

The regular meeting of the **November 2023** Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:35 pm on **Monday, November 13, 2023**, in person in the Candlelight Theater and online via Zoom. Melissa Parsonson, Town Chair, presiding. A quorum was present.

In Attendance:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Melissa Parsonson | 9. Stuart Craig | 17. Joan Fitzgerald (leaseholder) | 25. Sandie Cooper |
| 2. Cindy Cohen | 10. Peter Slattery | 18. Oliver Gutsche | 26. Howard Cooper |
| 3. Sherri Lindner | 11. Mhairi Craig | 19. Suzanne Cherrin | 27. Beverly Bizup Hawkins |
| 4. Dave Johnson | 12. Marian Pione | 20. Lindsey Sherwood | 28. Paul Romagano |
| 5. Annie Gutsche | 13. Michael Pione | 21. Elaine Schmerling | 29. John McCormick |
| 6. Bethany Rees | 14. Steven Cohen | 22. Alison Wakelin | 30. Lori Fleuter |
| 7. Maureen Gordon | 15. Barbara Mondzelewski | 23. Sharon Kleban | 31. Colleen Deemer |
| 8. Anne P. Lutz | 16. Betty Ann Thernal | 24. Susan Kaye | 32. Gerald Marcus |

Attendance via Zoom:

1. Harry Thernal

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes for the September 2023 meeting are approved as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Peter Slattery reported the following current balances as of November 13, 2023.

Operating Accounts:

Checking: Starting Balance	\$12,725.64	Savings: Starting Balance	\$23,286.37
Income	\$ 0.00	Income	\$ 5.84
Expenses	<u>\$10,490.28</u>	Expenses	<u>\$ 0.00</u>
Current Balance	\$ 2,235.36	Current Balance	\$23,292.21

Total Checking & Savings: \$25,527.57

Expenses: \$ 10,490.28	Income: \$ 0.00
Trash Tech	6,066.08
Restoration	2,219.00
Admin/Salaries	1,405.20
Snow Contract	800.00

Municipal Street Aid: \$3,049.40
ARPA Funds: \$75,257.92
Arden Bldg & Loan Balance: \$17,279.82

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Archives (Arden Craft Shop Museum): Bev Bizup Hawkins reported Beverly and Lindsey Hawkins cleaned, prepped, made repairs and painted the Bernie Schwab Room as the museum anticipates a Capital Campaign in 2024. This past Sunday the Museum hosted another Afternoon with The Artist (AWTA) featuring Artist Sadie Somerville. The museum had a wonderful crowd. Next artists: Clare Consavage in February, Ellen Dolmestch in May, then August is Micah Altman. Another new exhibit, Women Artists of the Ardens has now been installed as well. Stop in and visit the Museum.

Assessment: Janet Cosgrove was not in attendance, but reported she is seeking one or 2 Ardentown residents to join the Assessment Committee. The best way to understand the current focus of the committee is to read the Nov 2020 committee report which is posted along with the Nov 2020 Town Meeting Minutes on the Ardentown website. If you have questions about how to access the website or find the report, or even better, if you read the report and want to discuss it, please call or email Janet.

Audit: Jill Emery was not in attendance, but reported no updates from the Audit Committee.

Budget: Alison Wakelin presented the 2024 draft budget (see attached), still awaiting some figures. Discussed income (Verizon, AB&L Interest, Trustees contribution, no grants/donations yet), expenses (salary for secretary, treasurer, website maintenance, admin costs, W2s and payroll taxes). 2024 figures are similar to 2023. Committees tend to not spend their budgets except Public Works. Donations go to League of Local Government, ACRA, Arden Library, Arden Page, Arden Craft Shop Museum, and Buzz Ware Village Center. We have Municipal Street Aid (MSA) and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) monies, which have to be allocated by end of 2024. Strongly suggest we bring as many proposals to town meetings next year– by September if not before. Expenses in the 2024 budget will exceed income, as per usual, but as the committees usually underspend it tends to be OK.

- Suzanne Cherrin asked – If ARPA money needs to be spent by next year, shouldn't we have a committee to look at how to spend that money? Answer: The Community Planning Committee has that responsibility, reach out to them with ideas.
- Marian Pione asked – What is ARPA? Answer: Government monies that can be used for Covid relief, stormwater, community uses – hopefully roads, with new Nov 30th ruling coming out. Could the Disaster Preparedness planning group in Arden (CERT) use that money? Answer: Yes, the Trustees are considering it for the CERT Ardentown generator. Would like to have better announcements of the upcoming CERT meetings to the town residents.

Buzz Ware Village Center: Shari Phalan was not in attendance, no report.

Community Planning: Peter Slattery reported the committee met to compile and discuss topics directed to the committee by town meetings and community engagement. We are building recommendations for the Speed Limit discussion for the next town meeting. The current list of topics are: Village speed limit, Seeking an exemption for small livestock (chickens, goats, etc.), Community Recognition Awards, Proposal for use of ARPA funds, Proposal for a General Store, Restorative Justice, Agriculture initiative, Affordable Housing Initiative, and Yard Waste.

