

The regular meeting of the Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:30 pm on Monday, November 8, 2021, Alison Wakelin, Town Chair, presiding. A quorum was present.

***In Attendance***

- |                                   |                       |                         |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Alison Wakelin                 | 12. Betty Ann Themal  | 24. Shari Phalan        |
| 2. Cindy Cohen                    | 13. Lisa Riblett      | 25. Oliver Gutsche      |
| 3. Uttam Shanbhag                 | 14. Terry Harvey      | 26. Sofia Hogan         |
| 4. Maura Lynch                    | 15. Peter Slattery    | 27. Melissa Parsonson   |
| 5. Steve Cohen                    | 16. Chelsea Buscaglia | 28. Courtney Hayflinger |
| 6. Cheryl Regan<br>(302-475-0565) | 17. Shelley Robbins   | 29. Dan Emery           |
| 7. Edmond Bischoff                | 18. Janna Scheflen    | 30. Jill Emery          |
| 8. Barbara Mondzelewski           | 19. Michael Pione     | 31. Sue Cherrin         |
| 9. Drew Hansen                    | 20. Joe Grippe        | 32. Janet Cosgrove      |
| 10. Terri Hansen                  | 21. Elaine Schmerling | 33. Joseph Painter      |
| 11. Harry Themal                  | 22. Annie Gutsche     |                         |
|                                   | 23. Joan Fitzgerald   |                         |

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes for the September 2021 meeting are approved with revisions proposed from the floor

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

Operating Accounts:	\$ 47,229.98
Municipal Street Aid:	\$ 73,802.29
Arden Building and Loan:	\$ 16,574.38
<b>Total Funds Available:</b>	<b>\$137,606.65</b>

**REGISTRATION COMMITTEE:** Cindy Cohen reporting, **Recent Resident Changes:** No changes since the September town meeting report. **Melissa Parsonson** has volunteered to fill the open position on the committee, replacing Betty Ann Themal, who stepped down at our September town meeting. Melissa has been approved unanimously.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE:** Andrew Hansen reporting, The Audit committee (Andrew Hansen, Stefanie Lombardo, Terry Harvey) met on November 6, 2021 to audit the municipal and trustee accounts for fiscal year 2020. The committee has or shortly will follow-up with the Town treasurer and the Secretary of the Ardentown Trust to address a small number of questions that arose during the course of the audit. Overall, the Audit committee found the accounts and books to be complete, accurate, and in good order.

The proposed revision to the bylaws regarding the schedule of the audit will be brought to a second vote and, if approved, the bylaws will be changed accordingly. The proposed revision reads as follows:  
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.

Moved from the floor that the change be accepted as written, passed unanimously, bylaws will be revised to reflect the change.

**BUDGET COMMITTEE:** Andrew Hansen reporting, The Budget committee met on Sunday, November 7. Attendees included Andrew Hansen, Cindy Cohen, and Oliver Gutsche.

The committee discussed steps to improve the 2022 budgeting process, the process for 2023 and thereafter, and general improvements to the tracking of incomes and expenses against the town budget.

For the 2022 budget year, the committee will reach out to committee chairs, town officers, and the Ardentown trustees, during the week of 11/8/2021 to request initial estimates of 2022 budget outflows and incomes by mid-December. The Budget committee will meet in early January, 2022 with the town chair and treasurer to create a draft budget for the Town Meeting to review and vote on during the February, 2022 meeting.

For the 2023 budget year and thereafter, the Budget committee proposes to modify the budgeting process with the goal of having a draft budget prepared for a vote at the November town meeting, rather than February of the following year, with changes to the bylaws as needed to address this change in schedule.

General process improvements that the committee discussed include a shared spreadsheet or spreadsheets for committees to record incomes and expenses through the year, and coordination with the town treasurer to clarify and/or simplify the connection between budget line items and town incomes and expenses.

**MEMORIAL GARDEN:** Betty Ann Themal reporting- nothing to report.

**ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE:** Janet Cosgrove reporting-The committee met with the trustees on 11/4/21 and presented a draft of the Assessment Committee 2021 Annual Report. The final report will be posted on the Ardentown website. The 2021 annual report will have a sample of the proposed land rent bill with explanations of how each of the 6 line-items are calculated.

