

The regular meeting of the **May 2024** Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:32 pm on **Monday, May 13, 2024**, in person in the Candlelight Theater. Melissa Parsonson, Town Chair, presiding. A quorum was present.

***In Attendance:***

- |                        |                     |                      |                         |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Melissa Parsonson   | 11. Lee Painter     | 21. Stuart Craig     | 31. Elaine Schmerling   |
| 2. Cindy Cohen         | 12. Joe Painter     | 22. Steve Cohen      | 32. Art Cohen           |
| 3. Lisa Wilson Riblett | 13. Katie Donovan   | 23. Hillary Daye     | 33. Shelley Robyn       |
| 4. John Demsey         | 14. Cort Hayflinger | 24. Alison Wakelin   | 34. Chris Monson        |
| 5. Anne Lutz           | 15. Will Hayflinger | 25. Betty Ann Themal | 35. Sharon Kleban       |
| 6. Edmond Bischoff     | 16. Peter Slattery  | 26. Suzanne Cherrin  | 36. Stephanie Lombardo  |
| 7. Jill Emery          | 17. John McCormick  | 27. Janet Cosgrove   | 37. Maura Lynch         |
| 8. Daniel Emery        | 18. Bethany Rees    | 28. Shari Phalan     | 38. Janna Scheflen      |
| 9. Samantha Smith      | 19. Gerry Marcus    | 29. Michael Pione    | 39. Dela Muhlenberg     |
| 10. Maureen Gordon     | 20. Mhairi Craig    | 30. Dave Johnson     | 40. Drew Jordan (guest) |

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes for the February 2024 meeting approved as submitted.

**GOOD & WELFARE:**

- Congrats to Katie Bryan on her graduation from Wilmington Friends School and we wish her well as she heads to William and Mary in the fall.
- Welcome to Hillary Daye, new resident at 1502 The Mall (Fleuters/Altoes).

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Organic Waste Removal in the Ardens** – Drew Jordan gave a presentation on waste removal issues in our area. Regulations coming down in the future (possibly 2026) about landfills and ability to accept organics. Yard debris ban coming. Composting, anerobic digestion system, and pyrolysis are possible future solutions here in our community. Reach out to Drew for more information.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Peter Slattery reported the following current balances as of May 13, 2024.

Operating Accounts:

Checking: Starting Balance	\$16,215.83	Savings: Starting Balance	\$13,296.45
Income	\$37,225.35	Income	\$10,000.42*
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>\$24,926.62*</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 0.00</u>
Current Balance	\$28,514.56	Current Balance	\$23,296.87

*\*Transfer to cover TrashTech reimbursement from Trust. Returned to Savings 3/25/24.*

Total Checking & Savings: \$51,811.43

<b>Expenses:</b>	<b>\$14,926.62</b>	<b>Income:</b>	<b>\$37,225.35</b>
Trash Tech	\$9,241.62	Trustees (Trash)	\$18,000.00
Restoration	1,385.00	Trustees (Budget)	\$13,500.00
Snow	4,300.00	Comcast/Verizon	\$725.35
		Donation (Restoration)	\$5,000.00

Municipal Street Aid:	\$14,270.36
ARPA Funds:	\$73,807.92
Arden Bldg & Loan Balance:	\$17,923.84

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Archives (Arden Craft Shop Museum):** Bev Bizup Hawkins reported: 1) Along with Sunday afternoons, the Museum will be open 1-3 pm on Saturdays too, starting in May and through June. 2) The current "Afternoon with the Artist" exhibit, a collaborative effort with the Arden Artists Collective, features Russ McKinney, with a mixed media show that runs through Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. 3) The Museum is also working on a new website.

**Assessment:** Janet Cosgrove reported the Assessment Committee had its kick-off meeting on Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. The 5 committee members are Janna Scheflen, Lee Painter, Alison Wakelin (ex-officio member - town budget committee chair), Jill Emery (ex-officio member - audit committee chair), and Janet Cosgrove, Chair. The Deed of Trust and the Town Bylaws were reviewed, regarding the number of meetings required, and determined a minimum of 4 meetings a year is required, and that 2 of the 4 meetings will be with the Trustees. Other topics discussed were how land rent is calculated. The next meeting is tentatively set for the last week of August.

**Audit:** Jill Emery reported the 2023 Ardentown audit is complete with one open item, a missing invoice. Peter Slattery has agreed to provide a signed memo by the 5/13/24 meeting stating that the invoice was received but has been misplaced. This memo will be added to the town meeting minutes/records.

