

Village of Ardentown
Ardentown, DE 19810

Established 1922
Incorporated 1975

The regular meeting of the Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:34 pm on Monday, February 13, 2023, Joseph Grippe, Town Chair, presiding. A quorum was present.

In Attendance

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Annie Gutsche | 12. Uttam Shanbhag | 23. Bethany Rees |
| 2. Lisa Wilson Riblett | 13. Sofia Hogan | 24. Patrick Scolnick |
| 3. Joseph Grippe | 14. Cort Hayflinger | 25. Janet Cosgove |
| 4. Peter Slattery | 15. Sharon Kleban | 26. Janna Scheflen |
| 5. Melissa Parsonson | 16. Shari Phalan | 27. Mhairi Craig |
| 6. Jill Emery | 17. Lori Fleuter | 28. Dela Muhlenberg |
| 7. Daniel Emery | 18. Marian Pione | 29. Oliver Gutsche |
| 8. Stuart Craig | 19. Micheal Pione | 30. Maura Lynch |
| 9. Alison Wakelin | 20. Maureen Gordon | 31. Colleen Deemer |
| 10. Suzanne Cherrin | 21. Shelley Robyn | |
| 11. Elaine Schmerling | 22. Joseph Painter | |

Attendance via Zoom

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Pat Lane | 4. Harry Themal | 7. Betty Ann Themal |
| 2. Terri Hansen | 5. Betty Ann Themal | 8. Anne Lutz |
| 3. Drew Hansen | 6. Barbara Mondelewski | |

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes for the November 14th meeting are approved as written.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Peter Slattery reporting - Budget was as expected. \$23,000 in saving's account. \$10,000 in checking account.

TRUSTEES REPORT: Lisa Wilson Riblett reporting - Ivy Gables was re-assessed at ten times higher. George Loudon is appealing this rate. Ivy Gables has not paid the balance of the amount due. An action has been filed. Per the attorney, the specific numbers are kept private. Janet Cosgrove asked - Is this assessment or re-assessment? Annie Gutsche - It is an assessment of the improved property. It is not part of the NCC re-assessment. Stuart Craig - Land rent increased from 0.182 to 0.187. Commercial land rent increased from 0.217 to 0.223. Known drivers are inflation. Trash fees increase 3% annually. Trees and greens increase about 3%. Unknown drivers were county property reassessments and future school tax increases. Candlelight expenses - positive cash flow \$9,000 over the past 11 years. \$40,000 cost to fix the plumbing issue. Annie Gutsche reporting - Town budget - Candlelight doesn't appear because they are a renter and the trustees are the land owner. When Cindy Cohen returns, we will put the trustees budget on the website - 1 piece is the land rent & then pay over to trash, NCC school taxes, trees, etc. The second half is from the Candlelight Theatre and money to maintain the Candlelight Theatre. Stuart Craig - the budgets are on the government website. Stuart Craig reporting - No changes to the factors affecting the charging of leaseholds. Joe - The trustee budget is not voted on.

REGISTRATION COMMITTEE: Cindy Cohen reporting: Maile Gutsche attended the meeting as part of her internship requirements. It was a pleasure to have her with us. Welcome to James Kloss & Esther Golton, who moved into 1603 Millers Road (formerly the Contractor, then Kabbeko home) in late November 2022. Welcome to Don Swanson, who moved into 2308 Sconset Road (formerly Ruth Crovetto's home) in late November 2022. Welcome packets are being distributed to them by our committee.

MEMORIAL GARDEN: Betty Ann Themal reporting: Memorial garden has nothing new to report. Three members, Cheryl Regan, Edmund Bischoff, Barbara Modzewlewski, are up for re-election.

Community PLANNING COMMITTEE: Joseph Grippe reporting: Nothing new to report. The plan is for Joseph Grippe to resign and to nominate someone in the interim. The rest of Joseph Grippe's term is a full 2 years.

