

The regular meeting of the **May 2025** Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:34 pm on **Monday, May 12, 2025**, in person at Ivy Gables. Melissa Parsonson, Town Chair, presiding. A quorum was present.

***In Attendance:***

- |                         |                                  |                       |                          |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Barbara Mondzelewski | 10. Sabrina Crews (new resident) | 20. Jessica Riggleman | 31. Mary Ann Patterson   |
| 2. Lisa Wilson Riblett  | 11. Deborah Dehghan              | 21. Brandon Paris     | 32. Hillary Daye         |
| 3. Alison Wakelin       | 12. Stuart Craig                 | 22. Lindsey Sherwood  | 33. Mike Pione           |
| 4. Gerald Marcus        | 13. Jill Emery                   | 23. Richard Hawkins   | 34. Marian Pione         |
| 5. Annie Gutsche        | 14. Dan Emery                    | 24. Cindy Cohen       | 35. Elaine Schmerling    |
| 6. Mhairi Craig         | 15. Micah Altman                 | 25. Betty Ann Themal  | 36. Shelley Robyn        |
| 7. Cheryl Regan         | 16. Anne P. Lutz                 | 26. Susan Brandner    | 37. Janna Scheflen       |
| 8. Steve Cohen          | 17. Suzanne Cherrin              | 27. Melissa Parsonson | 38. John McCormick       |
| 9. Oliver Gutsche       | 18. Maile Gutsche                | 28. Samantha Smith    | 39. Peter Slattery       |
|                         | 19. Bethany Rees                 | 29. Edmond Bischoff   | 40. Uttam Shanbhag       |
|                         |                                  | 30. Maureen Gordon    | 41. Esther Golton        |
|                         |                                  |                       | 42. Scott Bowers (guest) |

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes for the February 2025 meeting were approved as submitted for informational purposes only.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Peter Slattery reported the following current balances as of May 12, 2025.

Operating Accounts:

Checking: Starting Balance	\$3,241.84	Savings: Starting Balance	\$18,298.50
Income	\$ 36,867.20	Income	\$ 0.39
Expenses	\$26,338.90	<u>Transfer from Checking</u>	<u>\$ 5,000.00</u>
<u>Transfer to Savings</u>	<u>5,000.00</u>	Current Balance	\$23,299.08
Current Balance	\$8,770.14		

Total Checking & Savings: \$32,069.22

Expenses:	\$ 26,338.90	Income:	\$ 36,867.20
Trash	9,185.40	Trustees-Trash	18,000.00
Restoration	978.50	Trustees-Budget	13,500.00
Snow Removal	1,175.00	Comcast/Verizon	367.20
Generator	15,000.00	Donation	5,000.00

Municipal Street Aid: \$ 16,320.42

Arden Bldg & Loan Balance: \$17,923.84

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- **Archives (Arden Craft Shop Museum):** Lindsey Sherwood read in place of Bev Bizup Hawkins. History Strolls: The museum will be hosting 3 History Strolls this Summer and Fall, one for each of Arden's villages. Dates will be announced in the Arden Page and the Ardentown History Stroll is tentatively scheduled for a Wednesday evening in July. The purpose of the strolls are two-fold: (1) To share with Arden, Ardentown and Ardencroft residents, how special our history is and to capture the stories of the leaseholds, greens and gardens. (2) To introduce residents to the Arden Craft Shop Museum. Each stroll will be a 45 minute walking tour, ending with a wine and cheese reception at the Museum. Any resident of the Ardens is welcome to join in on the strolls. Registration will be limited and is through the Museum in advance.m Dates: Arden Wednesday June 25th at 6:30pm, Ardentown Wednesday July 23rd at 6:30 pm, Ardencroft

Sunday afternoon September 7th. Watch for more information in the Arden Page. Afternoon with the Artist: Currently on display is the artwork of Cookie Ohlson. Stop in during regular Museum hours, or during the House Tour next weekend, to see her work or buy some of her lovely greeting cards. In August, the Museum, together with the Arden Artisans Collective will showcase the mixed media work of Megan (“Meegan”) King.

- **Assessment:** Janna Scheflen reported that the committee met on Wednesday, May 8, 2025, to discuss potential proposals for the trustees regarding the possibility of assigning the New Castle County tax to the common land rather than to individual leasehold parcels.
- **Audit:** Jill Emery completed the audit of the 2024 books, identifying a few minor issues, all of which have been resolved. The audit is now complete.
- **Budget: Nothing to report.** Alison Wakelin presented the proposed final 2025-2026 Town Budget.

