

The regular meeting of the **September 2023** Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:38 pm on **Monday, September 11, 2023**, in person in the Candlelight Theater and online via Zoom. Melissa Parsonson, Acting Town Chair, presiding. A quorum was present.

In Attendance:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Melissa Parsonson | 13. Mike Magee | 29. Susan Kaye | 43. Sherri Lindner |
| 2. Cindy Cohen | 14. Joan Fitzgerald (visitor) | 30. Shelley Robyn | 44. Dave Johnson |
| 3. Anne Lutz | 15. Susan Brandner | 31. Lindsey Slater | 45. Clare Consavage |
| 4. Annie Gutsche | 16. John Brandner | 32. Lee Painter | 46. Cort Hayflinger |
| 5. Betty Ann Thernal | 17. John Gordon | 33. Beverly Bizup Hawkins | 47. Elaine Schmerling |
| 6. Suzanne Cherrin | 18. Beverley Fleming | 34. Joseph Painter | 48. Jeffrey Politis (visitor) |
| 7. Steve Cohen | 19. Terri Hansen | 35. Lisa Wilson Riblett | 49. Janet Cosgrove |
| 8. Ben Gruswitz (visitor) | 20. Andrew Hansen | 36. Allen Riblett | 50. Janna Schefflen |
| 9. Bill Swiatek, WILMAPCO (visitor) | 21. Jill Emery | 37. Maureen Gordon | 51. Stefanie Lombardo |
| 10. Katie Bryan | 22. Dorothy Verne | 38. Conner McGivney | 52. Rep. Larry Lambert (visitor) |
| 11. Dela Muhlenberg | 23. Peter Slattery | 39. Marian Pione | 53. Sen. Kyle Gay (visitor) |
| 12. Pat Lane | 24. Oliver Gutsche | 40. Michael Pione | 54. Alison Wakelin |
| | 25. Cheryl Regan | 41. Esther Golton | |
| | 26. Bethany Rees | 42. Paul Romagano | |
| | 27. Art Cohen | | |
| | 28. Emily Kaye | | |

Attendance via Zoom:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Shari Phalan | 2. Harry Thernal | 3. Uttam Shanbhag | 4. Micah Altman |
| 5. Chris Monson | | | |

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

TREASURER'S REPORT: Peter Slattery reported the following current balances as of Sept 11, 2023.

Operating Accounts:

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Checking: Starting Balance | \$28,303.54 | Savings: Starting Balance | \$23,274.60 |
| Income | \$ 1,449.90 | Income | \$ 5.84 |
| Expenses | <u>\$16,805.80</u> | Expenses | <u>\$ 0.00</u> |
| Current Balance | \$12,947.64 | Current Balance | \$23,280.44 |

Total Checking & Savings: \$36,288.08

Expenses: \$ 16,805.80

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Trash Tech | 12,132.16 |
| Restoration | 3,402.00 |
| Admin | 521.64 |
| Internship | 100.00 |
| DE League of Local Gov | 525.00 |
| Memorial Gardens | 125.00 |

Income: \$ 1,449.90

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Verizon | 388.32 |
| Comcast | 786.58 |
| Credit Memo | 75.00 |
| Donation Mem. Garden | 200.00 |

Municipal Street Aid: \$3,049.40

ARPA Funds: \$76,782.92

Arden Bldg & Loan Balance: \$17,269.82

OLD BUSINESS:

