

The regular meeting of the Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:30 pm on Monday, September 13, 2021, Alison Wakelin, Town Chair, presiding. A quorum was present.

**In Attendance**

- |                     |                        |                                       |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Alison Wakelin   | 13. Mary Ann Patterson | 25. Jeana Carey                       |
| 2. Cindy Cohen      | 14. Joseph Painter     | 26. Cort Hayflinger                   |
| 3. Steve Cohen      | 15. Annie Gutsche      | 27. Beverly Hawkins                   |
| 4. Holly Custer     | 16. Oliver Gutsche     | 28. Maureen Gordon                    |
| 5. Terri Hansen     | 17. Drew Hansen        | 29. Sue Cherrin                       |
| 6. Uttam Shanbhag   | 18. Elaine Schmerling  | 30. Chip Kneavel (guest)              |
| 7. Sofia Hogan      | 19. Joe Grippe         | 31. Senator Kyle Evans Gay<br>(guest) |
| 8. Betty Ann Themal | 20. Ann Lutz           | 32. Stefan Rukowicz (guest)           |
| 9. Harry Themal     | 21. Lisa Riblett       | 33. Rep. Larry Lamberg (guest)        |
| 10. Janet Cosgrove  | 22. Will Ryan          |                                       |
| 11. Joan Fitzgerald | 23. Melissa Parsonson  |                                       |
| 12. Pat Lane        | 24. Janna Scheflen     |                                       |

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes for the May 2021 meeting are approved.

**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL:** Chip Kneavel, delDOT presenting- There was concern about the safety of students trying to get to Wilmington Montessori. A new sidewalk will be added to the side of Sconset Road, along with a crosswalk to improve safety and access. There will be new pedestrian stopwatch lights and buttons. Discussion followed about the aesthetics and scope of the project. Lisa Riblett, Oliver Gutsche, and Chip Kneavel will meet to discuss concerns brought up around the aesthetics of the curbing and the narrowing of Sconset at Harvey Road.

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Larry Lambert, Representative for District 7- Commends discussion around public safety and traffic. Notified attendees of upcoming Public Safety meeting at the Claymont Community Center, which is being held in response to an uptick in petty crime. Working on many other initiatives and community outreach. Constituents with questions should reach out. If you or your neighbors ever need anything, feel free to contact me anytime at [Larry.Lambert@Delaware.gov](mailto:Larry.Lambert@Delaware.gov) or 302-668-2205

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Senator Kyle Evans Gay- Working with Mr Lambert on several efforts for constituents. Some discussion around traffic calming on Harvey and Veale Roads. May have funds available for some road work, will reach out to Alison Wakelin. Gave some Legislative updates related to recent efforts by the State government. To receive the 5th District monthly newsletter featuring legislative and community updates, sign up at: [www.tiny.cc/SenGay](http://www.tiny.cc/SenGay) or send me an email at [kyle.gay@delaware.gov](mailto:kyle.gay@delaware.gov) and we will get you signed up. You can also text me anytime at 302-306-7322.

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

Operating Accounts:	\$ 55,806.49
Municipal Street Aid:	\$ 72,897.87
Arden Building and Loan:	\$ 19,965.18
<b>Total Funds Available:</b>	<b>\$148,669.54</b>

**REGISTRATION COMMITTEE:** Cindy Cohen reporting,

**1. Recent Resident Changes:**

- a. In May, **2312 Sconset** (the Zalasky house) was purchased by **Charles & Sabine McKee** and family, who moved in on May 28th.
- b. In May, **1603 Millers Road** (the Contractor house) was purchased by **Michael and Margaret Kabbeko**, who moved in in May.
- c. In June, **2316 Orchard Road** (the Peace House) had another change in tenants, welcoming **Kaylan Wetzel and Luca Spinola** and their family.
- d. In August, **1701 Appletree** (the Flannery/Nair house), was purchased by **Daryl Holcomb**. He and his family were to have moved in in mid-August.
- e. In August, **2310 Loreley Lane** was purchased by **Page Dwyer** from Brooke Bovard & Steven Harcourt.
- f. In September, we heard from **Barbara Pietruczenia** that she moved into **1525 Springhouse Lane** with Nick Lieberman back in March 2020.

g. In September, Lee Painter let us know that they have a new tenant in **Unit B at 1517 Woodland Lane: Kevin Cross.**

Please welcome all these new residents to the neighborhood.

