

# DRAFT

Village of Ardentown  
Ardentown, DE 19810

Established 1922  
Incorporated 1975

The regular meeting of the Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:30 pm on Monday, February 18, 2019. Annie Gutsche, Acting Chair, presiding. A quorum was present.

## ***In Attendance***

- |                         |                       |                          |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Anne P Lutz          | 14. Barbara           | 25. Suzanne Cherrin      |
| 2. Steven R Cohen       | Mondzelewski          | 26. Page Dwyer           |
| 3. Annie Gutsche        | 15. Steven Curley     | 27. Cindy Cohen          |
| 4. Lisa Wilson Riblett  | 16. Maureen Gordon    | 28. Mhairi Craig         |
| 5. Janet Cosgrove       | 17. Janna Scheflen    | 29. Stuart Craig         |
| 6. Terry Harvey         | 18. JudithA Glenn     | 30. Elaine Schmerling    |
| 7. Caroline (Line) Farr | 19. Chris Monson      | 31. Katrina Nelson       |
| 8. Betty Ann Themal     | 20. Christiana        | 32. Barbara Conway       |
| 9. Joan Fitzgerald      | Dobrzynski            | 33. Jake Thompson,       |
| 10. Pat Lane            | 21. Cort Hayflinger   | guest                    |
| 11. Drew Hansen         | 22. Melissa Parsonson | 34. Ray Seigfried, guest |
| 12. Terri Hansen        | 23. Joe Grippe        | 35. Chip Kneavel, guest  |
| 13. Dotty Verne         | 24. Edmund Bischoff   |                          |

**MEETING:** Regular meeting called to order at 7:30 pm by Annie Gutsche, standing in for Alison Wakelin, Town Chair

**BUDGET:** Steven Curley reporting: The budget hasn't changed much - income, expenses stayed relatively the same with additional payroll line items. A few line items were added for clarification. Snow removal, trash removal were moved to make clear that these are not "discretionary" budget items, and the Trust have designated money for roads and it has been noted as such. The committee planned for an increase in the intern program for teens in the community. Some money was added for treating trees.

Motion from the floor to approve as written. Passed unanimously.

**SPECIAL GUEST:** Jake Thompson, Transportation Planner & Chip Kneavel from DeIDOT WILMAPCO

Jake presented the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan. Public Comments welcome at <http://www.wilmapco.org/rtp/>

Chip Kneavel, DeIDOT is working with Wilmington Montessori on Safer Routes to School. Representative Ray Seigfried spoke about his intention to work with DeIDOT to improve that intersection all around, including a turn arrow from eastbound Harvey Road to Sconset. Pat Lane and Annie Gutsche volunteered to serve as point people. A question was raised around timeline. Mr. Kneavel preferred to not speculate as this type of project is complicated.

**PUBLIC WORKS:** Anne P. Lutz reporting for Cheryl Regan, Elaine Schmerling for Natural Lands:

**Signs:** Chris has installed:

- 1) Two ONE WAY signs on the wooden sign post at Harvey/Millers road.
- 2) New NO ENTRY and ONE WAY signs at Millers/The Mall.
- 3) The NO THRU TRAFFIC on the post at East Mall/The Mall. It had been taken down for wooden sign replacement and post staining. I had received a call that there was an increase in traffic, so the sign was put back up and hopefully the remaining posts will be stained in the Spring.

**Roads:** There are a couple of large potholes that we will try to fill weather permitting.

**Natural lands: 2019 Tree plantings** –Elaine Schmerling is hoping to apply for a new tree planting grant this year, applications are due early March. Let Elaine know if you need street trees by you (and what you'd like); I also would like to plant Ironwoods in several washed-out areas\* (they can handle shade and flooding), and plant a willow off Chestnut street (also can handle flooding and salt). I will be rooting wet-loving shrubs including elderberry, red-twig and silky dogwood for native shrubs for these areas. Volunteer helpers are welcome! (To hold potted rootings end of Feb/March, and to plant in April!)  
*\*Areas include: into The Glen behind the Slattery's, off the Appletree Lane entrance, and off Chestnut Street land.*

**COMPOST AREA** – Jeff Martin is the state's composting expert and wants to help us maintain the compost site (getting aeration under the compost, and possibly getting us a grant). He says the state would like to encourage "high use" composting.

**Paths** – A large tree fell across our main path in Sunnyside, it is so large we are making a new path.

**RESTORATION-** We worked hard in Dec/Jan when the weather was good, pulling 5-leaf akeabia behind Phibbs', pulling 1000's of ivy, burning bush, privet, etc seedlings; saving 100 trees in Sunnyside from almost smothering at the top (and as always, lost other smaller-medium trees). Nick Liberman helped chainsaw and we paid Nickia to help.

**Street Trees-** Carol & Nick have also helped saw off huge ivy vines from a few street trees, and from trees on 2 leaseholds (with their permission). We are willing to help others and accept donations (either cash to pay Nickia for more hours; or as donations to Ardentown for "Forest restoration").