## Village of Ardentown: Proposed Final Budget 2025 (as of February 8, 2025)

	2024	2025
INCOME	Passed	Proposed
Comcast/Verizon Cable	3100.00	3100.00
Interest AB&L	650.00	750.00
Transfer from Trust	13500.00	13500.00
Income from Grants	0.00	0.00
Donations	0.00	5000.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>17250.00</b>	<b>22350.00</b>

	2024	2025
COSTS	Passed	Proposed
Town Secretary Salary	1000.00	1000.00
Website Maintenance Salary	600.00	600.00
Town Treasurer Salary	400.00	400.00
Administrative Costs	1200.00	1200.00
<b>Subtotal Administrative Costs</b>	<b>3200.00</b>	<b>3200.00</b>
Playground Committee	250.00	250.00
Registration Committee	100.00	100.00
Memorial Garden	300.00	300.00
Assessment Committee	300.00	300.00
Community Planning Committee		0.00
Internship	200.00	200.00
Committee Expenses	300.00	300.00
Public Works Committee		0.00
Paths and Natural Areas	5600.00	5600.00
Signs	500.00	500.00
Snow Removal	5500.00	5500.00
<b>Subtotal Committees and Works</b>	<b>13050.00</b>	<b>13050.00</b>
DLLG Annual fee	525.00	525.00
ACRA	1000.00	1000.00
Arden Library	400.00	400.00
Arden Page	600.00	800.00
Arden Craft Shop and Museum	850.00	850.00
Buzz Ware Village Center	1400.00	1400.00
<b>Subtotal Memberships &amp; Donations</b>	<b>4775.00</b>	<b>4975.00</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>21025</b>	<b>21225.00</b>

	2024 Initial	2025 Initial
Non-Discretionary Items	Balance	Balance
Municipal Street Aid	14,270.36	16320.42
American Rescue Plan Act	73,807.92	0
Trashtech		1,676.41
Memorial Gardens Account	1,030.00	1,025.95

	2024 Initial	2025 Initial
VILLAGE ACCOUNTS	Balance	Balance
AB&L Savings	17,923.84	18,649.96
Village Account	19,092.26	18,298.40
MSA and ARPA		
MSA	14,270.36	16,320.42
ARPA	73,807.92	-

**MOTION: TO APPROVE THE 2025 TOWN BUDGET AS SUBMITTED.** Motion seconded.

Vote: All in favor. **Motion passes.**

- **Buzz Ware Village Center:** Shelley Robyn reported that the DNREC grant, which had been temporarily frozen, has now been reinstated. The grant will cover the battery backup system, solar panels, and a portion of the roof expenses. Remaining roof costs, along with additional renovation needs—such as replacement of the air handler units, a new ceiling in Room 3, and interior painting—will be funded through the general renovation budget. The “Peddlers and Potions” event at the Arden Fair is actively

seeking vendors and volunteers. Those interested may contact Toby Ridings for more information. Website issues have been resolved, thanks to the efforts of Rob Whitehead. Toby Ridings and Mary Young have returned to serve as co-chairs of the committee.

- **Community Planning:** 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 is listed below, in no particular order:
  - Seeking an exemption for small livestock (chickens, goats, etc.). 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 three villages are on the same page. A draft resolution is circulating among the villages. The committee is generally supportive of a variance for chickens in the Ardens and there is encouragement from Ardencroft. Arden is currently discussing the issue in committee.
  - Speed Limit: The committee is recommending reducing the speed limit in Ardentown from 20 MPH to 15 MPH. The increasing foliage around town is reducing sight lines and a substantial number of residents are concerned about the speed of traffic. This would not affect Harvey Rd.
- **Memorial Garden:** Cheryl Regan, Barbara Mondzelewski, and Edmond Bischoff have expressed their willingness to serve another term on the committee. We are still seeking and accepting one additional member. The committee meets several times a year and focuses on vegetation management and overall maintenance of the property. The committee met on May 1st to discuss issues including overgrown bushes along the fence line. We also want to highlight that June 2nd has been designated as an *Ivy Pull Day*, beginning at 8:00 AM. While we understand not everyone may be available that day, we encourage community members to take an hour at their convenience to help cut ivy vines from any tree within the garden. On March 20th, the committee replaced another fence post, which required trimming back nearby bushes. During this work, an oak sapling was discovered—please let us know if you are interested in transplanting it. The committee is also working with Sean Van Neerden on mowing and general grounds maintenance. Soil is currently being added to areas with holes and uneven ground to improve safety and appearance.
- **Playground:** Annie Gutsche spoke on behalf of Cortney Hayflinger and offered an apology for the absence of swings on the swing set. Due to liability concerns and the age of the structure—over 20 years—local welders have been unwilling to make the necessary repairs. In response, Lee Painter has applied for three to four grants to help fund the replacement of the swing set and has also submitted a request for matching funds from the community fund. Additionally, a crack has been found in the see-saw, identifying it as another piece of equipment in need of replacement. A question was raised about whether the committee has consulted with nearby communities, such as Ardencroft and Arden, which have recently updated their playground equipment. Lee has confirmed outreach to Arden but is uncertain whether contact has been made with Ardencroft.
- **Public Works & Safety:**
  - Oliver Gutsche reported the roadwork planned at the beginning of the year has been completed. However, some unusual cracks have been observed in the new gutter, and we are currently investigating the cause. A meeting is scheduled with Ed Smith, whose company was responsible for the gutter installation. Due to a personal family matter, Ed was unable to meet sooner, but we are hoping to connect with him this week to address the issue.
  - Elaine Schmerling reported on the following Paths & Restoration work:
    - **HG Rain Garden** – This was dug and installed, but contractor appears to have been given the wrong Biosoil – it is holding water (vs. in the Petit Green rain gardens, the soil is properly 70% sand, and they

drain properly). He plugged up the inlet to try to let it dry out. The soil will be either amended or dug out and refilled (mulch and plants will be taken out but then put back).