**2. Committee Changes:** Betty Ann Themal is stepping down after a collective total of over 35 years on the Registration Committee. Thank you Betty Ann! We are seeking a new member to fill her position, to join myself and Maureen Gordon.

What does the Registration Committee do?

- We maintain a list of residents of the Village, including the date of residence to determine when they are qualified to vote in Town Meetings.
- We try to contact all new residents to welcome them to the Village.
- We report to each regular Town Meeting new leaseholders and residents, who are then added by the Town Secretary to the regular meeting mailing list.
- We encourage attendance at Town Meetings, and plan social events for the town.

If you are interested in being a member of the Registration Committee, or know someone who would be a great fit for the position, contact Cindy Cohen, Committee Chair. We hope to have a vote for Betty Ann's replacement at our next Town Meeting.

**3. Registration Information:** We currently collect personal information on new residents, including names of all adults, phone numbers, email addresses, and names of children and their birthdates. We also request permission to include them in future ACRA Directories, and if we can welcome them in the Arden Page. **As our town meetings continue to be held via Zoom, we will be adding permission for the Town Secretary to email them with our town meeting notices and Zoom links.** If anyone knows of anything else we should be collecting for our town records, please contact me directly.

**TRUSTEES REPORT: Lisa Wilson Riblett:** *\*Safe Routes to School Update:* We want to thank Chip Kneavel of DeIDOT for his presentation regarding the Safe Routes to School project that will be happening next Spring. We will let you know more in the Spring when we hear from DeIDOT.

*\*Widening and Repaving of Swiss Lane:* Public Works Committee Chair, Oliver Gutsche, will contract and coordinate the widening and repaving of Swiss Lane. George Loudon, owner of Ivy Gables, has agreed to pay for half of the cost of widening and repaving.

*\*Footpath Restoration:* The footpath between the Henry George Green and the Pettit Green is being slowly, but surely, restored. Various residents and the Footpath Committee, which falls under the Public Works Committee, are working to restore this path.

*\*Bend in Road by Candlelight:* The overgrowth on the bend of the road (Millers) by the Candlelight has been cleared and restored to its full width.

**Joan Fitzgerald:** *\*Leasehold Changes:* The Registration committee reported the four leasehold transfers.

*\*Property Tax Bills:* The senior discount checks issued. The NCC/School property taxes will be paid next week. Reminder: If you receive a Supplemental tax bill from NCC, please forward it to the Trustees.

**Harry Themal:** *\*Illegal Fireworks in Ardentown:* The Trustees have submitted an article to the Arden Page regarding the illegal fireworks on the Pettit Green. The Trustees are concerned about personal safety and potential fires, especially in times of drought. A proposed ordinance will be presented soon at a Town Meeting.

**MEMORIAL GARDEN:** Betty Ann Themal reporting- The Memorial Garden Committee met the morning of July 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Memorial Garden.

We noted the usual growth of various vines and English ivy on trees and bushes, which is an ongoing problem. In addition, there were several low-hanging branches on the Linden trees, which needed to be trimmed.

Thanks to committee members Chris Monson and Ed Bischoff for working on this. We had Hal Jr. remove two piles of debris.

The committee members will be reviewing the regulations for the Memorial Garden and doing any updating we feel is necessary.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE:** Andrew Hansen reporting. Unable to meet, will have Audit completed for the November meeting. Changing the by-laws to reflect the change in our fiscal year. Proposed change in language- *The Audit Committee shall consist of three qualified voters elected at the regular May Town Meeting for a term of one year. It shall be the duty of the Audit Committee to audit all the accounts of the Trustees and of the Incorporated Village for the fiscal year just ended and give a report no later than the second Town Meeting following the end of the prior fiscal year. At any time during the*

year qualified voters may examine any such accounts on request to the Secretary of the Trustees or to the Treasurer of the Village. Vote taken, change was passed. Will be read again at the next meeting for the second vote.

**ASSESSMENT:** The Assessment Committee did not meet over the summer but is gearing up to meet with the trustees in mid-October.

