

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, May 10, 2021  
Alison Wakelin, Town Chair, presiding. A quorum was present.

**In Attendance**

- |                      |                           |                              |
|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Terri Hansen      | 16. Oliver Gutsche        | 30. Barbara Mondzelewski     |
| 2. Cindy Cohen       | 17. Janet Cosgrove        | 31. Shari Phalan             |
| 3. Chelsey Buscaglia | 18. Shelley Robyn         | 32. Courtney Hayflinger      |
| 4. Alison Wakelin    | 19. Joe Painter           | 33. Elaine Schmerling        |
| 5. Drew Hansen       | 20. Joe Grippe            | 34. Chris Monson             |
| 6. Cheryl Regan      | 21. Maureen Gordon        | 35. Janna Scheflen           |
| 7. Steve Cohen       | 22. Joan Fitzgerald       | 36. Edmond Bischoff          |
| 8. Duane Loeper      | 23. Cheryl Regan          | 37. Sue Cherrin              |
| 9. Anne Lutz         | 24. Line Farr             | 38. Warren Butt              |
| 10. Lisa Riblett     | 25. Lee Painter           | 39. Ardenoid ____?           |
| 11. Terry Harvey     | 26. Mhairi Craig          | 40. Senator Kyle Gay (guest) |
| 12. Judith Kay       | 27. Stuart Craig          | 41. Ray Seigfried (guest)    |
| 13. Betty Ann Themal | 28. Melissa Parsonson     |                              |
| 14. Harry Themal     | 29. Christiana Dobrzynski |                              |
| 15. Annie Gutsche    |                           |                              |

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes for the February 2021 meeting are approved with the addition of Lisa Riblett to attendance.

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

Operating Accounts:	\$43,928.83
Municipal Street Aid:	\$17,577.32
Arden Building and Loan:	\$19,965.18
<b>Total Funds Available:</b>	<b>\$81,471.33</b>

**TRUSTEES REPORT:**

**Lisa Wilson Riblett- De/ DOT Safe Routes to School Project:** Pat Lane had previously reported at Town meetings that DelDOT is working on a Safe Routes to School Project. This will affect the Sconset Road and Harvey Road intersection. The date for this project has changed several times. It is presently scheduled for this coming Fall 2021 or Spring 2022. Sconset Road will be closed periodically during an approximate three-week window and a flagger will also be periodically present on Harvey Road during this same time period. **Water Retention Area at Ivy Gables:** The present water retention area at Ivy Gables has been a *construction* water retention area and is presently being changed to be a permanent water retention area. The permanent area will have various layers of different kinds of gravel and soil with underground piping and water-loving plants on top. This area will be monitored by the State monthly. **Tree Removal from any Leasehold:** Just a reminder that you need *written* permission from a Trustee to remove *any* tree from *any* leasehold. This is in everyone's lease and on the Ardentown website. We really value our tree canopy, and we want to protect it.

**Harry Themal- Candlelight Dinner Theatre-** The Candlelight has reopened. It is functioning at about 1/3 capacity and is pretty much sold out. They have a show schedule for the rest of the year, and we are very hopeful.  
Question from Janet Cosgrove- Have you heard about Carriage House plans? The building is being stabilized. The ground level is used for vehicle storage, and there is an unoccupied apartment on the second floor.

**GUEST SPEAKER, SENATOR KYLE GAY-** After addressing the benefits of getting vaccinated, Senator Gay encouraged constituents to reach out to her with any issues or concerns that she might be able to help with. She can be reached at [kyle.gay@delaware.gov](mailto:kyle.gay@delaware.gov) or (302)428-9614. Alison Wakelin stated that we are likely to get money under the American Rescue Plan. Originally we were told by the State Treasurer's Office to use the combined budgets of the Town and the

Trustees to calculate the amount for which we would be eligible, but now they are telling us they may use only the Town budget, which would be a much smaller amount. Senator Gay responded that she has seen smaller municipalities overlooked in her district and will work with us to figure this out.