The New Castle County Tax Reassessment Program is in progress. Tyler Technology Data Collectors will be visiting every property in NCC to record data such as outside house measurements, pictures and other notations. Please see the complete report posted on our website with the Nov meeting minutes.

**ARCHIVES-** Melissa Parsonson reporting- The museum remains closed until further notice while it's undergoing renovations. The museum will have a table during the Artisan's trail on 11/28/2021. Remember, items can be purchased on the museum website. The archive's can also be accessed via the website.

**COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Joe Grippe reporting- nothing to report, plans to have a meeting in the near future for a report for the February meeting

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE:** Oliver Gutsche reporting- Roads- Swiss Lane repaved, a speed bump was installed, Belgian block moved to accommodate widening. Potholes on Millers repaired. Inventory of potholes was used to create a map to use to plan future repairs. Survey of street signs, map them and decide what needs to be removed or replaced. Had a meeting with Ben Gruswitz to talk about his effort to create more connectivity/accessibility/safety between the Ardens. Elaine Schmerling reporting- **Paths – Sunnyside** – Chris Monson cleared another huge fallen tree off the main North-south path. We received new signs from DNREC that Chris Monson has also generously offered to put up, (in addition to the 2 signs still standing marking the main borders in & out of Sunnyside).

Ardentown Paths – Lisa Riblett arranged a huge clearing of the path between HG Green and Pettit.

Sat. 11/13: Nick Liberman is next leading an effort clearing the dead red cedars to the left of Janna Schefflen's house across Marsh Rd. (the old mill), Saturday 10 am: Note they were smothered by ivy & bittersweet vines and on the town "path" between 2 leaseholds. 2-3 chainsaw-savvy people to work on this. If others want to join us Janna Schefflen & I will lead an effort to help clear invasives further down this path on Ardentown lands above it, on the path that leads to county lands (Harvey Mill Park, between Lancashire and Wynnewood). This is upstream Naamans creek before flowing through Arden and then Ardentown woods.

**Misc:** Rich Cropper took down the hazardous swing hanging over the rocks at the creek just east of the power line.

**Tree of Heaven (AA):** Fall work finished eradicating trees of heaven in Sunnyside and in the village.

One contractor killed over 25 tree of heaven (AA) trees in Sunnyside. The original areas are finally getting under control, but there are many sprouts to kill next year in a newly-found infested area (since last report), way off the path on lower I-95 side, that will need to be controlled July-September next year, our fourth year working on AA in Sunnyside (we have killed over 100 large trees, and hundreds more sprouts throughout the entire tract, otherwise they would be taking it over and AA is allelopathic). A new contractor worked on Ardentown lands: killed 11 AA trees on Ardentown lands (behind/side of Phalans, and path area between houses and lower Sconset-all neighbors gave permission behind their

houses). He also eradicated numerous sprouts in these areas, we will need at least another year again for sprouts, as they will keep spreading from the CSX area. Come April we plan to take down the 2 large killed AA trees on town land immediately behind Hope and Paul's houses, to prevent damage.

**Spotted Lanternfly (SLF)** – SLF are going in mass to silver maples and Japanese Styrax (snowbell or snowball) trees now. Last year they laid eggs through mid-December. Elaine Schmerling recommends removing the styrax's, or putting up good traps and scraping the egg masses on them and nearby. Carol Larson did not trap-treat them this year as she did last (which killed those that went to them). Elaine Schmerling sees many egg masses already on young silvers between Candlelight and stream and can show anyone anytime (for winter scraping, will post sessions).

Note that the SLF Task Force is NOT taking down the traps this year. Elaine Schmerling will remove and store the bags only this winter, but a) it was too much work taking traps down, storing and then putting back up again in spring, and b) the earlier they are up, the more early first instars that we caught this year (100's per trap!). It will be easier to just put up the bags next April/May. Our populations were manageable this year and we want to continue keeping the numbers low enough to discourage insecticide spraying – the traps and scraping work pretty well!

