

Village of Ardentown  
Ardentown, DE 19810

Established 1922  
Incorporated 1975

The regular meeting of the Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:35 pm on Monday, February 13, 2017. Annie Gutsche, Chair, presiding. A quorum was present.

**In Attendance:**

- |                       |                              |                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Annie Gutsche      | 16. Katrina Nelson           | 31. Terri Hansen             |
| 2. Pat Lane           | 17. Bobby Lockerman          | 32. Peter Slattery           |
| 3. Cheryl Regan       | 18. Hans Francke             | 33. Cassandra Lewis Slattery |
| 4. Steve Cohen        | 19. Hetty Francke            | 34. Beverley Bizup Hawkins   |
| 5. Sandi McCormick    | 20. Betty Ann Themal         | 35. June Kleban              |
| 6. John McCormick     | 21. Judy Glenn               | 36. Ann Balogh               |
| 7. Stuart Craig       | 22. Barbara Glenn            | 37. Shari Phalan             |
| 8. Mhairi Craig       | 23. Harry Themal             | 38. Steven Curley            |
| 9. Shelley Robyn      | 24. Joan Fitzgerald          | 39. Maureen Gordon           |
| 10. Melissa Parsonson | 25. Suzanne Winkler Macguire | 40. Pat Phillips             |
| 11. William Parsonson | 26. Janet Cosgrove           | 41. Elaine Schmerling        |
| 12. Chris Monson      | 27. Katie Donovan            | 42. Oliver Gutsche           |
| 13. Anne P. Lutz      | 28. Tim Donovan              | 43. Renata Brito Cherrin     |
| 14. Dotty Verne       | 29. Sue Cherrin              | 44. Bev Barnett (guest)      |
| 15. Holly Custer      | 30. Drew Hansen              |                              |

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the November 2016 meeting were approved as written. Accepted unanimously.

**REGISTRATION COMMITTEE:** Alison Wakelin reporting:

- Emily Tinali and Calvin Cooper moved in to 1607 Orchard Road on 3/1/2016
  - Leaseholder: Susan Kaye
- Alex and Edward Espinoza moved in to 2312, Brae Road on Jan 5, 2017
  - Leaseholder: Kathryn Bierbower.
- Carly Hampton and Kevin Seefried moved in to 2301, Sconset Road on Dec 1, 2016
  - Leaseholder: Coburn
- In attendance: The McCormicks, now at Harvey and Loreley

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Holly Custer reporting:

Operating Accounts:	\$ 53,383.33
Municipal Street Aid:	\$ 1,530.42
<u>Arden Building and Loan:</u>	<u>\$ 23,488.45</u>
<b>Total Funds Available:</b>	<b>\$ 78,402.20</b>

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Andrew Hansen reporting: Jake from WILMAPCO in attendance to answer questions in New Business.

Update on Village website: Content is being edited and the committee is working with the State of Delaware to get it live. Also discussing website maintenance - should position be rolled into the Secretary's position, or be a separate one? A resident expressed concern about the availability of minutes without computer and was not comfortable with no longer receiving minutes or meeting notices in the mail. The committee will discuss how to handle the mailer in the future, but the intention is that minutes and meeting notices will be mailed to residents who ask for this option.

**BUDGET:** Steven Curley reporting: final budget available to review on request. Contact Terri Hansen at [ardently@verizon.net](mailto:ardently@verizon.net).

Changes from last year's budget in this year's proposed budget:

- "Compost site" line item was moved under Public Works (previously it was a separate program). The new Community Board will be under the Public Works budget.
- Added in a line for garbage removal. Trustees will transfer money to the town and the town will pay the bill with those funds. A resident asked how this would work? There will be no difference to the residents; it is just that the Village is now paying the bill instead of the Trust. The money will be transferred from the Trust to the Village to cover. This change will make us consistent with how the other Villages handle garbage. Any trouble with collections can still be managed through Harry Thernal.
- Further description of the \$5000 for paths and natural lands was requested. Steven explained that this represents \$1500 from 2016 that was rolled over for bills incurred in 2016 but not yet paid. Additionally, Elaine had requested an increase to help remove invasive species from the woods.
- \$200 was allocated for a new website maintenance position.

The following changes to the proposed budget were made at the meeting:

- An increase from \$200 to \$600 proposed for the Town secretary web site maintenance. Amended to \$600.
- Trash collection expenses were added at \$33,000.
- The Account balances as of 12/31/2016 were filled in with the information from Holly .