Memorial Garden: Betty Ann Themal reported the committee has engaged Rachel Kantner, who lives across from the Ardentown Memorial Garden, to do some gardening work for us. She has already begun removing ivy, honeysuckle and other vines from the shrubs along the left fence.

Playground: Cortney Hayflinger was not in attendance so not report, but Melissa did report she informed him about graffiti on the swings, which will be taken care of.

Public Works & Safety:

- **Roads:** Oliver Gutsche reported on a proposal to rebuild the swale on Sconset Road using ARPA funds. Quote from Ed Smith Paving for \$13,000, includes removing concrete and replacing and repairing swale. The swale affects 5 properties, will help with water drainage in front of their properties.

Motion: TO APPROVE USING \$13,000 FROM ARPA FUNDS TO REPAIR/REBUILD SWALE ON SCONSET ROAD (SEVERAL SECTIONS). Motion seconded.

Vote: Unanimous. **Motion passes.**

- Oliver indicated they also need to support the back of the new swale sections on properties. Will discuss with the individual leaseholders.

- Other swales around town are filled with debris, overgrown, or grates are clogged. Looking into solutions: such as having Hal Goodwin clean the clogged swales 4x/year, having overgrown ones be tended to, hopefully from the leaseholders. Or could have special swale cleaning days.
- Public Works met with NCC Conservation District Rep looking at stormwater management between Sconset & Brae. There is a program that helps communities with funding for stormwater management and contract the work to be done. In the neighborhood of \$500k-2M projects. ARPA funds may be used for this.
- Pothole map ongoing – Anne Lutz reported there are potholes on Brae that need looking into.
- **Stormwater Committee:** Elaine Schmerling reported the swale from Woodland to the lower Rain Garden, as voted on at the last town meeting, has been dug. Waiting for rain to see how it works. Bethany Rees and Elaine planted, with permission, pussy willows, red-twig dogwoods, a silver maple, and elderberries, hoping to absorb more runoff. Elaine has more trees, happy to share with others.
- **Restoration Work:** Elaine reported she pulled more Mile-a-minute and stiltgrass, under the powerlines. Thanks to Liz Ryan who helped walk the lower Sunnyside area, pulling invasives off the main path areas. Elaine plans to go out with Redtail to cut ivy from trees in Sunnyside in the new few weeks. Let her know if interested in helping on a weekday.
- **Power Line Trees:** Elaine reported trees (only) were treated under the main power lines, as discussed at the last town meeting, to prevent everything being sprayed by the power company. Some small trees were dug out for plantings elsewhere. If others want to help let her know. Pulling canopy trees and invasives, as they come into this area, will avoid future treatments, save the native plants that support wildlife, and supply our own source of trees for planting.
- **Phragmites:** Elaine reported the 2nd Phragmites spray was done, as discussed at the last town meeting. Planning to chop up the top layer of the root system this winter, to expedite decomposition to reduce fire hazard and allow for quicker plant regrowth. Saving native seeds to toss there in spring, including jewelweed, Joe Pyeweed, swamp goldenrods & blue stem asters.
- **Across Marsh Road:** Elaine reported 2 paw paws and seeds of aggressive natives were planted behind Janna Scheflen's, and pulled invasives. Expanding the area cleared of multiflora rose and wisteria, and have met 2 adjacent neighbors willing to join their efforts with ours. The hillside between the path & 2232 Marsh Road is filling in – 4 of the 5 red cedars we had planted have taken (and we put more cut rose stems to keep protected). I also planted 2 American hollies from Pat Lane.

Registration: Anne Lutz reported the Registration Committee met to plan tonight's pre-meeting Wine & Cheese Reception. It is held annually before the November town meeting. We hope you enjoyed it.

- **Recent Resident Changes:**

- Welcome to **Geena George**, who moved into 2322 Brae Road (Pat Hannigan's) in September.

TRUSTEES REPORT:

- Annie Tang Gutsche reported they are working on renewing the Candlelight's lease, which ends in December this year. In addition, the steps to the left of the Candlelight are in poor condition and we will be getting them repaired.
- Stuart A.S. Craig (reporting for Lisa Wilson Riblett): In October, an area near the bottom of the Candlelight parking lot, next to fence, was cleared of invasives and 16 new native holly trees planted. Additionally, there has been ongoing work to remove dying and/or dangerous trees around town. The Petit and Henry George Greens have been aerated (a multi-year process) which should improve both soil quality and

drainage. Just learned there is a transfer of ownership of Ivy Gables coming, beginning of December, so Trustees will be working on new lease with new owners.

- Peter Slattery asked: How do we decide risky trees? Answer: Dead branches, and many of the large old trees are aging out of their 100-year lifespan. For those removed we try to replant as quickly as possible. The one by Candlelight that recently came down had a branch fall on a guest's car, another big branch damaged the new roof at Candlelight. Elaine reported that Ash trees are dying quickly, which become dangerous hazards. Seems like lots of trees came down recently, but we were waiting for resolution to the Ivy Gables situation before expending monies from the tree budget. Bethany Rees asked: Could we get grants (e.g., ARPA) to replace downed trees with more mature trees? Susan Kaye asked: Why is Ivy Gables transferring ownership? Answer: Not sure, just learned of this change from the current owners. Understand it may be Asbury Communities coming in, a not-for-profit group that has other properties. Should know more in a month. Anne Lutz indicated trees on Brae in front of Geena George property – one is dead and worry it will come down. Elaine thinks it is an Ash tree, and will probably need to come down. Melissa asked: As we lose canopy/larger trees, do we look at what gets replanted to keep that canopy going? Answer: Will look into that.