**Emerald Ash Borer (EAB):** Reminder for Trustees to plan to remove the large big dead ash on the playground side of the Candlelight next year. We identified 7 more large trees that Carol Larson could treat next year (if they survive till May) by Candlelight or leaseholds. Her injection treatment lasts three years, and later we can reassess continuing treatment. USDA has been releasing and assessing a biological control in our region that may help. Note: expect to see hundreds of dead ashes all over our woods.

**Sunnyside Tree Planting** – Thanks to Nick Liberman, Arthur Marks, Terry Harvey & Edmond Bischoff, we planted 12 trees (from the GG oak sale, 2 donated) in Sunnyside (in the new tree planting former mile-a-minute (MAM) area). Also: DNREC is planning a large spring tree-planting climate change initiative on state lands and our rep is requesting more trees for us there including ALL supplies. We could easily plant 100 new trees in place of invasives which would be better for the climate and ecosystem ... if we can get **volunteers for winter work, contact me, will arrange and post work days.** The biggest area is above our new tree planting area – if we can control MAM in an area possibly bigger than the first. Normally in winter we save 100-200 trees from English ivy and other invasive vines (keeping these trees alive is important for the climate!)– this winter we can also focus on freeing up areas from invasives, for new trees.

**Benches** – are ordered from Ecoplastics with donation money as reported at the last meeting. We chose the most natural-looking ones similar to the two we have– brown benches with green sides, all from locally recycled plastic. Huge thanks to Chris who has offered to pick up and install them! By the new year we should have them replacing the rotten benches on the Petit and The Mall.

**Stormwater-** Terry Harvey reporting- Town voted to approve funds for rain gardens on the Pettit Green. Then we re-read the American Recovery Plan funding guidelines and decided that we should get competitive bids. We will distribute an RFP to several firms and move forward after we get the bids.

We plan to act similarly for H. George Green and the Mall/Candlelight areas: ask some professionals how they would approach the problem, write one or more RFPs and get bids, then bring them to the town for approval.

**PLAYGROUND:** Cortney Hayflinger reporting- Not much going on right now. He has taken down some of the pieces that were falling down so that nobody gets hurt. Straw poll of the meeting says that the town would like to have a fence in place along the road. The Committee will meet to discuss

**BUZZ WARE VILLAGE CENTER:** Shari Phalan reporting-Coffee House

Next Coffee House - 11/12/21, Strength & Mobility now is low cardio yoga flow strength and mobility classes.

Will be new class by Joan Phibbs - dates TBA, Fiber Arts - Denise Nordheimer Tuesday evenings, Stage ceiling fluorescent lighting Being removed before ceiling repair. Exterior Lighting - along pathway is being considered, Arden Bookies have requested a link/hyperlink from the BWVC. Committee agreed. Arden Anti-Racist Event artwork has been requested as a community event

PPP - \$6,930 total income: Expenses \$325 : Net \$6,601

1096 guests

Expense Breakdown:

\$60 misc. donation box income

\$90 in printing

\$30 in hospitality

\$85.79 in lunch for volunteers

\$60 in materials for set up – donated to the BWVC by Shari Phalan

**TOWN CHAIR-** Alison Wakelin reporting- We need to put a statement on the Website that the Village of Ardentown does not discriminate based on disabilities, to meet ADA requirements. With respect to the ARPA Funds, we have signed on with Barnes and Thornburg, attorneys retained by the state to give advice on the proposed uses of the ARPA funds. Ardentown will pay a very small percentage of the ARPA money for this service. The transition to Trash Tech seems to be going reasonably well, with no issues reported recently.

**TRUSTEES-** Harry Themal reporting- As a follow up from the September town meeting, the proposed ordinance on the illegal use of fireworks in Ardentown will be presented under New Business this evening.

Lisa Wilson Riblett reporting- We continue to receive calls from leaseholder, requesting permission to remove trees from their leaseholds. We encourage these call and thank you for following the Ardentown tree removal guideline.