**REGISTRATION COMMITTEE:** Cindy Cohen reporting,

**Recent Resident Changes:**

Michael O'Toole informed us that 2 new residents moved into his apartment in April 2021: **Nicole Moore and Cindy Amber Bonsall**. Dropped off a note in their mailbox welcoming them and letting them know we have a Welcome packet for them. No word from them yet.

**MEMORIAL GARDEN:** Betty Ann Themal reporting, nothing to report

**ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE:** Janet Cosgrove- The Assessment Committee met 3 times this quarter and continues to gather information for future discussion around how Land Rent is calculated in Ardentown by the Trustees.

Joe Grippe- Joe gave a presentation on some of the supporting documents in the Assessment Committee 2020 Annual Report, posted on the Ardentown website, regarding how NCC bills Ardentown separately for 1) taxes on Leaseholds with structures and 2) taxes on the Land in Ardentown both improved (with structures) and unimproved such as for greens, woods, paths, etc. He also presented a pie chart showing how total land rent is spent using percentages, e.g., 54% pays NCC for Structure taxes and 25% pays NCC for Land taxes.

Shari Phalan asked if Joe was able to compare our taxes to those of surrounding areas. Joe responded that he is working on that now. Anne Lutz stated that the most recent Page had an article that described how the three Ardens differ in government structure and Land Rent assessment. She thinks all of this is going to have to wait until our properties are reassessed in 2023.

**ARCHIVES COMMITTEE:** Melissa Parsonson reporting- Work continues on the oral history project. Jena, a student of Professor Thomas Guiler, has been working on transcriptions of digital files and she will be conducting new interviews to add to our collection. We plan to share this content on the website, [ardencraftshopmuseum.com](http://ardencraftshopmuseum.com), possibly in a podcast series. Jena is concentrating her research on women in the Ardens.

Our current exhibit, "15 Years, 15 Treasures," is still on display in our main gallery. Our second exhibit, "Equality in the Ardens," has been moved from the Bernie Schwab Community Room to the main gallery as well. We have added several works from the collection to the exhibit, most of them never displayed. So even if you have already visited us in the past year, please stop by again to see our refreshed exhibit.

Planning has started for a 2022 exhibit on the 100th anniversary of the founding of Ardentown. Please let us know if you have something you would like to share with the museum for the exhibit.

The Arden Craft Shop Museum is still operating during our regular hours, Sundays 1 to 3 p.m. and Wednesdays, 7:30 to 9 p.m. with COVID-19 protocols in place. If you are planning a visit, please email [ardencraftshopmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:ardencraftshopmuseum@gmail.com) so we may manage visitor numbers.

**PUBLIC WORKS: Paths:** - *Chris Monson*: Re the Station Path, Chris was able to catch up with the Ivy Gables project manager for Brandywine Nurseries and had him relocate 2 inkberry shrubs and a hemlock tree that were being planted directly on the centerline of the path near Millers Rd. Further west a large tree branch has split off and is hanging precariously over the path, which will hopefully be removed as the landscaping is being completed. Between Swiss Lane and Lorelei next to Garm's, a stump and 2 small boulders need to be removed to clear the path. 15 minutes with a Bobcat should do the job.

Cropper's bridges are holding up nicely, thanks again (last minutes). Thanks also to someone who is keeping the lower path by the creek and this path clear of the vegetation, which is also appreciated.

**Restoration: Ivy Trees** - 100-200 trees from ivy in March -mostly in Sunnyside, and with helpers, but also with a volunteer effort saving the evergreens off the Station Path. **Ardentown woods** efforts continue -Elaine shared photos of wildflowers that are expanding in the restoration area by the pink flagged "higher path" below Phibbs' before creek path. We have expanding patches of these special wildflowers which are only found here in the Ardens (and more common ones like bloodroot and others also expanding) but it is continual work to keep out invasives! Elaine has transplanted 7 elderberry rootings in 2 areas in Sunnyside where we killed tree of heaven, has cut and stacked multi-flora rose and sticks all around to save the shrubs from deer. In planting and removing invasives, we freed *Viburnum dentatum*s, Jack-in-the-pulpits and many other natives. It is suggested that we similarly save baby oak trees from them this way too if others can help.