Joe Grippe compared 2020 and 2021 New Castle County taxes and assessments for Ardentown as follows:

The Total Assessed Value for all leasehold structures and all land (leasehold and trust) was \$10,175,500. in 2020 and increased 0.414% to \$10,271,600. in 2021.

The Total Tax (county and school) for all trust land (which includes all structures) was \$341,436. in 2020 and increased 1.195% to \$345,516. in 2021.

Conclusion: As the tax rates remain the same for 2020 and 2021, the increase in tax in 2021 is due to an increase in assessed value.

**COMMUNITY PLANNING:** Joe Grippe reporting- Joe Grippe has been appointed to the Community Planning Committee and will be meeting with Alison Wakelin soon. He has spoken with Will Ryan and there is some good energy and ideas. There will be a more complete report in November

**PUBLIC WORKS:** Oliver Gutsche- Roads- Swiss Lane is set to be repaved and widened by 2 feet in October, with Ivy Gables contributing half the cost. There will be a walk through the community in October to assess road repair needs, which Municipal Street Aid will pay for.

Elaine Schmerling, reporting

**Paths – Sunnyside** Chris Monson has cleared many downed trees off Sunnyside paths including a HUGE beech which recently fell down at the bottom of the N-S path. Elaine Schmerling has cleared a few smaller trees/branches from other paths especially in from the rail side with Serena a few months ago. We have a new volunteer, Arthur Marks, who helped with an easier way into Sunnyside from Harvey Rd which Elaine can show to anyone who is interested!

**Ardentown Paths –** Nick Liberman & Elaine cleared bamboo from the station Path. Elaine has cleared vegetation off the path below Appletree and a few others. Rich Cropper continues to maintain the power line path, and lower down is looking better and with wildflowers. Nick & Elaine assessed the path between Janna's at the old mill across Marsh Rd (between 2232 & 2234) and he plans to take down 3 dead vine-covered red cedars this month, with assistance of the 2 neighbors. We welcome help on any other paths and if there is one that concerns you, please call and we can work together- we have a lot to take care of!

**Misc:** Nick Liberman cut out two more white mulberry trees, including the one blocking the siteline to Harvey Rd. from Millers (in front of Donovan's) – we put all waste out with yard waste collection.

A swing was once again hung over the rocks at the creek just east of the power line. We are taking it down for safety reasons and as our lawyer advised last year. We also noticed someone had started building a fort with cut bamboo, at the large rock where there had been past trashed campsites-seems to have been abandoned. If any of you are doing this neatly let Elaine Schmerling know.

**Restoration:** We have spent hours trying to maintain the good areas pulling invasives such as:garlic mustard, wineberry; Devil's Walking stick, mile-a-minute & Japanese Knotweed esp in Sunnyside, purple loosestrife at three locations. Recently we have started pulling stilt grass, mugwort, and Japanese Virgin's bower (see recent Leaf article for ID to remove in your yards). Elaine has cleared some of these off trees in the Sconset triangle and E Mall areas-more to go. Elaine tries to go out once or twice/week, some with Redtail Restoration and/or volunteers. She also always has aggressive natives to replace at various sites, she would welcome any help anytime at any of our many restoration areas.

We also are working on several pollinator gardens with Terry Harvey and Lee Painter, at small triangle and Pettit Green gardens. We welcome other helpers!

**Compost area:** Chris has been weed-whacking this path to the woods, and Mike is mowing when not too wet. Nick Liberman & Lee Painter helped chop and move the rest of the dead tree that fell off the path from Candelight parking lot. Lee & Elaine have been working on plantings & weeding there. The 4<sup>th</sup> compost bin is almost ready for winter dismantling and spring planting.

**Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) and Tree of Heaven (TOH):** The SLF Task Force helped put up traps on major town host trees, including this year, walnuts on the path between Pettit & HG Green, and more in town land off lower Brae Rd.. They are all together catching loads and now are esp going to the silver maples. Carol Larson helped to trap-treat 28 tree of heaven (TOH) trees on town lands – 15 in Sunnyside (most newly-discovered) and 13 in town. Most of these will be killed at the end of this month with a contractor. (We are not treating Japanese StyraX this year – Elaine is removing it. If you have them you should trap them or call Carol Larson if you want to treat).

