered that if you see something say something and the Police will do their best to respond. She will also have a press release; indicating that we will see a lot of them.

Recording/Broadcasting Council Meetings

Mr. Dunman via his written information wanted to ensure that residents who wanted to live stream or Facebook or YouTube meetings were able to do so. Ms. Traore had indicated that she has shown Mr. Dunman how to do that and we will begin making this available to residents who are unable to attend the meetings. A decision has to be made on where exactly where this is going to be: on the Facebook page or is it going to be on YouTube.

We ask Ms. Traore what her vision for the village was.

She has indicated the following;

- she wants to work on branding among other things....
- so that the first thing people think about when they hear Newburgh Heights is not a just a traffic camera community
- but they hear about our integrated neighborhood
- they hear about our proximity to downtown
- they hear about our park system
- our dog park, our golf course, our schools etc.
- she wants to make certain that she reaches out forms relationships with the CEO of Cleveland Public Schools

Mrs. Kray clarified that these efforts are ongoing and that they started ten years ago. That our information on branding has been put out by the previous administration including these highlights:

- Signage
- including media coverage of positive events
- like the 32 Hour Work Week
- 6 months of paternity leave
- and many of these branding issues have been seen across the country

Mr. Moran indicated we've spent over \$50,000 on things like this thus far

The mayor indicated the state of the village will happen in February.

A discussion about communication ensued:

We all agreed communication and working together is extremely important. Examples were given of emails not being returned all agreed to work harder. Luke clarified that a quorum is 3 out of 5 and that no one person, not even the mayor can cancel a meeting that has a legitimate agenda and a quorum. He also cautioned members to be very careful discussing things online because if more than two council members are discussing any issue it could be considered an illegal meeting and subject to the Open Records Act. If two people, it is not a problem. Nor is it a problem when talking with a resident.

Mr. Moran mentioned that he is getting complaints constantly about people putting their trash cans out early and Ms. Traore suggested that the building department resume giving tickets as the police department as a resource, cannot always be available for these matter .

Ms. Giersz, Mr. Moran and Mrs. Kray indicated there was much confusion about this meeting. The mayor did not understand that we all got a message saying the meeting was canceled; after which it appeared that the meeting was back on so depending on where you were in the email thread you might not have known there was a meeting today.

Mr. McConville indicated he was notified it was canceled as well and that it appeared the mayor had declined the meeting. He made the following statement. If there is a quorum the meeting cannot be canceled by the mayor or anyone else; it is council's meeting and Council would have to cancel it.

A resident at the meeting was given an opportunity to speak. Ms. Sally Perez indicated the following:

She indicated that the police were doing an excellent job. She has had interactions with the police and found them to be very responsive but limited in their involvement in her particular situation. She understands that they are not a personal protection agency.

She expressed displeasure with the amount of the ARPA dog park grant, she felt that, as a village, we have other issues where the monies allocated for the ARPA grant could be used to serve more residents, not just those with dogs.

Meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Councilwoman

Michelle Graora



Approved 7/19/22