It is **garlic mustard time** now and it is everywhere; please help pull and bag it for yard waste collection if you can. GM not only smothers other native plants, but it inhibits mycorrhizal fungi too. Thanks to many for helping to pull it out including: Maureen Theresa, Maile Gutsche & Annie, Klebans, Painters and more.

**Lesser celandine** is really winning out in many areas of our woods. Elaine has discovered organic Iron chelate products that are approved for broadleaf control in grass, that apparently work on lesser celandine control too (EPA registration says no adverse effects to the environment, people, pets or wildlife). She would like the town to review this over the next 3 seasons and consider it for March '22 early treatment in select areas of our woods (recommended in March before most native plants emerge), where this has created swaths of ecological deserts and outcompeted all native plants. She has given to several neighbors esp. scientists to review – info at <https://mygreenmontgomery.org/2020/iron-based-herbicides-for-weed-control/>, EPA registration: [https://www3.epa.gov/pesticides/chem\\_search/reg\\_actions/registration/decision\\_PC-034702\\_17-Sep-09.pdf](https://www3.epa.gov/pesticides/chem_search/reg_actions/registration/decision_PC-034702_17-Sep-09.pdf). Terry Harvey suggested we trial it in specific areas where residents can offer to help and to monitor.

**SLE:** Eggs are starting to hatch now thru June – and we still are finding egg masses to scrape (most recently backyards & the town land off Sconset & rim). As of today we have scraped 878 in the Ardens (85% in Ardentown & Sunnyside, most near the railroad tracks), preventing over 35,000 from hatching. It is less than last year – perhaps our efforts reduced them, but Elaine suspects it's from less searching with fewer volunteers during the pandemic, and she hasn't been to as many areas and leaseholds). We are starting to put up inward-facing sticky tape traps now on 9 remaining trap-TOH trees in Sunnyside (to trap treat late July), and we are working on several such trees on the rim of lower Sconset. Thanks to John Chronin, Paul Romagano, Hajni Halasz and Edmond Bischoff for helping. We still have more to do and Elaine has Joe Painter's pole scrapers to loan. We are starting to put up circle traps around town and have a group effort tomorrow Tuesday 10 am at the Henry George Green, and next Tuesday 5-18, 10am at the Buzz. We continue to look at improving and simplifying them. She has logged over 50 volunteer hours on SLF egg-scraping and restoration, plus some paid help.

**Earthweek Cleanup:** Several volunteers pulled over 20 bags of garlic mustard out of our woods, and a few trash pulls other times behind leaseholds: special thanks to Lee Painter and Paul Romagano. We are finding lots of old metal, and thanks to John DiGiacoma who is picking it up for us. There is still a lot of trash behind leaseholds bordering the woods and on town land before CSX tracks – note broken glass too we took out Friday.

**Arbor Day Tree Planting:** – We celebrated our own Arbor Day on April 28 and planted a “Little Gem” southern magnolia (from our Tree City award), near the silver maple that came down on the HG Green. Arbor Day Proclamation attached.

**Other Pests:** – **Mosquitos** – time to look for standing water and remove every few days; ribs in flexi-drain pipes can hold enough for them to breed in – can cover end with panty-house and duct-tape where the pipe hooks up to the house. I put mosquito bits in the standing water all around the compost area; please empty trash cans, lids, flower pots etc.

**Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)** – if you have an ash tree die, please contact Carol Larson to take a core sample to see if we have a confirmed case of EAB. If you have an ash tree you want to save, you should have your trees treated. **17-year cicadas** - we aren't sure if they will be a problem (we don't remember it so bad 17 years ago) but to be safe, you'll be seeing some netting around young plantings, which they can hurt.