**Joan Fitzgerald** reporting- There have not been any new leasehold transfers since our last meeting in September.

**ELECTIONS:** Community Planning- 3 positions, Holly Custer, Oliver Gutsche, Joan Phibbs up for reelection- Oliver Gutsche is stepping down. Volunteers from the floor, Melissa Parsonson, Edmond Bischoff, Peter Slattery. Moved that they be elected, unanimously elected.

Town Secretary- Terri Hansen, re-elected unanimously

Treasurer- Holly Custer is stepping down. Peter Slattery was nominated from the floor and was elected unanimously

**OLD BUSINESS:** Community sign- Waiting for a bid through the Georgetown shop. Lettering will be Old English. Sign funded by the Cohens. Facility is currently on lockdown due to Covid, hoping that it will be in place by January.

**NEW BUSINESS: Shelley Robyn-** Issue of chemical deicing that is used by the Town contractor. It was mentioned that there was a product that was more environmentally friendly, should we make this shift? Elaine Scmerling has heard that Arden is going to be using a more environmentally friendly product, they also use the Burslems for snow removal. Discussion followed of the expense of changing products. Steve Cohen feels that this should be a subject for the Public Works Committee to examine and decide. Straw poll indicates that the Meeting preferred to use more environmentally friendly products.

Fireworks Ordinance- Harry Themal proposed the following ordinance.

***Discharging explosives in the Village of Ardentown  
Ordinance 01-2022***

*Section 1: Although the State of Delaware already prohibits the sale or possession of fireworks in Delaware Code Title 16, Chapter 65, unless a pyrotechnician is in charge, violations occur in Ardentown that require specific attention.*

*Section 2: The additional danger from such illegal activity results from the fact that the Village greens and streets adjoin and are surrounded by homes, trees, grasses and other flammable material that are combustible, particularly in periods of drought...*

*Section 3. Therefore it is ordained that no person shall discharge any appliance, whether projecting or exploding, including fireworks, rifles or guns in any portion of the Village of Ardentown. This ban is parallel to protection already offered in Arden.*

*Section 4. These provisions do not apply to any peace officers in the regular discharge of their duties. Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed as restricting the legal possession of arms under the Second Amendment of the U. S. Constitution.*

*Section 5. Violators of this ordinance shall be fined a minimum of \$25 and a maximum of \$100 for each incident.*

*First of two readings at the Town Meeting of Ardentown on Nov. 8, 2021, and final reading and adoption on Feb. 14, 2022.*

There was discussion around language of the ordinance, the amount of fines, and whether we should ban fireworks entirely. Steve Cohen feels that people engaging in illegal behavior will engage in that behavior until someone stops them. He agrees with the ordinance. Andrew Hansen stated that one of the reasons that we are having trouble getting any police presence or assistance with fireworks is because we do not have an ordinance. Alison Wakelin said that was not the case, police just are too busy. Joan Fitzgerald mentioned that Larry Lambert said he would help us get

police help. Joe Grippe- What is the benefit of having the ordinance? Harry Themal- It would help us with our insurance liability and that having a specific ordinance will help with police enforcement. Terry Harvey- we will have to hire off duty police. He also told the Meeting that one year there were cars from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Joan Fitzgerald, one of the reasons why we are having trouble is because Arden shut it down on the Green and the activity migrated to Ardentown. We need to get this ordinance passed as soon as possible so that we can get ahead of this quickly. Terri Hansen has volunteered to reach out to State and County police and the local fire companies about enforcement. Joan Fitzgerald thinks we should increase the fines. Maura Lynch likes the approach of getting the word out, hiring law enforcement, putting up caution tape with signs on days of violation before voting on an ordinance. Harry Themal will reach out to NCC. Vote was taken on the ordinance as written, passed with a majority of the votes.

Good and welfare- Sandy McCormick has passed away, condolences to John and the family. Thoughts to Aaron Hamburger on the loss of Sally. Chelsea Buscaglia is having a girl!

Meeting was adjourned at 8:58

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Hansen, Secretary of Ardentown