Budget passed unanimously, amended as described.

**NOTE ON ROADS FUNDS-** The budget committee would like to add a line item for roads that would roll over and be dedicated to major road repairs. There are several ways we could start paying into such a line item, and we have the next year to think about and come up with a mechanism. Municipal Street Aid from the state is not guaranteed, especially this year with the state budget shortfall, and is in any case not enough to pay for the repairs we need.

**MEMORIAL GARDEN:** Betty Ann Thernal reporting:

The Memorial Garden Committee will meet to discuss the fence around the lot. The current fence was installed 20+ years ago and has had sections of rails and posts replaced over the years since then as needed. It has reached the point where we may need to replace it with a whole new fence. The committee would like to explore coordinating replacement with the playground to hopefully replace both those fences and save a little money.

The committee is planning for new plantings on east side of the property abutting Ivy Gables.

**PUBLIC WORKS:**

**Roads: Cheryl**

Various areas need attention that municipal street aid won't cover at one time. We are researching the possibility of laying down a tar base, or some alternative, to keep the affected roads from further deterioration, while repairing others.

**Signs: Cheryl**

A new batch of wooden road signs will be ordered when the budget is passed. It has been recommended that a one way sign be placed on the wooden post for the street sign at the top of Brae road. A new bulletin board is being ordered through DCI. Just working out a few details on materials being used.

**Snow/sand: Paul Romagano**

The season has been relatively uneventful. We had one occasion for plowing and salting, but it was minimal.

**Natural Lands: Elaine Schmerling, Chris Monson**

Chris has made tremendous progress in reclaiming paths in Sunnyside from invasives, overgrowth, and downed trees. We can now access & get to many areas with hundreds of trees in danger of being smothered. We will focus now on trying to save the trees in imminent danger and reducing seed spread from large old vines.

Elaine went out with volunteers a few times in late '16 (Chris, Nick Liberman, & Gavin Klahr), and then with Hal & Co. two days in January to cut vines off trees in Sunnyside. Saved up to 50 trees from English Ivy, Oriental Bittersweet and Japanese Honeysuckle. Will go out once a week as weather permits the next few months, targeting trees where ivy is getting close to the top.

With the additional money just approved, we are signing a contract with Red Tail Restoration & Land Management to work on clearing invasives from the lower area on up. We restored a large section at the beginning of

the path at the base of the hill last year, and will continue in this area where we have indigenous plant and soil communities-the largest ecological benefits are here, where the native plants can spread into areas as we clear them. We have flexibility with this contract to add other areas in Ardentown too, if we decide to add a section such as the compost area, Harvey Road butterfly garden or another in the Ardentown woods.

#### **Street Trees: Elaine Schmerling**

Three free hackberry seedlings were planted as an experiment on the Petit Green, on the corner at Orchard and Appletree ...will see if they survive in the spring. Hackberries are tough and salt-tolerant, produce pollen for bees, host and nectar for several butterflies and moths, and produce berries for many birds and mammals.

Also considering using some funds to rescue a few street trees (where the vines are nearing the tops), and planting a few more street trees for Arbor day this year along with the free one we usually get from the state (e.g., Washington Hawthorn? Salt tolerant and 3-season interest). Let me know if there is interest for an area near you!

#### **Earthday Cleanup/Sunnyside Walk-Tree planting**

As announced in the Arden Page, our community's Earthday Cleanup is set for Saturday, April 8. Rain/bad weather date Sunday, April 9 (snowed on last year's cleanup!).

I can either lead a Sunnyside walk and/or a tree planting effort the weekend before (April 1), also.

**PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE:** Steven Curley reporting: Nothing to report.

**TRUSTEES REPORT:** Harry Themal reporting: Budget - there is a \$26,000 deficit this year. Several things are happening. Federal and State governments are projecting cuts, all of which will fall on municipalities. Even with a modest increase in Land Rent, there will be a significant deficit this year, which will be made up from reserves. Hoping that expenses will stay stable or be reduced. There is every likelihood that there will be a significant increase in land rent next year. We are looking at a lower increase than Arden and Ardencroft since they have more line items and more factors than we do.

The Trustees had worked with a bookkeeper in the Fall, but it did not work out. They have hired a new bookkeeper. The Bookkeeper is being paid from the Trust's Secretary line item.