**Budget:** Alison Wakelin – Nothing to report.

**Buzz Ware Village Center:** Shari Phalan reported administrative changes occurring (Rebecca Brown taking Pam Cohen's position, Grace Ressler to be backup secretary). Four new community rentals, fire system upgraded, Awakened Heart has new contract & increased dates, Art Loops going well, Sudbury School back in building, Coffee House continuing, BWVC will be a designated emergency reception center for CERT, Jester Art & Ikebana are back, Peddlers/Potions/Practitioners will be at the Arden Fair again this year, new water fountain to be installed, Tai Chi, yoga, Arden Bookies, Move Well class all ongoing. 100<sup>th</sup> year Arden School celebration discussions continuing.

**Community Planning:** Peter Slattery reported the Committee met in May (Peter Slattery, Chair, Dela Muhlenberg, Alison Wakelin, and Edmond Bischoff) to compile and discuss topics directed to the committee by town meetings and community engagement. They are building recommendations for a Speed Limit discussion for the September town meeting.

The current list of topics are: ARPA projects, Seeking an exemption for small livestock (chickens, goats, etc.), Agriculture initiative, Village speed limit, Yard waste, Proposal for a general store, Restorative justice, Affordable housing initiative, and Community recognition awards.

Current ARPA project recommendations (\$45,509.92 are still uncommitted) include:

- Fully fund Henry George Green Rain Garden (\$10,000),
- Fully fund Glen work (\$15,000)
- Other projects we would recommend with more information include:
  - Playground proposal – from Lee Painter
  - Improvement to Candlelight back room
  - Seed funding for Carriage House proposal

Chicken Variance:

- Background: Chickens on lots less than one acre are prohibited in New Castle County. Our representative, John Cartier, is supportive of seeking a variance if all 3 villages are in favor. A draft resolution is circulating among the villages.

- The Committee is generally supportive of a variance for chickens in the Ardens. We are submitting the draft resolution for public review (distributed to attendees, see attached). Please submit comments to Peter Slattery @ [peter.w.slattery@gmail.com](mailto:peter.w.slattery@gmail.com).

**Memorial Garden:** Edmond Bischoff reported the committee met on April 24<sup>th</sup>, reviewed their duties, talked about how best to maintain the grounds, perhaps with outside help and additional volunteers. May need to increase budget. Discussed post and rail fence repairs, watching the health of a tree along Harvey Road. The committee has an open position to fill, if interested contact a member of the group. Next meeting is August 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Playground:** Cortney Hayflinger reported playground is quiet, mulch coming for teeter totter, come on out Saturday morning to help move it.

### **Public Works & Safety:**

- Edmond Bischoff reported for Oliver Gutsche:
  - 1) **Roadwork:** Sconset Road work to begin May 22<sup>nd</sup> – concrete work on gutters and some leaseholds will get gravel on driveways.
  - 2) **Rocks on Greens:** Some large rocks are being placed on East Mall and The Mall to discourage people driving on the greens.
- Elaine Schmerling reported:
  - 3) **Restoration Work:** Had several volunteer days and some hours with Redtail, clearing garlic mustard from Ardentown woods and 5-leaf akebia below Phibbs' (more to do there and below Bischoff's). Making progress on ridding GM from hillside behind Gutsche's/Painters, natives returning but more to do. Volunteers always welcomed.
  - 4) **Phragmites:** Elaine worked with Redtail twice planting native plants around power lines, pulling Japanese honeysuckle. Work on hold due to power line discussions with Trustees of clearcutting.
  - 5) **ARPA Proposal for Open Spaces Project** ("Vegetation Survey & Mapping of Open Space in the Three Ardens") – Will has started surveying, stay tuned.
  - 6) **Rain Garden on Pettit Green** – Cory (Advanced Ecology) re-dug and re-leveled the swale to the lower rain garden off Orchard, pushed back overgrown grass and widened opening above. Believes due to water flow change with Veolia work at Loreley. Water did flow better this past rain storm. He also had re-worked the Loreley Lane rain garden stone inset in February, it is flowing well. Thanks to Gerry Altman for helping dig plants out of the swale – will require ongoing maintenance.
  - 7) **3 ARPA Funding Requests:** a) Rain Garden on Pettit Green, b) Rain Garden for Henry George Green, and c) Swiss Lane Curb. *All 3 requests tabled – see ARPA Funding under New Business.*
- Maura Lynch would like PW&S to address water issues in front of her house. Also wants drainage into sewer looked at. (Noted that sewer is a NCC issue, not town.)
- Janet Cosgrove has flooding from path behind her house with rainstorms. She would like help with that drainage.

**Registration:** Mhairi Craig reported town meetings will now begin with **refreshments & social time** 30 minutes ahead of the meetings. The **Ardentown Summer Picnic** returns on Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1-3 pm on Pettit Green with a potluck picnic. Please come and bring a favorite summer dish to share. Welcome to **David Girolami & Hillary Daye**, who moved into 1502 The Mall (Altoes/Fleuters) at the end of April.