**Terry Harvey reporting on Stormwater Management-** Terry Harvey met with an engineer who is working with Arden on their plan, and a County employee to survey areas of concern in Ardentown. Stormwater damages roads, erodes natural lands, and is bad for Naaman's Creek. Topographically, from the Green to the Candlelight there is an altitude decline of 30 feet. Water from the Lower Green heads toward Petit Green and then into the woods. As a first, small step towards stormwater management Terry is proposing a 120' long x 2-3' wide native wildflower garden along the Orchard Rd side of Petit Green. The cost of \$1000 will be covered by the Trustees and will serve as a good learning experiment that may help us address other areas of concern going forward. There were no objections.

Janna Schefflen asks if the Marsh Road leaseholds and land is being looked at because she is seeing trees falling down at an alarming rate and there is a significant problem. Joe Grippe expressed concern for the leaseholds on the East Mall that back up to the Candlelight parking lot. Joe asks if other areas have been considered for intervention. Terry Harvey agrees that there are many places where there is trouble, but the solutions are far too expensive to tackle right now. The group that had been working on this plan focused on Petit because of the low cost/benefit ratio. Alison Wakelin agrees that this is a beginning and not a global approach. She hopes that we will be able to expand our efforts with money from the proposed Federal Infrastructure bill. Alison plans to send a letter to Arden asking that they notify Ardentown if they are undertaking interventions that will impact runoff in Ardentown

**BUZZ WARE VILLAGE CENTER:** Terri Hansen reading a report submitted by Shari Phalan- Coffee House- Making plans to hold an outdoor Coffee House on May 14. Strength & Mobility- Waiting to resume; offered using Zoom: Correction from Suzanne Cherrin who reports that Strength and Mobility is once again offering in-person classes, which she attended.

Chair Yoga-One day session; Awakened Heart-Holding outdoor meetings; ACRA-Plans in the making for 2021; Mural-Finished and is beautiful; PPP-No fair updates, yet. Toby would like to step down. Any volunteers? Dominic Chen- June, students resume, July - students low Art on the Town Canceled - However, they are proposing an outdoor event for Memorial Day weekend. Possibly displaying Rick Rothrock sculptures outside of the BWVC and 2 to 3 additional artists. All activities would be outdoors. Art Loop is back! Financial- Electrical issues are being repaired and at reasonable costs. May need another employee for cleaning. Bldg. Mgr. has a new wage schedule. Discussion of the possibility of purchasing a large tent to support more outdoor activities. Air Purification System Proposal - \$2,900 includes replacement of all thermostats. Correction- Alison Wakelin reports that the Air purification system has already been installed. Awakened Heart Donation \$554.64 Strength & Mobility - \$755 donation were received. One rental to report - wedding Room 3-New Screens needed at French doors; Website- Updated to include COVID building procedures **PLAYGROUND**- Cortney Hayflinger reporting- The playground will need to be mulched this year. Unlike previous years, he is not planning a work day but will have mulch delivered and asks that people who want to help spread when they can.

**TOWN CHAIR:** Alison Wakelin reporting- Happy to report that the project to get our Town documents scanned and on the website is complete. Thanks to Terri Hansen for getting it done in far less time than either of us anticipated. Terri gave a brief presentation on the website and asked that if anyone had documents that she is missing, please consider giving them to her. Harry Themal stated that he has a copy of the 1922 Deed of Trust and the original Act of Incorporation, Terri will get those from him and get them scanned.

Alison has signed us up with the State for the mosquito program, which is done yearly, just in case we need it. So far the only time we have reached out to the State, they came and did a survey that showed the problem was standing water and we were not eligible for spraying. The town approved this.

Alison would like to have an outside audit done (at a reasonable price) of the Town accounts, in order to increase our chances of success when applying for grants and federal money. A motion was made to allow this and was passed unanimously.

There have been complaints about a fire pit on Sconset Road that is being used to burn cardboard and other refuse, which is illegal. Alison wanted to know if the Town should have an ordinance on fire pits. It was decided that if what was being done was already illegal, there was no need to have an ordinance. Harry Themal says he will call the people who are burning and ask them to stop.