- **WILMAPCO Ardens Transportation Plan** – <http://www.wilmapco.org/ardens>
 - History: At a special meeting of the 3 Ardens held on June 26th to review the WILMAPCO Ardens Transportation Plan, Ardentown took a poll of their residents, but not an official vote. Representatives Ben Gruswitz of Ardencroft and Bill Swiatek from WILMAPCO are here tonight to give another overview of the plans, followed by a vote of Ardentown residents about the proposed plan.
 - Ben Gruswitz discussed the history getting us to this point: in 2021 an inter-Ardens Transportation Working Group commenced, with representatives from all 3 villages, which discussed state roads and speeds. Found that WILMAPCO had a project coming up, who we sought as a partner. Ben, as a resident (Ardentown then Ardencroft) and professional transportation planner in Philadelphia, has led this effort. Village feedback offered since 2021 led to the current plan presented again tonight.
 - Bill Swiatek from WILMAPCO spoke on the Implementation Plan and public process, including a Wikimapping exercise done by over 100 residents and youth. Speeding is the biggest issue on Harvey, Veale and Marsh Roads, looked at real world data which confirmed there is a speeding issue, especially along Harvey Road. Sought input on what residents would like to see along Harvey Road. Looked at bus line that comes through the Ardens, bike and pedestrian networks, heard we did not want sidewalks along Harvey Road. Potential concepts to calm traffic include Marsh/Harvey – gateway vs roundabout, medians, etc. Majority support: Intersection treatment at Harvey & Marsh, bioswales at “C”, maintaining and improving signal at Orleans, trail alignments, more speed signs, gateway installation at entrance to the Ardens near Montessori, bioswales, bumpouts, etc. On the Veale Road corridor: Speeding reductions, installing medians & pedestrian crossings. Cost: \$9M-16M from Federal grants and state matching money. Claymont Fire Company engaged with plan, agreed plan will not have things that slow emergency vehicles, want coordination with traffic lights and rescue vehicles.
 - Next steps: Want to establish monitoring committee with all 3 villages represented.
 - Questions:
 - Will Station Path be paved? (*No paved paths in Ardentown.*)
 - Implementation of the concepts requires approval by town mtgs, right? If any concepts in detailed designs a town mtg decision can stop it, correct? (*Yes.*)
 - Concern about living on Harvey Road and that nothing on plan will slow traffic. Speed camera would be great. Bioswale in front of my home will be a detriment. (*Will not place bioswales where they will be detrimental to residents.*) Concern plan will change character of community to be generic and not as special a place to live. Not in favor of this plan as proposed.
 - Are speed cameras included in transportation plan? (*Yes, pg 64 of project plan*). Concern it was not legal at the time of the plan. (*In the law a municipality has to request it – WILMAPCO did so, but it is up to the municipalities to advance it.*) Rep. Kyle Gay spoke on the cameras – intended to be more severe than speed signs – intended to be temporary and moved around. DeIDOT still working on them and she is working on getting the Ardens first on the list.
 - **Motion: MOVE THAT THE CURRENT PROPOSAL, IDENTIFIED AS THE CONNECTING WITH THE ARDENS TRANSPORTATION PLAN, BE APPROVED IN CONCEPT, UNDERSTANDING THAT FURTHER APPROVAL OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS WILL UNDERGO EVALUATION AND APPROVAL BY TOWN MEETING, CONSIDERING FUNDING, RESPECT FOR THE LEASEHOLD AGREEMENTS AND LEASEHOLDERS, COMPATIBILITY WITH THE HISTORIC NATURE AND DESIGNATION OF THE VILLAGE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IMPORTANT TO THE TOWN.** Motion seconded.
Vote: 34 in favor, 7 not in favor. **Motion passes.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Archives (Arden Craft Shop Museum): Bev Bizup Hawkins reported the **Ardentown Centennial** exhibition is closing Sept 24th. The next exhibition, to open Oct 15th, and will be **honoring women artists of the Ardens** with Connee McKinney at center stage. It will be a retrospective of those women artists who came before and inspired Connee, followed by all of the women artists who found guidance in her footsteps as she shepherded them along in like tradition. The Museum, in support of the Arden Artisan's Collective, just wrapped up the 2nd "Afternoon with the Artist" mini-event: with a focus on Arden poets, past and present. It was a standing room only event. These events are short-duration art shows open to all forms of art from artists who are residents of the Ardens. Any sales made are the profit of the artist alone. The next ones are scheduled for November 12th (Sadie Somerville, artist), February 11th and May (during ACRA Open House tour). If interested in applying, application forms can be found on the Arden Artisans Collective Website or can be submitted to the Museum. The Museum benefits with the increased traffic that these mini-exhibitions encourage. The contact person from the Museum is Beverly Bizup Hawkins and she can be best reached by text @ 610-4420-8564 if you are interested in having your work showcased. The Arden Craft Shop Museum is hailed as one of the premier small museums in the greater Delaware Valley, known for very unique and well curated exhibitions. If you are a new resident in Ardentown, the museum welcomes you to visit, Wednesdays 7:30 - 9pm and Sundays 1 - 3.