**LANTERN FLY** – THE GOOD NEWS is – a UMD professor is interested in using Sunnyside for a research trial on lanternfly control. This is through my contact with Rainbow Tree Care, who was planning to help us and volunteer his labor, to make our Sunnyside Tree-of-Heavens (TOH; now at least 14 have been found), into "trap trees" to kill just the lanternflies. We would pay for chemical only (approx. \$1,000). Perhaps with a research trial they can pay for the chemicals, and perhaps they can make headway with CSX (since 30-50 TOH's are along the ROW).  
Motion from the floor to allow a UMD professor to use Sunnyside Tract as a research for Lantern Fly control. Motion passed.

**EARTHDAY CLEANUP** – The Naaman's Creek Watershed Annual Cleanup (part of Christina R. Basin Cleanup) will be held Saturday, April 6.

**MOTION FROM THE FLOOR-** Janet Cosgrove introduced the idea of creating a new standing committee called the Assessment Committee. Our Deed Of Trust states: "The trustees shall consult with the Assessment Committee of the Village of Ardentown, a Municipal Corporation organized under the laws of the State of Delaware, with respect to the setting of annual land rent rates, but such consultation shall not in anywise diminish or impair the right, authority, and discretion of the Trustees in the setting of such rents."

To summarize: First, the word "shall" (the trustees shall consult) is a legal word meaning "has the duty to" and is "an absolute requirement." Second, the consultation in no way diminishes the trustee's authority to set land rent.

By creating a standing committee called the Assessment Committee, we will establish (or possibly re-establish) a procedure that we not only should be doing but are permitted and required to do under the terms of our Deed of Trust.

This will require amending the Bylaws of the Village of Ardentown, and as such requires voting at 2 consecutive meetings.

Motion: I move that the Village of Ardentown amend the Bylaws to create a standing committee called the Assessment Committee as referenced in our Deed of Trust. Motion was seconded and opened for discussion.

**Discussion from the floor-**

Trustee Joan Fitzgerald - The Trustees have talked about this because it is in the Deed of Trust. The committee existed once, and for some reason fell away. The Trustees have no objections to reforming this committee.

Question to the Trustees - does it matter if it is a standing vs. ad hoc committee? Joan sees no problem with either.

Comment - We have three Trustees so why is an assessment committee needed; wouldn't it be better to just call the trustees if you have a question?

Comment - The Deed of Trust calls for annual consulting so a standing committee makes sense. The language of the motion does nothing to amend the bylaws. So perhaps a motion to create an ad hoc committee to create the language to amend the bylaws.

Comment - A suggestion was made to combine Budget, Audit, and Assessment into a Finance Committee.

The original motion was withdrawn and revised: To create a standing committee to be composed of three members one chair and two members to meet at least one time a year with the Trustees and report back to the town meeting.

Comment - it's good to get the process started, but she doesn't feel comfortable voting without specific language.

Comment from the acting chair - as residents are uncomfortable voting without specific language, perhaps the next step should be to have an ad hoc committee examine the issue and propose specific language to amend the bylaws. This language can be voted on at the May meeting.

A straw poll to see the will of the meeting regarding forming an Assessment Committee was taken, there were 18 for, 2 opposed.

The acting chair requested interested parties to approach the table to serve on the ad hoc committee.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the November 2018 meeting were unanimously approved.

**PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE:** Cortney Hayflinger reporting- Not much going on for the Winter. The Committee will have an annual clean up on April 13.

**TRUSTEES REPORT:** Joan Fitzgerald: At the end of January, Shari Phalan resigned as the Secretary to the Trustees. Therefore, Betty Ann Themal and Joan Fitzgerald are handling this year's land rent bills. There was an increase of 3 cents; 2 for the roads funds and the other penny was for county taxes. There was a small increase in the municipal factor. Leaseholds have been reviewed according to zoning, there is one assessed at commercial rates. Trustees will contact all leaseholders with ADU approval and ask if that status has changed.

The Trustees budget is posted on the town website.

Ivy Gables - The final plan looks largely like the last plan we saw. The latest plan was shared at the meeting.

Question: The current plan shows the driveway as 24 feet, why so wide?

Answer: The width is required by NCC, for emergency vehicle access.

Q: What are the exterior lighting plans?

A: Not sure, but Harry has been discussing this topic with Ivy Gables.

Q: How will construction affect residents of Swiss Lane, and the road condition of Swiss Lane?

A: George Loudon will repave Swiss Lane at the close of construction.

Q: How will the Station Path look after renovation?

A: Station Path will be maintained, there will be no fence. Landscaping will be completed once construction is over.

Q: The current plan requires a 15 foot easement, so does that mean there is a total 30 foot easement?

A: On Harvey Road there is already a 15 foot easement, in addition the state is taking an additional 15 feet along Harvey Road. There would be no plantings in that 30 feet.

Q: Do we know when the tree removal will begin?

A: No, with the wet weather everything has been delayed.