Alison reported that Steve Cohen has agreed to assist with understanding the many requirements of the American Rescue Plan Act, and with considering what projects are included in this Act. An ad hoc town committee to discuss how to spend the ARPA money was formed, consisting of Joe Grippe, Harry Themal, Drew and/or Terri Hansen, Terry Harvey. Alison encourages anyone else in the town to consider being part of this committee, especially younger residents. Alison asked for approval for the Committee, along with herself and Steve Cohen, to spend up to 10K without bringing it to the Town Meeting, if it seemed beneficial, when we get the funds from ARPA. It is preferred to bring it to the town, but sometimes speed is necessary. A motion was made and the vote was unanimous.

**OLD BUSINESS:** there was no old business

**NEW BUSINESS:** Steve Cohen is donating funds for the installation of a "Welcome to Ardentown" sign at Sconset and Harvey Road. He has asked Andrew Hansen to help with the design, Lisa Riblett has volunteered to help as well. A proposed design will be presented at the September Town Meeting.

**Judith Kay**-Swiss Lane residents Chris Monson,, David DeGarmo, Linda Brandschain, my husband Duane Loeper and I have formed an ad hoc committee called the Swiss Lane Committee. At the moment I am the spokesperson for that committee. This is our report

### **Repaving of Swiss Lane**

In the last 2 weeks, there have been discussions between Ardentown's Coordinating committee, the Trustees, and George Loudon of Ivy Gables concerning the repaving and widening of Swiss Lane. The residents of Swiss Lane had suggested that when the promised repaving of Swiss Lane was being done, it would be an opportune time to widen the road.

George Loudon had promised the Trustees that he would pay for the paving of the road upon completion of the construction. This was documented in the minutes of the Town meeting of May 13, 2019, as a response to a question asked of the Trustees by an attendee who was concerned about the damage that would inevitably occur to the pavement during the construction process.

The coordinating committee forwarded a written proposal to Mr Loudon concerning the widening and repaving, including pricing as procured by Mr Loudon. In the proposal, the Town and Mr Loudon would split the cost, \$25,000 (was

*this a written quote?*). However, permitting and drawings, if required, would be furnished by Mr Loudon. He rejected the proposal, replying that there was not enough time to complete the work in order for him to get a CO [Certificate of Occupancy] for the project. He then further stated that he was only required to patch the street at the entrance to the work site and nothing more.

**PROBLEM** If this is indeed Mr Loudon's intent, it is completely unacceptable. In the past 15 months, bulldozers, backhoes, heavy excavators and 30 ton dump trucks have been utilizing Swiss Lane, almost daily, as a construction road. The pavement for the entire length has been severely compromised. Besides the 50-foot long crater at the entrance to the new driveway, there are numerous new potholes and pavement cracks, far in excess of normal wear and tear of our residential streets.

The residents of Swiss Lane, and the entire town, have put up with construction noise 6 or 7 days a week, up to 12 hours a day, for 15 months. We have endured street closures, vibrations from hundreds of 30-ton dump truck loads and all-night construction lighting.

**[SOLUTION]** If we can't come to an agreement on the widening of the road, the very least that Mr Loudon is obligated to do is to honor his commitment to repave the road. The Trustees - and our entire Town - must not allow him to renege on his promise.

### **Width of Swiss Lane**

**PROBLEM** Swiss Lane is by far the main thoroughfare for large vehicles entering and exiting Ardentown. From curb stone to curb stone, our street averages 14 feet eight inches wide. This is obviously far too narrow for many of the larger vehicles to pass without running off the road, often onto our properties. Eight-foot wide tractor-trailers deliver food products daily to Ivy Gables and/or Candlelight. Trash trucks servicing our town, including daily servicing by Republic, and the tour buses that carry patrons to Candlelight, are 8 feet wide. As a result, ruts extend down the shoulders of the street from Millers Rd to Harvey Rd.