Assessment: Janet Cosgrove reported no report tonight. If questions about reassessment the County is doing contact Janet for details. Will get a letter that contains new assessment figure, can be challenged.

Audit: Jill Emery reported the audit of our 2022 books has been completed with all items satisfactorily resolved. Terry Harvey has left the committee. Uttam Shanbhag and Maurisa Byer have agreed to join the committee. Jill Emery and Stefanie Lombardo are willing to continue on the committee for the 2024 audit of the 2023 books.

Budget: Alison Wakelin reported no meeting was held, no report.

Buzz Ware Village Center: Shari Phalan reported Three new rentals, Restorative Yoga continuing in Sept, electronics event went well. Ikebana classes Tuesdays in Sept/Oct 2pm-4pm & 6pm-8pm. No work from Susan Oates yet. Maria Gonzalez from Wilmington Drama League is setting up Sept series. Art Loop: 5/5/23 - Alan Burslem's pottery, 6/2/23 - David Burslem's paintings, on hiatus until October. Coffee House: 5/12/23 - The Q factor (donations of \$218), 6/10/23 - Knot Funk Band (\$408), Anniversary Celebration has been postponed due to lack of musicians and volunteers; want to coincide with 100th Arden School celebration next year. ACRA Summer Program: June 24 - July 29 went well, all packed up until next year. Ardens Artisans Collective: A Social Media Workshop for Artisans was held on March 25. Next social will be April 25 7-9 PM. This is a great opportunity to learn about your artist neighbors' background and their recent/current projects. Telebration: November 18 @ 3:00 pm. Cards and Games for Adults will be September 17, 2-5 p.m. Peddlers, Practitioners & Potions at Arden Fair – brought in ~\$5,000 in booth space. Final numbers not in yet; will be for next meeting. Ongoing classes include: Tai Chi - Mon, Weds and Sat; Yoga continues; Monday Night Art Studio; Arden Bookies: first Thursday of the month; Free Little Library: Has gotten good use and feedback has been positive; 100th Year Celebration of the Arden school is coming up in 2024. Discussion continues. New storage shed in place. Still following Governor's protocols for Mask Mandate for public events.

Community Planning: Peter Slattery reported the committee (Peter Slattery, Chair; Dela Muhlenberg; Edmond Bischoff; & Alison Wakelin) met to compile and discuss topics directed to the committee by town meetings and community engagement. Next tasks are to prioritize topics and begin developing reports for the town. The current list of topics, in no particular order are 1) Seeking an exemption for small livestock (chickens, goats, etc.); 2) Agriculture initiative, 3) Village Speed Limit, 4) Affordable Housing Initiative, 5)

Proposal for a General Store, 6) Restorative Justice, 7) Community Recognition Awards, and 8) Yard Waste. Previous topics were: 1) Emergency Planning: Inter-Ardens group established. 2) Harvey Crossing: Wilmapco project in progress. 3) Ardentown Centennial: Wasn't it great!

Memorial Garden: Betty Ann Themal reported miscellaneous straggly bushes and vines were removed from inside our fence at the corner of Swiss and Harvey in response to a call from a neighbor who said the view for cars coming out onto Harvey from Swiss was being obstructed. This area will remain clear.

Playground: Cortney Hayflinger reported no report.

Public Works & Safety:

- **Roads:** Oliver Gutsche reported an opening on the committee, to appoint Bethany Rees. Paved Sconset & Loreley – spent 7K, have 3K left for potholes. Water issues on Sconset, swale broken, met with Ed Smith, who will offer proposal to fix and to remove another cross swale across Sconset. To meet with Kevin Donnelly from NCC on Thursday to walk down right of way of electric lines between Brae & Sconset. Also storm water issue bottom properties that get lots of standing water – want to brainstorm possibilities. To meet on Valley at 1:30 pm on Thursday.
- **Stormwater Committee:** Elaine Schmerling reported the raingardens look great! Have had a few weeding efforts and the plants are filling in. The top one (by Craigs, across from Altmans) collects rainwater well and drains in less than a day. Gerry Altman helped to dig the grass growing in the ditch to it, has seen lots of butterflies there. The lower raingardens are doing well but not collecting adequately. Our contractor, Cory, with Advanced Ecology, discussed digging a swale from Woodland (low point between trees where we have seen water run down) to the raingarden last year. He provided a \$1,450 estimate – SWC approves it, now asking for town approval to spend ARPA money on this effort.