**Emerald Ash Borer (EAB):** The EAB is killing ash trees. We have one large dead ash to remove next year on the left side of the Candlelight. Carol Larson treated 7 on Ardentown land where they could damage buildings. We have identified 7 more for next year. We hope they survive till then! Elaine has notified some residents of ashes we have noticed on their leaseholds that are a hazard. If you have an ash tree, be prepared to either treat them (May or June is best) or take down as soon as they die since they are very brittle and break easily.

**Tree Sale** – the Arden Gardeners Guild is having a tree sale (mostly oaks) – please consider purchasing in place of an invasive tree or in an open lawn. Also we are accepting donations for public areas as well.

**Benches** – we have a donation that can cover the cost of 2 benches to replace the ones falling apart (one on Pettit Green, and one at HG Green) I could not locate any to match the “Make Every Day Earth Day”, but would like to purchase from Ecoplastics, which recycles plastics locally. They currently have a 3-month wait for new orders. The PW&S Comm will pick a color/pattern and I would like approval to put in order (blue & white swirl that was at the Art & the Park? Brown? Or best match of the current ones?)

**STORMWATER:** Alison Wakelin reporting for Terry Harvey- The Committee felt that we should try to do what we can with the money we have available. There is a focus on the Pettit Green because it has the easiest problems to address, and the projects will have a positive effect, although not solve all the problems. The Pettit Biofiltration Strip was approved at the last Town meeting and planting will begin in the Fall. The Trustees have offered to pay up to \$1000 toward the cost of planting this.

Pettit Green was aerated in June. Joe Grippe provided the tractor, aerator, and labor for this effort. Thanks Joe! We want to repeat this process on the Pettit and add the Henry George Green in September. We have been told that we will have to do this 3x a year for 3 years before we see a change in the flora and absorption. Terry Harvey is looking for volunteers to drive the tractor/aerator

The SWMC met with a contractor with experience building rain gardens. In looking at the Pettit Green, 3 locations were identified for rain gardens, approximate cost to build is about \$15k. These gardens will not redirect runoff, but handle existing runoff patterns. The money for these gardens can come from the American Rescue Fund money as an approved use. A vote was taken and the SWMC has approval to spend up to \$17k from the American Rescue Funds.

The retention pond at Ivy Gables has been constructed according to design, but there has been more run-off water than expected during recent rainfalls. Since the design was approved by the county, the committee will reach out to the county to request that they come and look at the issues to offer guidance on how to solve the continuing problems. Lisa Riblett will inform George Loudon, and invite him to meet the county together.

Janna Schefflen mentioned that there is a problem on Marsh Road where storm drains are not being maintained by the State and it is causing problems. She has reached out to Larry Lambert and he did get the State to come out and clear them, but they get clogged again. This is a situation she wants the Committee to keep in mind.

**PLAYGROUND:** Cortney Hayflinger reporting- Back in April he got 8 yards of mulch and mulched in the teeter totter. The old split rail is falling apart, do we need a fence? Terri Hansen expressed that the fence is an added safety for the playground, because of its location at a blind curve. Cindy Cohen feels like the natural barrier is enough. Lisa Riblett thinks more natural plantings would be enough. Alison Wakelin asked Public Works, Cortney Hayflinger, and Lisa Riblett to work on a solution and bring it to the November meeting

**ARDENTOWN SIGN:** Steve Cohen reporting- Lisa Riblett, Andrew Hansen, and Steve Cohen formed an ad hoc committee and examined other signage in North Wilmington. Sign regulations through the State would bar us from putting a new sign at the top of Sconset, which is really the only place that makes sense. However, on the post that holds the current small Ardentown sign, we can place a larger, wooden sign on that post. With no objections, the committee will move forward and hope to have the sign up for the eve of 2022, our 100th Anniversary.

**BUZZ WARE VILLAGE CENTER:** Alison Wakelin condensed the report submitted by Shari Phalan, full report in minutes below-

Betty O’Regan is the new co-chair with Mary Young. Katie Scobel is a new ad hoc resident guest from Arden

**Coffee House** No food or drink will be allowed. A \$5 donation will be in effect and wristbands will be worn by paid attendees.