### **TRUSTEES REPORT:**

- **Ivy Gables Carriage House.** Stuart Craig reported when the new contract was drawn up between the new owners of Ivy Gables and the Trust, a section was added that required them to repair and maintain the Carriage House. The new owners of Ivy Gables, Asbury, Inc., are getting ready to begin work on the Carriage House in these steps. 1. They will clean up the grounds around the Carriage House and trim the shrubs on the bend of Millers Road between the Candlelight and the Carriage House. They will trim these shrubs annually. 2. They will clean out the first floor of the Carriage House and remove debris around the

outside of the building. 3. Then they will begin a facelift. Currently getting bids for new windows and doors, repair plaster and paint, replace rotted wood, address the gutters and roofing as needed, and replace the stairs. They “will keep as much of the authentic detail the same as possible”. It is their intention to use the building for storage.

- **Furniture in the Woods.** Stuart Craig reported we recently were made aware that there was a bench in the Ardentown woods by the bottom of East Mall. Cigarette butts were found under the bench (and cleaned up), which are a fire concern. Today we were made aware that the bench has been moved to the other side of the creek, which is not Ardentown property. However, the concern about fire safety remains. Please do not add furniture to the Ardentown woods and help us keep the woods clean and safe from fire hazards.
- **First four feet in front of Leaseholds.** Lisa Wilson Riblett asked that if you are planning any permanent work in the first four feet of your leasehold to please reach out to the Trustees before the work begins. Also, trees in that first four feet are the responsibility of the Trust, so please let us know if you see any concerns with trees in the area.
- **CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) “ArdensReady”** – Lisa Wilson Riblett reported the group is busy working on building(s) prep (grants are in the works for generators) and organizational aspects. Thinking of purchasing orange cones, caution tape, and walkie talkies to have to help Ardentown be better prepared. Anyone interested can join this three-Village group. Our next meeting is Thursday, June 6, 7 pm, at the BWVC.
- **Delmarva Power plans to replace the electric towers** (target date 2026) from Harvey Road, between Brae and Sconset into the woods. To clear about 30-foot area under the power lines that run between the towers. Lisa Wilson Riblett reported the Trustees are reaching out to everyone we can think of to help mitigate this clearing. As we learn more, we will let you know.
- **ARPA Funding for Ardentown Glen** – Trustees requesting an additional \$6,710 (in addition to the already-allotted \$8K) due to matching funds falling through. *See Motion/Vote in ARPA Funding section under New Business.*

#### **TOWN CHAIR REPORT:**

- Brandywine School District thanked us for allowing them to come speak about the recent referendum, which passed.
- Spring Plant sale – Milford May 18<sup>th</sup> at the Food Bank farm, plants from Mt. Cuba Center.
- UD Homelessness Conference – June 6<sup>th</sup>, 10-4 pm.
- Thanks for having town committee meetings publicly accessible. If you want your meetings posted on the town website, email [ardentown.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:ardentown.secretary@gmail.com).

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **WILMAPCO Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee** - Bethany Rees reported no updates to date. At the last meeting there was chatter about opening up Sunnyside Tract to others..

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **New ARPA Funding Proposals** – Peter Slattery reiterated that all ARPA monies need to be allocated by end of 2024, must be spent by end of 2026.

**Proposal #1: Repave/mill 120 feet of Orchard Road, and slope slightly toward Pettit Green rain garden, for \$12,500.** Public Works & Safety Committee is requesting ARPA funds for road improvements on Orchard to help runoff toward swale.

*Discussion: Wonder if speedbump/swale might also work on Orchard, road already in bad condition. What about other paving issues in neighborhood? (Have other pockets of money for potholes.)*

Can we not correct water flow when Veolia work is repaved? Won't be our expense.

-- **MOTION/VOTE TABLED UNTIL NEXT TOWN MEETING, with request for formal presentation of this project, with accompanying documentation, along with accounting of all ARPA monies allotted and proposed.**

**Proposal #2: Spend \$10,206 for rain garden on Henry George Green.** Public Works & Safety Committee is requesting ARPA funds for a rain garden on the Henry George Green to help with water pooling between winterberry hollies and pines. Proposal from Cory (Advanced Ecology) to build rain garden in this area, with plants ½ provided by town (spice bush and others for shade) - \$10,206.

-- **MOTION/VOTE TABLED UNTIL NEXT TOWN MEETING, with request for formal presentation of this project, with accompanying documentation, along with accounting of all ARPA monies allotted and proposed.**

**Proposal #3: Spend up to \$15,000 on curb for Swiss Lane.** Public Works & Safety Committee is requesting ARPA funds for a curb on Swiss Lane across from Ivy Gables. Trucks are driving onto Henry George Green as they leave Ivy Gables. Met with Smith Paving and got quote to put in curb and additional 2 feet of blacktop for \$15,000 (with cut-outs to direct water to the new Henry George Green rain garden). Since that time, Committee believes curb alone, with rocks to discourage trucks, will be sufficient to reduce additional runoff. Have a quote for \$~10,000 for just the curb, but seeking approval to spend up to \$15,000 for this work.