Motion: TO APPROVE SPENDING \$1,450 FROM ARPA MONIES FOR DIGGING A SWALE FROM WOODLAND TO LOWER RAINGARDEN. Motion seconded.

Vote: Unanimous. **Motion passes.**

- **Restoration Work:** Elaine Schmerling reported pulled lots of garlic mustard, there's always more, but mostly off main path areas. Now it's stilt grass (SG) & mile-a-minute (MAM) season. Have been pulling them in Sunnyside (esp off the main N-S path) before seed set. Made progress pulling MAM near power lines, pulled most before it set seed (now boneset and goldenrods are blooming instead¹). Lots more SG in middle areas but path & creek areas look better.
- **Power Line Trees:** Elaine Schmerling reported the power company is behind schedule. Current plan is to just spray under the lines when they get here (from bridge by Phalans to creek) to kill ALL trees growing in the area and not have to come back here for several years. Their spray probably would affect many non-target native plants. We asked and got permission from them and the Trustees to hire Cory (Advanced Ecology) to target the trees only, with basal bark spray. I dug and cut with Redtail Restoration a few times, but we only got a small area on both sides of the bottom path. Cory treated 2/3 of the remaining, including taller trees we had left, 8/9. He will return in a few weeks to finish and look for missed trees. Power company will inspect and allow us, just this year, to see if we can keep these trees off the lines (they are still planning to cut large trees & limbs).
- **Reducing our Wildfire risk:** Given the increasing prevalence of devastating wildfires, as recently occurred in Maui, we reviewed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan for the Ardens drafted by the state Forestry office 10 years ago when they funded some removal of "hazardous fuels": English ivy growing up trees (they noted that the dead trees killed by this ivy can be a hazard fuel too) and bamboo (funded removal of a large patch in Ardencroft). The draft plan identified invasive Common

reed grass and the tall Phragmites as the most hazardous of these fuels, but hadn't been found here. Since then it has grown and spread tremendously under the Power lines. It is a fire hazard, "flash fuel" in drought and/or fire conditions. It burns hot & quickly – but not completely – and can even stay smoldering over winter in their extensive underground roots. Embers can blow out in wind months later and spread to other areas (not to mention PL's right over it!). With the Coordinating Committees approval, Advanced Ecology is treating this hazard 2 times (last Wed, and follow-up in October; prime times to maximize eradication). They will then chop up the top layer of the huge root system in the winter, to expedite decomposition to reduce fire hazard and allow for quicker plant regrowth. We encourage all residents to work on their leaseholds to remove bamboo, and ivy from trees, to further reduce our fire risk. I hope to continue working to cut ivy from 100+ trees in Sunnyside this winter (early Dec on a weekday this year), if anyone wants to join us!

Registration: Anne Lutz reported the Registration Committee met on August 26th. Anne Lutz's term is up this month, and she is willing to stand again for the two year term - from September 2023 to 2025. Mhairi Craig is now keeper of the Welcome packets, and will be maintaining the official list of residents. Members of the committee will take turns reporting on our activities at these town meetings. For November's Town Meeting we are planning to return to hosting a pre-meeting Wine & Cheese Reception.

• **Recent Resident Changes:**

- Welcome to **Olivia Kirkpatrick**, who moved into Apt #3 at 2303 East Mall in May.
- Welcome to **Rachel Miller**, who moved into 1501 Valley Road (the Buscaglia's) in June.
- 2303 Loreley Lane (Jeana Carey's) was sold to **Steve Tanis & Alida Fish** in June.
- 2302 Loreley Lane (the lot across from Jeana Carey's) was sold to **Ferenc Cserei & Hajnalka Halasz** in February. They have been busy all summer building a new house on the lot.
- 2322 Brae Road (Pat Hannigan's) is anticipated to be sold this month.

Welcome packets are on their way to these new residents.

