



Denise Hamler <denisehamler@gmail.com>

PLEASE REVIEW THIS for accuracy so I can send over to them asap -- ARPA Funds Designated for the Cottage City Garden - Documentation from April 19, 2023 - May 2025

1 message

Denise Hamler <denisehamler@gmail.com>
To: Diana G <dguespe@gmail.com>
Cc: Denise Hamler <denisehamler@gmail.com>

Tue, May 27, 2025 at 4:35 PM

Dear John H and Treasurer Todd,
CC: Garden Treasurer Diana Gulespe, Wanda Wheatley

Denise Hamler, Coleader of the Cottage City Community Garden, met with John H on May 27, 2025 to discuss the issue with allocating the recent garden purchases to the original ARPA funds. Through this discussion we realized that due to staffing changes through the years that the original ARPA allocation needed to be reviewed per the decisions that were made back to April 2023. Below is my attempt to document all the discussions/decisions made/ allocation of monies per the \$25,000 original allocation to the garden from the ARPA funds in 2023.

1) In April 2023 when residents learned that there were remaining ARPA funds the Garden and Green Team presented this letter in a town meeting to request funds be spent to benefit the residents: Denise Hamler and Diana Gulespe on behalf of the two team presented this letter - per the mandate of the garden and Green Team:

LETTER to Commissioners:**April 19, 2023**

Dear Cottage City Commissioners, Carol Richardson and Greg Pinkney,
RE: Community Requests for ARPA Funds

Thank you for allowing the Cottage City residents to learn how the town has allocated and spent the approximately \$700,000 of the \$1.1 million and asking for our feedback on how the remainder of the funds could be allocated.

The Cottage City Community Garden and Cottage City Green Team/Tree Canopy Committee are asking that the following projects be funded from the ARPA Program:

a) Cottage City Green Team's Tree Canopy Committee has been working for two years with the town to locate funding for new tree plantings, removal of dead or diseased trees and trimming our mature tree canopy on town property. We are pleased to submit a new request that we believe will further aid in the preservation of our tree canopy. There are many mature trees on private properties that require significant attention. The committee walked the neighborhood and identified approximately 50 trees and they have been cataloged in our Goggle document. Understanding that tree maintenance is the property owner's responsibility, we also understand that this expense is often not possible for families. REQUEST: We are asking that \$25,000 from the remaining ARPA funds be allocated for residents to request tree maintenance assistance.

We will work with the town to design a fair process for allocations of the funds.

We also realize that the need far exceeds the requested amount.

DECISION MADE TO ALLOCATE \$25,000.

b) Cottage City Community Garden has been a community asset for well over a decade. The garden currently serves 32 community families with a place to grow food for their families. The co-leaders and the committee members have worked tirelessly over the last five years to acquire grant monies and town resources to do much needed improvements to the garden and increase the reach of the services to the community. Request: At this times we request \$25,000 from the remaining ARPA funds to assist in the following projects:

DECISION MADE: THE COTTAGE CITY COMMISSIONERS ALLOCATED \$25,000 TO THE GARDEN FOR FOUR PROJECTS.

* Our **beekeeping operation** that assists with the pollination and the health of the garden requires a new shed to house the supplies that are expensive and need secured.

2024: DECISION MADE: IN THE SPRING OF 2024 THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CLASS BUILT US A SHED AND DELIVERED IT TO THE GARDEN SO WE DID NOT HAVE TO SPENT THESE RESOURCES ON A NEW SHED - THEY DONATED THE SHED AND LABOR

DECISION MADE: TO BUY BEE SUPPLIES AND A NEW HONEY ELECTRIC EXTRACTOR

* The original cistern that provides water to the garden, fondly dedicated to the builder Demetrius Givens, is in need of a roof to protect it and to allow us to harvest rainwater for use. This would then allow us to use less water from the city water supply.

* The deer fence/ground hog fencing is 10 years old and requires replacement. This keeps the wildlife out and the garden growing.

* The raised beds that are 3 feet tall (and metal) allow for gardeners to better access their garden beds. These are ADA compliant. We have several low beds that need replaced by the larger metal beds to complete the rebuilding.

As you consider the long term work and accomplishments of these important committees we ask that you consider allocating 10 hours a week of staff time to assist the volunteer leaders to better accomplish our shared goals of making Cottage City a more resilient and sustainable town. We are certified under the Sustainable Maryland Certification program and our recertification is in 2024.

Thank you for your support of these activities in the neighborhood. The committees are led by volunteers and the work is done by community residents. We are available for questions and conversation.