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE: Janet Cosgrove reporting: There is an assessment committee in our deed of trust. The assessment committee has been in place for three years. The trustees are supposed to consult with the assessment committee. The assessment committee needs to give a report every quarter as written in the by-laws. With the increase in land rent, the assessment committee should have met with the trustee and been consulted. Janet Cosgrove is calling a meeting with the trustees in the next couple of weeks. Joseph Grippe stated - the assessment committee is the liaison between the trust and the town.

Audit COMMITTEE: Jill Emery reporting: Jill Emery will be reviewing the books.

BUDGET COMMITTEE: Alison Wakelin reporting - Budget Chairs, please keep a list of what you spend. Motion to approve the budget and a second is moved. Melissa Parsonson presented - 1st amendment - ACSM proposed \$850-\$1000. Peter Slattery - President of ACSM - the individual towns make up the amounts to give. Motion to increase \$850 - 1500. Ardentown has not increased its donation in 7 years. Janet Cosgrove - ACSM, Inc - Five person board that handles the buildings and the rentals. The ACSM, Inc. paid for the renovations to the museum. Drew Hansen - where are the increases in the funds to the ACSM coming from (\$150-650)? Stuart Craig - has to come from somewhere. Jill Emery - snow removal? Annie Gutsche - Candlelight Theatre increases are written into the lease. Sometimes land rent doesn't increase much because of the offset from the Candlelight Theatre income. Peter Slattery - what makes up our donation budget? Some guidelines for donation? Alison Wakelin - it is not part of the budget total. It's tradition. Stuart Craig - in the future it is good to have a guideline to go by for donations. Joe - Percentage increase !5%. Move to vote. All in favor to increase from \$850 - 1500 - 4 opposed & everyone else is for or are abstaining. Motion approved. Janet Cosgrove - Amendment to increase budget to \$300 for the Assessment Committee. Motion to discuss approved. Stuart - When are we obligated to use physical mail over email? Joe Grippe - town charter requires that the town meeting minutes and invitations be mailed to leaseholders, residents, and trustees. Janna Scheflen suggested a postcard with QR code. Joe Grippe - mail has traceability. Stuart Grippe - there are records for email. Proposal to vote moved and seconded. All those opposed 1. Motion passed and budget amended to include \$300 to the budget for the Assessment Committee. No one opposed passing the budget. Budget approved.

PUBLIC WORKS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE: Oliver Gutsche reporting: One speed bump removed as approved in the November minutes. One speed bump was reduced. Swale placed on Loreley. Contacted Ed Smith about some further improvements with the Swales. Hal Goodwin painted the speed bumps. The speed bumps may need to be repainted due to vehicles driving over them before they were dry. Hal Goodwin also cleaned out stormwater drains. Melissa Parsonson proposed fixing the corner of the road on East Mall. Elaine Schmerling reporting: Stormwater Committee met on 2/11/23 – Work on Loreley as per Oliver's report. Nick Liberman and Edmond Bischoff offered to take the excess rocks away and will put some to the left of Appletree path to the Glen in front of the concrete gully to slow the flow into the Glen. Nick Liberman and Edmond Bischoff will store the other rocks for other town needs. The plan is for every winter clearing the storm drains. We would like to map out the drains and encourage residents to keep drains cleared near their houses. Looking forward to Hal Goodwin's proposal also to use some of the rocks to slow the flow to the drain in front of Peter Slattery's house. We are considering a small rain garden on Henry George Green as Doub Liberman/Larson Eng. suggested. He noted that storm drain below on Millers is undersized – suggested we consider upsizing the inlets & pipes at a future time. Committee approved trying a low-growing aster "Snow flurry" to plant at the tops/sides of the rain gardens, to fill in thickly and try to prevent weeds going from there into the rain gardens. Elaine Schmerling will organize a spring planting if I can source the plants - contact me if interested. Paths – Exploring possible grant-funding w/trustees & DNREC for steps into The Glen, wet area below & rotting bridge to Candlelight Theatre. ARPA funds could also help cover costs. Ron's Tree Service has been asked to cut down the dead Tree of Heaven (TOH) trees behind Hope Zucker and Paul Romaganos leaseholds sometime in February or March.