Must bring your own chairs, food & drink. Civic Committee approved the use of a fire pit. It was suggested that performers go “unplugged” after 10 p.m to reduce sound since it will be held outdoors. 78 guests \$397 in donations. Fundraiser will be held in September.

**Strength & Mobility** 5/4/21 was the first onsite event. Will be offered virtually via Zoom.

Has since been cancelled. Plans in the works for an alternative mobility class by Joan Phibbs.

**Tai Chi 101** Interest in holding classes Monday, Thursday and Sundays

**Awakened Heart** Drafting a new lease. Will be doing the iced coffee at the Fair. Will be meeting on Wednesday evenings.

Drum Circle may be using Buzz if poor weather.

Shakespeare show will be held on 9/18.

Georgists 9/12,

**ACRA** New guidelines for COVID. Masks to be worn at all times. Working to see if Friday can be used for pool days.

Capacity 55 attendees. BWVC will be open for inclement weather. Last day 7/30.

Over 21 event well attended.

**Mural and Practice Mural** Hung in hallway and Room 1

**PPP** 75% of previous vendors to participate. Still \$2 fee. No raffle this year

Kids will "chalk the walk". Fair finances still be settled.

**Art Studio** Sessions started back in 5/4/21

**Arden Bookies** Have requested a link/hyperlink from the BWVC. Committee agreed

**Art on the Town** Katey has ideas for children's art show

**Art Loop** is back! Phoenix Ridings exhibited. \$900 sold, 10% to BWVC. 72 guests, \$48 donations.

June 7 - 38 guests; \$120 donations and \$300 sales. Next Loop: October 1

**Financial** Electrical issues being wrapped up. Plumbing \$689 and lighting cords for pathway. Dropped ceiling: \$1095 estimate. Renovation fund will be used for this expense. Fluorescent lighting to be removed.

March 25 to date:

\$3,284 in donations/program donations

\$1,335 in rentals

\$4,819 total income

\$5,400 expenses

These figures may have changed in the interim.

**Room 4** - Wilmington Sudbury School will be renting 9/21 to 6/22/22. May hold an introductory event for the community. Pet clause added.

**Website** - Still being updated and eMail addresses added.

**ARCHIVES COMMITTEE:** Melissa Parsonson reporting- The Craft Shop Museum is currently closed for renovation following damage resulting from a faulty sprinkler going off. Luckily no damage to the collections.

**TOWN CHAIR:** We have the American Rescue Plan Act funds in our account, and the Village needs to design a plan to help low income people who are struggling due to Covid. Since we do not have a 'Qualified Census Tract', designating an area where people have less than a certain income, this is quite complicated and there are many restrictions in the ARPA. Alison Wakelin seeks anyone interested in helping to design a program.

The Village would like to use some of the money on projects proposed by Community Planning, which is focused on environmental issues at present, and encourages the committee to submit a plan.

Alison asked for the Village to approve membership of the League of Local Governments, which costs \$500 per year, since it is beneficial in helping municipalities. Membership was approved.

Trash contract: Two possibilities were outlined, and we were given a month extension on our contract, until September 30, to make a decision. After reaching out to many companies, only Trash Tech responded to Arden's outreach with interest.

The Village voted to renew the contract with Waste Management, with the caveat that since the contract will be with all three Ardens, our choice is only one part of the vote and that whatever Arden decided would likely be the final decision.

**ELECTIONS:** Assessment- Janet Cosgrove is standing for re-election, re-elected unanimously  
Registration- Delayed to the November meeting following the retirement of Betty Ann Thernal, so that the position may be outlined in the ArdenPage to attract more people to join Town Committees.  
Budget- Terry Harvey, Cindy Cohen, Oliver Gutsche, re-elected unanimously

**OLD BUSINESS:** no old business

**NEW BUSINESS:** Janna Scheflen wants to know if we are likely to be redistricted, since Marsh Road residents of Ardentown and not in the District with the rest of the village, because the line goes down Marsh Rd. Larry Lambert says

the lines are likely to stay the same in Northern Delaware. There is a small chance of change, but Larry will keep us posted.

November we have the Treasurer, the Town Secretary, and 3 seats on Community Planning are up for re-election.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:43pm.