*Discussion: Why a curb – won't it make water flow down Millers worse? (Think catch basins on Millers can handle it.) How about rip rap? (Truck tires may sink the rip rap.) Suggest we just put the gutter in without widening the road.*

**Motion: THAT WE APPROVE THE 3 ARPA PROJECTS ABOVE AS PRESENTED.** Motion seconded.

*Discussion: Would like to table until we hear what other monies are needed from Trustees.*

*Suggest we have formal presentation for this amount of money to spend, along with accounting of all ARPA monies allotted and proposed.*

-- **MOTION/VOTE TABLED UNTIL NEXT TOWN MEETING, with request for formal presentation of this project, with accompanying documentation, along with accounting of all ARPA monies allotted and proposed.**

**Proposal #4: Additional \$6,710 to complete Ardentown Glen renovations.** Trustees would like an additional \$6,710 to finish Glen work. Originally this money was to come from a DNREC matching grant, but those monies fell through.

(Original proposal was \$8,000 from ARPA and \$8,000 from DNREC. ARPA monies approved by town in May 2023.)

*Discussion: Would like to see all ARPA allotments laid out and decided upon at one time, at September town meeting, or special meeting if more time critical.*

**Motion #1: THAT THE ADDITIONAL \$6,710 NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE ARDENTOWN GLEN RENOVATIONS BE FUNDED BY ARPA MONIES, SINCE THE DNREC MATCHING GRANT FELL THROUGH.** Motion seconded.

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

**Motion #2: TO HAVE ALL OTHER ARPA PROPOSALS PRESENTED IN WRITING WITH APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION AND ESTIMATES AT THE NEXT TOWN MEETING.** Motion seconded.

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

**Other Possible ARPA Proposals - Playground Funds** – Lee Painter indicated the playground is in need of repairs, some equipment old, not being used. Would be great to have new, attractive equipment in our town. (Possible this could be funded through town vs. ARPA.)

- **Trash Collection** – Melissa Parsonson reported Trash Tech (now SEM) and Evergreen being interviewed for future contract for the Ardens. Both feel they can service our needs. Evergreen would pick up trash, recycling and yard waste on Fridays. If they refuse to take recycling they would tag it for follow up. Both similar costs: \$25 (SEM) vs. \$24.30 (Evergreen) /unit. If we were to switch companies need to know today, to arrange for switch over. Better Business Bureau rating for SEM is 1.19 (F), Evergreen is 4.87 (A+). Waste Management can't handle all 3 of our needs. Other companies have much higher costs.
  - Arden & Ardencroft both wish to go with Evergreen.
  - If we know we want a public trash can on one of our greens, can be added into contract.

**Motion: ARDENTOWN APPROVES A 3-YEAR TRASH, RECYCLING, YARD WASTE CONTRACT WITH EVERGREEN STARTING OCTOBER 1, 2024.** Motion seconded.

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

- **Ardentown Potluck Picnic** – Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1-3 pm on the Pettit Green. Please come!

#### **ELECTIONS:**

- **Audit** – All 3 positions up for annual election: Jill Emery, Stefanie Lombardo & Uttam Shanbhag. All are willing to stand again.

**Motion: APPROVE JILL EMERY, STEFANIE LOMBARDO & UTTAM SHANBHAG BE ELECTED TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE FOR MAY 2024-MAY 2025 TERMS.** Motion seconded.

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

- **Playground** - 2 positions up for May 2024 election: Annie Gutsche & open position. Lee Painter is willing to stand for the open position.

[Cort Hayflinger serving 2023-2025]

**Motion: APPROVE ANNIE GUTSCHE & LEE PAINTER BE ELECTED TO THE PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE FOR MAY 2024-MAY 2026 TERMS.** Motion seconded.

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

- **Public Works & Safety** – 3 positions up for election: Elaine Schmerling, Paul Romagano & open position. Bethany Rees is willing to stand for the open position.

[Oliver Gutsche, Nick Liberman, Edmond Bischoff, and Janna Scheflen serving 2023-2025]

**Motion: APPROVE ELAINE SCHMERLING, PAUL ROMAGANO & BETHANY REES BE ELECTED TO THE PUBLIC WORKS & SAFETY COMMITTEE FOR MAY 2024-MAY 2026 TERMS.** Motion seconded.

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

- **Upcoming September Elections:** Assessment, Budget, Registration.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

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