TOWN CHAIR REPORT:

- Melissa Parsonson reported **CERT Training** dates – if interested contact Melissa.
- Town is trying to get **more involvement on committees**, including set times for committees to meet, to help engage more neighbors into getting involved. Community Planning is also looking into meeting spaces, since we do not have a town building for meetings.
- Propose starting future meetings with **Good and Welfare** reports, like Arden. If you have items, get them to Melissa prior to a town meeting.
- Kick off of **Monitoring Committee for the WILMAPCO Transportation Plan** - initial meeting tomorrow night, Nov 14th from 1:30-3 pm on Zoom. Ardentown representatives on the Committee are Lisa Wilson Riblett (for Trustees), Melissa Parsonson (as Town Chair), Elaine Schmerling & Bethany Rees. Meetings are open to the public, if you would like to attend contact Melissa for the Zoom link.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **WILMAPCO Transportation Plan** – Susan Kaye reported not much new since last meeting. Speed survey expired on October 7th – need new one. Kyle Evans Gay indicated there may be funds available – Susan is following up. She contacted DelDOT, waiting to hear back. One issue that has come up: the DE State Police will need to recalibrate the speed camera every day and are pushing back on that. One option being discussed is certifying some people in the Ardens to recalibrate them. Melissa indicated if we are interested in having speed camera, would have to vote for that at a town meeting. There is a charge to have the camera, and if the tickets don't bring in enough revenue, we would not recoup that money.
Motion: TO APPLY FOR SPEED CAMERA ON ARDENTOWN LAND, IN CONCERT WITH ARDEN AND ARDENCROFT. Motion seconded.
Vote: Unanimous. **Motion passes.**
- **Trash in Playground:** Susan Kaye spoke with Kelly at Ivy Gables and asked their employees to not discard masks and other trash in the playground area.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Phil Fisher Artwork: Melissa has optioned 2 pieces from the family – the** Question mark sculpture and the bell cluster – thoughts on putting up on public land? Some are in support of it, others questioning use of

public land, liability, maintenance, etc. Melissa to bring pictures of the artwork and costs to next town meeting.

ELECTIONS:

- **Community Planning Committee:** PETER SLATTERY, MELISSA PARSONSON & EDMOND BISCHOFF re-elected tonight (2 year terms: Nov 2023 to Nov 2025). (*Other members on the committee are Alison Wakelin & Dela Muhlenberg, whose terms expire Nov 2024.*)
- **Town Treasurer:** PETER SLATTERY re-elected tonight for another year (1 year term: Nov 2023 to Nov 2024).
- **Town Secretary:** No one elected tonight. (2 year term: Nov 2023 to Nov 2025). Position remains open.

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Cohen, filling in as Secretary of Ardentown

Attachment: Draft 2024 Town Budget

Ardentown Budget 2024: proposed

INCOME	2023 Proposed	2023 To Date	2024 Proposed
Comcast/Verizon Cable	3,100	1920.11	3100
Interest AB&L	500	304.71	500
Transfer from Trust	13,500	13,500	13500
Income from Grants	0	0	0
Donations	0	3200	0
TOTAL INCOME	17100	18924.82	17100

COSTS	2023 Proposed	2023 Actual	2024 Proposed
Town Secretary Salary	1,000	635.25	1000
Website Maintenance Salary	600	381.15	600
Town Treasurer Salary	400	0	400
Administrative Costs	1,200	799.63	1200
W-2 Tax Preparation	50	0	50
Payroll Taxes	255	183.6	255
Subtotal Administrative Costs	3505	1999.63	3505
Playground Committee	250	0	250
Registration Committee	100		100
Memorial Garden	300	125	300
Assessment Committee	100		100
Community Planning Committee			
Internship	200	100	200
Committee Expenses	300		300
Public Works Committee		975	
Paths and Natural Areas	5600	8768.25	5600
Signs	500		500
Snow Removal	5500	800	5500
Subtotal Committees and Works	12850	10768.25	12850
DLLG Annual fee	525	525	525
ACRA	1,000		1000
Arden Library	400		400
Arden Page	600		600
Arden Craft Shop and Museum	850		850
Buzz Ware Village Center	1400		1400
Subtotal Memberships & Donations	4775	525	4775
TOTAL EXPENSES	21130	13292.88	21130

	2022 Received	2023 Received	2023 Remaining
Municipal Street Aid	11,375.66	11,223	3,084
American Rescue Plan Act	0	0	76,782.96
Trashtech			

ACCOUNTS	Start 2023	as of 11/13/2023	Start 2024
AB&L Savings		17269.82	
Village Account		23292.21	
MSA and ARPA			
MSA		3084	
ARPA		75257.92	