Good evening everyone,

Thank you for gathering here today to discuss an important opportunity that has the potential to transform our community, particularly for the young generations that call Carmichaels their home.

I'd like to share with you why we should wholeheartedly support a new grant that aims to provide new amenities and surfaces to our beloved Wana B Park.

We all know all too well that Carmichaels and its surrounding areas have faced significant challenges in recent years. I’m all too aware of it as a father. Our local school district has been struggling, with some of the lowest standardized testing scores in the state. These difficulties have been compounded by disproportionately high tax rates in our district compared to neighboring counties. Families here pay significantly more in taxes for an average home compared to residents just a short drive away.

I believe that if we know our community is facing challenges, it's our duty to do something about it. We have a chance to provide our children with alternatives to negative influences, to give them opportunities to make good decisions.

The grant we have been awarded, the LSA grant, totaling $775,000, is a golden opportunity. It will enable us to update and modernize Wana B Park, making it more accessible by upgrading parking and restrooms to be ADA compliant. I’m grateful to the support of our Congressman, Representative Guy Reschenthaler, who has stepped up and helped us to potentially secure $5 million in additional federal funding. These funds can serve as matching funds for other grants, helping us further refurbish our park and provide more for our community.

This is personal to me. In the late '70s, my grandmother made a significant donation to the county that led to the creation of this community asset. She believed in the potential of this park – and in our community’s ability to not just maintain it over the years, but work to improve it.

I know that there are those in our community who fear that the changes we propose will harm the park. But I believe we owe it to the next generation to bring this place out of the 70s and into the 21st century – and this new funding will allow us to do exactrly that.

We plan to use a small portion, just four acres in the upper right-hand corner, for a new Community Center. Yes, it will mean losing one baseball field, but it's a trade-off worth making. A generous individual has already pledged $200,000 to enhance the remaining fields. This will ensure that the park continues to cater to the interests of all our residents.

The new Community Center will be a hub of activity, offering library services and much more. Libraries, as you may know, are evolving to serve as centers for education, technology, and community-building. They are not relics of the past but critical resources for the future. We want to make sure our children have access to these resources right here in Carmichaels.

Our goal is to create an environment where our kids have positive role models, educational opportunities, and a sense of belonging. We’re working to rebuild our community's spirit a place where kids can engage in activities, enjoy concerts, and learn valuable skills.

In conclusion, the decision before us is clear. We need to accept this grant - and understand that our taxes won't increase because of it. This money is specifically earmarked for the park's improvements and cannot be diverted elsewhere. It's an investment in our community's future and, most importantly, in our children.

Let's move forward with optimism, embracing this opportunity to revitalize our community. We have a chance to provide our children with a brighter future, one where they can thrive and grow. Together, we can make Carmichaels a place we are all proud to call home.

Thank you for your attention, and I urge you to support this vital project for the betterment of our community.