

**TOWN OF DUNE ACRES
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION
February 15, 2022**

The Town of Dune Acres Town Council conducted a Public Hearing on Tuesday, February 15, 2022, via zoom teleconference. Council President Rich Hawksworth opened the hearing at 7:00 p.m., with Council Members Alexander Stemer and Paul Woidke, Clerk-Treasurer Jeannette Bapst, and Attorney Adam Mindel in attendance.

PUBLIC INPUT ON THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION

The Town Council had advertised the “Notice to Taxpayers of Hearing on Additional Appropriation” relative ARP Funds. The notice was published in *The Times* and *Chesterton Tribune* on February 1, 2022.

The Town Council had proposed an additional appropriation for American Rescue Plan funds as follows:

\$20,545	Capital Investment, Infrastructure, Fund 2401 Installation of a pedestrian walkway on Mineral Springs Road
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The pedestrian walkway had been discussed at numerous Town Council meetings since June, 2021, reviewed and reported on by town engineers, and quoted by an outside contractor at \$45,000, all in response to pedestrian and vehicular safety concerns at the blind hill. The proposal calls for a four-foot wide, wood plank structure on the west side of Mineral Springs Road, starting at the intersection of West Road and continuing south past the blind hill. It was stated that, partly because of the COVID pandemic, more people are out walking in Dune Acres. The Town Council regularly receives safety concern comments from residents about the Mineral Springs Road blind hill. A hard surface walkway provides conveyance for strollers and bicycles as well as pedestrians. Great Lakes Engineering determined a walkway was the most cost-effective solution to the hazardous site.

Input was received from residents attending the Public Hearing and from residents submitting emails. Eleven residents shared their opinions on the walkway proposal.

Residents in opposition to the plan expressed disapproval of the design concept which they felt interferes with the natural setting of Dune Acres, of the wood surface which may become slippery and requires maintenance, of the presumed walkway slope that would require railings, and about the general lack of detail on how the finished product would look. Other residents questioned why the Mineral Springs Road blind hill was selected as a safety project when there are other hazardous locations in Dune Acres with more foot traffic from residents, opining the selected location is used more by non-resident National Park visitors. A statement was made that in Dune Acres, “Our Roads are our Sidewalks,” and those wanting to widen roads and add sidewalks should select another community in which to live.

Two residents said the Town should decline American Rescue Plan Funds, stating Dune Acres is an affluent community that should be self-sustaining and that should not participate in federal government deficit-producing policies.

Suggested options from residents included placing warning signs on the hill, installing speed bumps, installing an electric speed limit sign, widening the road, and revitalizing the existing short pedestrian pathway that is overgrown and has a soft, sandy surface.

After receiving input from all residents wishing to speak, and following discussion, no action was taken on the Additional Appropriation. The Town Council will explore incremental steps toward safety improvement, gauge the success of those efforts, and possibly re-visit the pedestrian walkway project at a later date.

ADJOURNMENT

The hearing was closed at 7:35 PM.

RICH HAWKSWORTH, Town Council President

PAUL WOIDKE, Town Council Member

ALEXANDER STEMER, Town Council Member

JEANNETTE E. BAPST, Clerk-Treasurer