Elaine Schmerling has gone out twice with two Redtail workers to save over 100 trees in Sunnyside (my yearly winter goal), and cut ivy off some trees in the Glen too. Have also worked with Redtail and volunteers to tackle 5-leaf akebia invasive vine behind Hugh & Joan's house and behind Edmond's going far into the woods; we had a good group in January one day with Edmond, Nick and Lee and a few Ardenites behind his & Dela's old house. EarthDay Cleanup & Wildflower walk this year is on Earth Day Sat. 4-22! There will be a celebration and coffee snacks 9 am at the Buzz. Meet at the Candlelight Parking lot at 10 am and we can pull garlic mustard but also take a look at early spring wildflowers in the Ardentown woods (and we can do a May one too if folks are interested). Note most bulbs flowering now in winter are not native-residents wanting winter aconite, snowdrops or crocuses could go out with me and dig some out, and/or could harvest aconite seeds to prevent their further spread

PLAYGROUND - Cort Hayflinger reporting: Cleaned up vandalism on the playground.

BUZZ WARE VILLAGE CENTER: Shari Phalan reporting: Rentals are increasing to 19. Cabinetry is being upgraded. The Coffee House in November had a total of donations of \$217, and in December it was \$141. The Art Loop is being featured in the "Out and About" magazine. November was Nina Silverman-Weeks. December was the Arden Artist Collective. There was nothing in January. In February, the artist was Jennifer Small. March and April are open. Community Event Requests are Jill Althouse-Wood sponsoring the Arden Artist Collaborative, and a Martial Art presentation possibly leading to weekly classes. The Holiday Art Show went very well. Attendance was 105 people. Art profits were \$1085, commissions \$108.50, which brings the total to \$564.50. This will be used to help pay for refreshments and operations all year. The 100th anniversary of the Arden School is in 2024.

Archives - Melissa Parsonson reporting: ACSM is now fully re-opened. The great 'Ardentown' exhibit will be up until October. The museum has been involved in various Arden events, which included the Ardentown Centennial, the Winter Holiday Shoppe in the Gild Hall, and the Arden Fair. March 26th - the Museum is starting "Afternoon with the Artist" an art exhibit with discussion. This new event will start with two a year and the next one in November. The art can be fine art, music, poetry or book authors. The Museum had to take out a new mortgage after being mortgage free for only a year. The cause was the broken sprinkler damage and subsequent additional building repair issues. The ACSM now has Emergency Bins with materials to be used in the event of another sprinkler, weather or any other disaster. There are many repairs and upgrades still needed for the old building and the artifacts within. Like the Gild Hall, the stonework on the outside will need repointing soon. The roof will need some repairs. We also will need to replace the HVAC system (museum climate control) soon. Some Archives Committee members are attending the Small Museum Association Annual 3 day Conference next week in Wilmington, DE.

TOWN CHAIR: Joseph Grippe - if you require any salt or sand talk to Joseph Grippe or Oliver Gutsche. Notification of road work was put in the mailboxes of upcoming work. In the future, people will be notified of any roadwork to the people affected. Legality of hybrid meetings need to be addressed if the state of emergency is removed. This is similar to the email questions when it comes to mailings. Melissa Parsonson and Joseph Grippe have signed the updated by-laws. The order of succession is to Melissa as the secretary for the town chair position if Joseph Grippe is no longer a resident.

OLD BUSINESS: No update with exercise stations

NEW BUSINESS: Alison Wakelin proposed to help people in our community by buying a leasehold and building small houses. Proposes this to be done by the Community Planning Committee. Alison Wakelin, Shari Phalan and Sophia Hotan would like to be included.

ELECTIONS:

Archives- Maura Lynch self nominated and motion approved

Memorial Garden- Cheryl Regan, Edmund Bischoff, and Barbara Modzewlewski re-nominated and motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm

Respectfully Submitted By

Melissa Parsonson, Secretary of Ardentown