All the activities of the Cottage City Community Garden and Green Team/Tree Canopy Committee can be seen on the Cottage City website and Cottage City Garden website.

We look forward to moving ahead as we become a healthier Prince George's County municipality and a model in the county.

Respectfully,

Denise Hamler, Co-leader of the Green Team/Tree Canopy Committee

Diana Guelespe, Co-leader of the Cottage City Community Garden

2) Reporting on the use of the ARPA Funds: to gardeners and commissioners:

ARPA Projects: notes from 1/20/2024 meeting

Fence work: Long Fence is scheduled to complete the work on Jan. 26, 2024.

Bed signs: The Town mistakenly only ordered one metal stake. Diana will ask them to complete the full purchase request.

Bee shed: Will be purchased after the fence work is completed. Some extra shelving may be purchased for the existing shed.

Hoop House cover: Brian has purchased the plastic. It will be placed after the fence work is completed.

Raised metal bed: One metal bed with a new design has been purchased. Diana and Brian will assemble it when the weather allows.

Cistern Roof: The gardeners (6) discussed the three quotes. We eliminated the quote from Dwell Build (cost was too high). The two we are looking at and doing more research on are: Love & Carrots (approx.\$6-7k) and Demetrius (approx. \$1,600 + volunteer labor). The budget for this project was \$7-10k (per the Garden request of the ARPA money). Discussion focused on potentially changing the slant on the roof to make sure both designs can provide maximum shading and shading materials. Ideal timeline for the project to be completed is mid-march, prior to the start of the season. **The next steps are to get the info below and re-group on a zoom call on Feb 3rd to make a decision.**

Here are the garden beds I suggested we purchase at the last garden meeting. This is from a different company than the white one but has all of the same eco-friendly materials. It also has brackets on the sides and hooks that come together in the middle for added support which should help with the buckling. See attached picture. When we walked around the garden I noted 5 low beds and 4 high beds to be purchased. The total would be about \$2k. Let me know if I should have the town go ahead and place the order.

Tall (29 inches high) 4x8 garden bed in Sage color, \$299 each:

<https://shop.epicgardening.com/products/birdies-large-raised-garden-bed-29-tall?variant=42495964152004>

Low (15 inches high) 4x8 garden bed in Sage color, \$199 each:

<https://shop.epicgardening.com/products/birdies-large-raised-garden-bed-15-short?variant=42495963660484>

3) 12/2023 - New Fencing

The community garden met recently and reviewed four quotes to have part of the deer fence replaced. This was one of the projects we plan to use the ARPA funding for. We chose to go with Long Fence company. Their estimate for \$5,898 is attached. They plan to complete the work sometime the first week of January. **Could you prepare a check for the total amount and have it ready by December 31?**

4) 12/2024- HONEY EXTRACTOR PURCHASE

The beekeeping committee would like to purchase an electric honey extractor. See link below. We discussed this purchase in a previous garden meeting and Wanda said it was ok to purchase with the ARPA Garden funds (Budget Code 6054.14). Let me know if you have any questions.

<https://www.dadant.com/catalog/honey-harvesting/honey-processing/extractors/4-frame-power-honey-extractor-m00408>

5) 2024-2025 Rebuilding Garden Beds

sample bill attached

Diana has been corresponding and working with our neighbor Roello about rebuilding the beds and giving us estimate on the costs.

We have approved this work and it is within our ARPA budget.

He will possibly start this weekend.

ALL the beds have been marked for work

Low Beds to be replaced have **red flags** in them and they are
BEDS 15-21-22-26-30

High Beds to be replaced have Green flags in them and they are
Beds 7-9-17-29

6) 2025-2026 Town Budget

Diana and Denise attended the first town 2025-26 budget feedback session and requested **\$3,500** in the budget for the coming year.

(\$600 of that is earmarked for the beekeeping operation)

This captures the decisions made and allocations per the ARPA funds.

The recent purchases of additional fence work, four new beds and a new order for two more beds should all be coded to the ARPA funds NOT to the Cottage City operating funds.

7) The final word:

Diana Gulespe has turned in every Garden invoice, bill, expense with the correct coding - ARPA and/or Operating.

She has nothing more to provide to your staff and town treasurer. You need to allocate them per your budget. FYI - we didnot come even close to spending the original amount of \$25,000 that was allocated. *WARRA*

I know there is a lot of information here - so I am willing to walk thru it again with John H and Treasurer Todd,

Respectfully,

Denise Hamler

240-476-4349

VOLUNTEER,

Garden co-leader