TRUSTEES REPORT:

- Lisa Wilson Riblett reported that George Loudon, owner of Ivy Gables, is now up to date with all of the money that is owed to the Trust and the check has cleared. The three Villages are working on a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The Candlelight Theatre is Ardentown's hazard mitigation building. Arden and Ardencroft's buildings are the Gild Hall and the BWVC. We are gathering quotes on what it would cost to have an emergency generator installed at the Candlelight. We have one price so far for about \$70,000. We are expecting two more bids. *Grant for Funds from DNREC to repair steps and bridges in the Glen are in their second phase, which ends this Friday. All of our paperwork is in and we are now waiting to see if we receive the Grant Funds. *A large oak tree fell across the footpath in the woods (approximately down from East Mall). Ron's Trees cleared the footpath today and it is now passable. *Tree work started today and will continue to clear several dead dogwoods from The Mall and East Mall. The large old silver maple at the corner of The Mall and Brae, by Pione's, is scheduled to be taken down in November.
- Annie Tang Gutsche reported New Castle County has issued a one-time tax rebate to Ardentown of approximately \$2,600. All three Villages are putting the rebates into reserves. It did not seem worth the time and effort to issue \$5-20 checks per leasehold. We are looking into using the rebate for some special use, like tree work or needed road work.
- Annie reported for Stuart A. S. Craig, who is out of town, that the Trustees are beginning to collect information that will be helpful for our emergency preparedness project (CERT). If Trustees do not have your email address or phone number and you would like to provide it, please let Stuart know. Additionally, if you are willing to share any important medical needs, (e.g., need oxygen tanks), or if you

have a back-up generator at your house, you could include that as well. Sharing this information is voluntary and entirely up to you.

TOWN CHAIR REPORT: Melissa Parsonson, as Acting Chair, is happy to remain Town Chair and finish out the current term. Recruiting More Village Participation: Melissa encourages setting consistent times for committee meetings to help encourage more village participation, and could post meeting times publicly. Also want to change Coordinating Committee meetings to be more proactive and less review of committee reports.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) meeting** with State Representative on **Sept 28th at 6:30 pm at Buzz** – open to all 3 villages.
- **Dead Wildlife Seen** behind Mall: possums, rabbits. Reminding residents that the black boxes used by exterminators kill more than little rodents near our homes.
- **Playground Debris:** Seeing lots of masks in playground from Ivy Gables personnel (we believe). Ivy Gables has been notified and will announce to staff to please keep area clean.

- **Speed Cameras in Ardentown:**

MOTION: FOR ARDENTOWN TO CONTACT DELDOT AND EXPRESS OUR INTEREST IN APPLYING FOR SPEED CAMERAS WHEN AVAILABLE, AND CALLING FOR INFORMATION. Motion seconded.

Vote: All in Favor: Unanimous. **Motion passes.**

Susan Kaye is willing to do the contacting and collecting of data, and will keep the 3 Ardens committee up to date.

- **Henry George's Birthday Party** tomorrow at 7:30 pm at the Buzz Ware Village Center.

ELECTIONS:

- **Assessment:** **JANET COSGROVE** re-elected tonight, **one open position remains.** (*Other members on the committee are Janna Scheflen, and the chairs of the Audit and Budget committees.*)
- **Budget:** **CINDY COHEN, OLIVER GUTSCHE & MAURISA BYER** elected tonight. (*Other members of the committee are Alison Wakelin & Stefanie Lombardo.*)
- **Registration:** **ANNE LUTZ** re-elected tonight. (*Other members of the committee are Maureen Gordon, Mhairi Craig, and the secretaries of the Town and Trustees.*)
- **Town Chair:** **MELISSA PARSONSON** elected tonight to replace Joe Grippe for the remainder of his term (Nov 2022-2024).
- **Town Secretary:** **CINDY COHEN** will fill in for Melissa until the November election of Town Officers.
- **Audit Committee:** Jill Emery, Chair, has appointed **UTTAM SHANBHAG** to take over Terry Harvey's position for the remainder of his term (May 2024). **MAURISA BYER** also interested in being on committee.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Cohen, filling in for Melissa Parsonson, Secretary of Ardentown