A resident asked why it is that the Candlelight doesn't appear to pay land rent? There are property taxes paid for the Candlelight that are covered by the facilities rent and Land Rent from Leaseholders, yet this is not a facility available for residents to use. If the Candlelight is Trust property and does not pay taxes, shouldn't there be a detailed line item in the Trust Budget to show the income and expenses? The Trustees will work on adding details in their budget for clarity.

**BUZZ COMMITTEE:** Terri Hansen - The BWVC Committee is waiting for a proposal from ACRA to replace the mural on the rear of the building. ACRA is currently working with Linda Celestian on the project. Rentals are going well, community events continue to be fairly well attended.

**ARCHIVES COMMITTEE:** Hans Francke reporting: Ongoing exhibition on the Gilds. The Curator is leaving at the end of this month and she has done a tremendous amount of work. With the help of an intern last summer, she now has 40% of the collection scanned and digitized. The museum is asking members of the community to help identify people in photos. The museum is interviewing a new curator with the hope that they will start in the Spring.

The Museum is still looking for materials related to Ardentown. Elaine Schmerling wonders if our Ardentown Intern could be set on that project.

Last year the Crystal Trust gave a grant, this year John Cartier gave a grant to fund a heavy duty filing cabinet.

Steven Cohen mentioned that we are 5 years away from the 100 anniversary of the founding of Ardentown, might be a good topic for an exhibition.

**TOWN CHAIR REPORT:** Annie Gutsche reporting:

- FYI preparations for the 2020 Census are underway.
- FEMA- Has sent us all kinds of information to let us know what has been updated for floodplains. This does not affect most residents, but if anyone is interested in seeing this material, please contact the chair.
- Annual sign up for DNREC mosquito spraying program: Please note that signing up for the program does **not** obligate us to have spraying done. We have never needed this service, but we must sign up now or lose the chance to take advantage of it if needed later. There are a number of very serious diseases transmitted by

mosquitoes. Residents should be reassured that spraying is the last resort and will not happen unless the mosquito population reaches an unacceptable level.

**Resolution:**

A resolution was unanimously passed to commit to inclusion in Ardentown.

**Whereas** the Village of Ardentown is committed to inclusion as a fundamental aspect of our community; and

**Whereas** cities and towns are important places to make inclusiveness an everyday priority; and

**Whereas** local residents and elected officials can and should lead the way forward in making inclusiveness a priority in America's cities and towns; and

**Whereas** an inclusive community promotes equal opportunity and fairness; and

**Whereas** an inclusive community promotes citizen participation and engagement; now, therefore be it

*Resolved*, that the Village of Ardentown (Ardentown) strives to foster a climate of purposeful inclusion of all people. We value the diversity of racial and cultural identity and background, nationality, sexual and affectional orientation, gender identity and its expression, religious background and belief, marital status, family structure, age, mental and physical health and ability, political perspective, and educational and class status. We hereby affirm our commitment to inclusion as a fundamental aspect of our community, and urge all residents of Ardentown to join together to support this effort.

**BY-LAW CHANGE**

**Current Language:** Qualified voters shall be all residents 18 years of age or over who have resided in the Village for a preceding period of six (6) consecutive months.

**Proposed Language:** Qualified voters shall be all residents 18 years of age or over who have resided in the Village for a preceding period of one (1) month. Passed unanimously; we will need to vote on this again next month in order to officially change by-law language.

**ELECTIONS:**

**ARCHIVES:** Hans Francke and Melissa Parsonson were unanimously approved. Peter Slattery was thanked for his service.

**MEMORIAL GARDEN:** Cheryl Regan, Suzanne Maguire, and Edmond Bischoff were unanimously approved.

**NEW BUSINESS-**

Bev Barnett (guest)- Bev presented information on the Save the Valley effort for Brandywine Valley. There are 240 acres adjacent to the new First State National Historical Park that Brandywine Conservancy is trying to buy. The group would like to raise \$8,000,000 by May. All contributions are tax deductible. Currently they have raised \$1,875,000. There is a goal of 1000 individual donations, currently they are at 30%. Donations begin at \$5 and every penny counts. Bev asked the town to vote a voice of moral support of the effort. We in Ardentown support the effort of the Brandywine Conservancy to purchase the 240 acres adjacent to the First State National Historic Park.

WILMAPCO- There was lots of great response from the survey at the last meeting. A new short survey was given out as a follow-up. The new survey is also available through survey monkey online.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:56 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Hansen