Chris Monson will work with Harry Themal and Ivy Gables to further discuss specific plans.

A resident stated that she would like to see more in writing.

Note to all leaseholders: if you do any work on your house that requires you to pull a permit, you will receive a supplemental tax bill. Do not pay that, the Trustees handle that.

**BUZZ COMMITTEE:** Terri Hansen reporting for Shari Phalan- Great news! A new Building Manager has been hired and started work on December 1. Pam Cohen, previous and present Arden resident and new owner of Ruth Bean's house. Pam brings 15 years of management experience and much affection for the Buzz. She will also be taking over the bookkeeping to keep abreast on issues and Buzz business.

The Buzz - November donations \$292, December donations \$189 January donations \$136

Art on the Town - November artist - Heather Stiple. December was a group show; No show in January

Telebration in November was sponsored by Cecilia Vore

Storage space is necessary for Buzz inventory; Hope to have shelving space constructed on the stage done by March.

On-going classes:

Strength and Mobility; Art studio; and Yoga

Long term renter, Dominic Chen Ghi-Gong

Interior Mural - Linda Celestian heading up and looking into purchasing mounting boards.

Furniture will be steam-cleaned this month.

Will be voting on whether to continue the Peddlars, Potions and Practitioners in 2019

Betty O'Regan is starting a book discussion group to meet once a month.

Larry Strange has finished the new website, already seeing increased and tweaking link features.

All rentals can be done on-line now and Pam has created an evaluation for to provide to renters for follow-up.

New telephone answering service has been instituted and will be checked three times a week to keep on top of rentals and correspondence.

**REGISTRATION COMMITTEE:** Cindy Cohen reporting:

**Leasehold Changes:**

In July 2018, **Joseph & Lee Painter** purchased the Solway property at 1517 Woodland Road, and are in the process of tearing down and building a new home on the property. A Welcome packet will be given to them when we can find them at the house.

In September 2018, **Brian & Mary Ann Patterson** purchased Richard Cannon's property at 2312 Brae Road, and are in the process of renovating it before moving in. A Welcome packet is also on their way to them when we can find them at the home.

In December 2018 lot #237, at 2306 Brae Road, transferred from the estate of **Theresa Duffy** to **Maureen T. Gordon and Megan Gordon** irrevocable trust.

**If you know of any other leasehold changes, or changes in rentals** within Ardentown, please see one of the Registration Committee members after the meeting tonight (members are myself: Cindy Cohen, Betty Ann Themal, and Maureen Gordon), or contact one of us directly. It takes a village to keep track of all the comings and goings of our residents.

**Summer Potluck:** The Registration committee is interested in holding an **annual Ardentown-wide summer potluck event**, possibly for a weekend in June. It will most likely be on one of the greens, maybe with Candlelight Theater as a backup for any weather issues. (We're checking with Candlelight.) The committee is thinking about providing burgers and hot dogs (including eggplant "burgers"), paper products and water. All other food and drink will be potluck. If you are interested in hearing more or helping out, please see one of us on the Registration Committee. We welcome your thoughts on how to make this an annual family-friendly event for all the residents of Ardentown.

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

|                                 |                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Operating Accounts:             | \$45,831.58        |
| Municipal Street Aid:           | \$29,223.79        |
| <u>Arden Building and Loan:</u> | <u>\$19,965.18</u> |
| <b>Total Funds Available:</b>   | <b>\$95,020.55</b> |

**MEMORIAL GARDEN:** Betty Ann Themal reporting: The committee is planning to plant new shrubs or bushes inside the fence along the Harvey Road side of the property to create a natural buffer from the road.

Three members of this committee are up for election at this meeting, and all have agreed to serve again. They are: Cheryl Regan, Edmund Bischoff and Shelley Robyn (appointed to fill the term when Suzanne McGuire moved out of Ardentown in December 2017).

**ARCHIVES COMMITTEE:** Melissa Parsonson reporting- current exhibit is ACRA, currently one opening on the Committee now that Hans Francke has stepped down. There has been interest in the Craft Shop Museum from overseas. They are now able to accept credit card purchases of over \$10.

**TOWN CHAIR REPORT:** Annie Gutsche reporting for Alison Wakelin- nothing to report.

**ELECTIONS:**

Archives: Allan Kleban and Christiana Dobryzniski unanimously elected.

Memorial Garden: Cheryl Regan, Edmund Bischoff and Shelley Robyn all unanimously re-elected.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Joan Fitzgerald- please keep the AB&L in mind when you are considering mortgages, 2nd mortgages or home improvement loans.

Andrew Hansen- Requested a sense of the room, did residents like the environment in the Gild Hall with lighting, sound, and projection? Should we explore these types of improvements for the Candlelight? There was general agreement from the room

Representative Ray Siegfried (7th District): Please add your email to his monthly newsletter subscription for updates from Dover. This Thursday at 10 am at the Darley House there will be a groundbreaking for the new Claymont Train Station. The opening of this new station should revitalize the North Wilmington area.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terri Hansen