**SOLUTION** Swiss Lane needs to be widened if it is to continue to receive 2-way traffic. However, if the widening is not practical at this time, an interim solution would be to change the street to one-way outbound from Via Italia to Harvey Road. Traffic would then enter the town via the one-way section of Millers Rd and exit on Swiss Lane.

### **Speed Bump(s)**

**PROBLEM** For several years, at our town meetings, residents of Swiss Lane and many others in the town, concerned about the excessive speed by both residents and visitors, have proposed speed bumps for the street. After discussion, it was agreed to try installing stop signs and children playing signs at the Via Italia intersection. This has proven to be useless. Most drivers don't stop, many do not slow down, and some even accelerate from Miller Rd right through the intersection. Not only are pedestrians and cyclists at risk due to the high speed of traffic on this narrow road, drivers exiting Via Italia have had several near accidents with speeders flying through the stop sign.

**SOLUTION** It is past time to install a speed bump. If a speed bump were installed midway between Harvey and Millers, the stop signs can be removed. We would not expect Mr Loudon to absorb the cost of the speed bump, but it should be significantly less expensive to the town if it were installed at the same time as the repaving.

There ends our report - Other than the repaving which should be addressed immediately, we feel that the other two items - the width of Swiss Lane and the Speedbump - should be discussed and voted on in the next meeting. Thank you, and I will send a copy of the report to Terri Hansen.

Alison Wakelin clarified that George Loudon had brought to the Trustees, and thereby to the Coordinating Committee, the proposal that would have widened Swiss Lane by 2 feet, and repaved the length of the road. The cost would be split between the Town and Mr Loudon. Joan Fitzgerald stated that the cost to the Town would have been \$12.5k, \$8000 for repaving, and \$4500 for widening, a very reasonable amount. The Coordinating Committee had questions and concerns, mostly due to the short time period involved, and Mr Loudon felt unable to give the Coordinating Committee the time to address these (for instance getting permits can take months), so he has decided to move forward and simply do what is required of him by the County.

Judith Kay asked if anything was proposed in writing. Mr. Loudon made the proposal by email.

Joe Grippe volunteered to review the agreement between Mr Loudon and the County regarding repairs to roads damaged by his construction. He will reach out to Harry Thernal for additional details. (at Harry's request)

Janet Cosgrove asked why we were being asked to pay anything when it had been stated in prior Town Meetings that Mr Loudon had offered to pave Swiss Lane when construction was over.

Alison Wakelin says that we will have to look into exactly what was agreed to.

Oliver Gutsche, newly elected to Public Works, will look into the cost to repave Swiss and install a speed bump.

**Terri Hansen** proposes we form an Ad Hoc Committee to plan community celebrations related to our Centennial in 2022. This was approved and Edmond Bischoff and Melissa Parsonson volunteered to be on the Committee with Terri. Terri will submit a notice in the Page seeking help.

**Annie Gutsche** would like to see what we can do to stop the dangerous party/firework activity on Petit Green around the Fourth of July. There was discussion of hiring an off duty police officer to patrol. Alison Wakelin will reach out to Arden and Ardencroft to coordinate efforts.

**ELECTIONS: Public Works-** Cheryl Regan is stepping down as Chair of the Committee after many years. The Town thanks her for her service and dedication. Anne Lutz has also resigned, with the thanks of the Town for her work.

Elected unanimously to Public Works, Nick Liberman, Chris Monson, Janna Schefflen, and Oliver Gutsche. Alison Wakelin appointed Melissa Parsonson to complete Anne Lutz's term, which ends in May 2022.

**Audit-** Re-elected unanimously, Andrew Hansen, Stefanie Lombardo, and Terry Harvey

**Playground-** Re-elected unanimously Cortney Hayflinger and Annie Gutsche. There is a vacancy. If you are interested in serving, please contact Alison Wakelin.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm Respectfully submitted by Terri Hansen, Secretary of Ardentown