- **Pettit Rain Gardens** - Elaine, Lee, & Altmans removed leaves, stalks & debris, to keep these functioning, and weeded (let us know if you want to be involved! Blooms are starting, now through the late fall!). The swale to the lower RG will be redug, and the inside wall of this lower RG is collapsing, will be bermed up.
  - **Sunnyside** – We were awarded a grant to pay for at least 2 more full days of cutting dead ash trees - prioritizing those which could fall on the main trail. Match also includes saving living trees from invasives (we cut ivy off trees in winter, will soon be pulling mile-a-minute), restaking/securing newly-planted trees, and planting & protecting more trees (probably in the fall)! Let Elaine know if you want to help!
  - **Deer Overpopulation** – Cindy Cohen of the ad-hoc Committee to present the Deer Management Plan. Scott Bowers of Ardencroft, chairing this effort, will be at the meeting to answer questions.
  - **Ardens Vegetation Mapping and Surveying (ARPA-funded) project** - Data has been delivered to Ben Gruswitz. This will be distributed to contacts in each village May 15 who will subsequently be trained on the mapping system. Due to scheduling conflicts, we are planning the public presentation for the fall.
  - **Restoration efforts** - We have pulled garlic mustard (GM) in the lower part of Sunnyside, and some on the hillside in Ardentown woods during the Ardens' Earthday Cleanup effort (with 6 of us – Annie, Shelly, Lee & Joe Painter, Dan Emory & Elaine). And now Will Hayflinger just started a 3-hour scouts service project pulling – w/Maile Gutsche's help. Thanks all! We still have a lot of GM on the hillside in the Ardentown woods behind the houses from Edmonds' to Slattery's'. Will will see if other scouts need hours too!
  - **A Wildflower Walk** will take place on Sunday, May 18, 2025, at 10:00 AM, starting at the Gild Hall. All are welcome to join and enjoy the local flora.
- **Registration:** Tonight's treats were brought to you by the generosity of Ivy Gables. Resident Changes: Sabrina Crews has purchased 2208 Loreley Lane (MaryLou Kime's), and she and her 3-year-old son, Billy, moved in at the end of April. If you see them, please reach out and welcome them to the neighborhood. If you know of any new residents in Ardentown, please let one of us on the Registration Committee know. The next meeting of the Committee is Sunday, August 17th at 3 pm at Cindy and Steve Cohen's.

#### TRUSTEES REPORT:

- Lisa Wilson Riblett - \*Hazardous Ash Tree Removal Matching Grant – Ardentown (and Sunnyside and Arden) received matching grants to help defray the costs of taking down the infested ash trees that are on common land. Later this year, you will see these trees being removed. If you have an ash tree on your leasehold, PLEASE have the tree(s) evaluated by a professional. These infested trees become brittle and dangerous once they are infected. In an effort to help replace these ash trees, we will be planting replacement native trees. Two new native pink crabapple trees have recently been added to the Pettit Green and more native trees will also be added this year. \*Delmarva Transmission Line Replacement update. The Ad Hoc Committee is continuing to pursue various avenues to try to get Delmarva to reroute the Transmission Lines out of Ardentown. We have reached out to the State Historic Preservation Office for help and they are making inquiries as to how this might affect our Village. Several months ago, we sent the results of the lead testing we did with the University of Delaware to DNREC, who then reached out to Delmarva. As a result, Delmarva is working with DNREC and has agreed to a Voluntary Clean Up Plan. Delmarva has agreed to remove and replace the soil around the Towers and Poles but the timing is not yet finalized. More studies about the lead in the soil and in Naamans Creek and Perkins Run (in Ardencroft) are in the planning. The Committee has reached out to Delmarva and asked for a lot more information

about the new Transmission Lines, like how tall the new Poles and Towers would be, and many other questions and are waiting for their answers. Several State Reps, especially Ray Seigfried our State Senator, are involved and are helping move this conversation forward. We have also reached out to our lawyer for counsel. Last Spring, the company that Delmarva contracts to set up tree work came through and said they were going to clear cut a 30 foot swath through Ardentown and a 70 foot swath through our woodlands. Last week, this same company came through and substantially reduced the number of trees that would be removed and took almost all of the shrubs and low lying plants off on the list; however, we would definitely still feel the impact. We are still hoping for a rerouting of the Transmission Lines and continue to pursue these and other paths. Delmarva said they will hold a three Villages' Community Meeting regarding the new Transmission Lines at some point but no date has been set at this time. Arbor Day Proclamation 2025. We are required to have read into the minutes a proclamation regarding trees for our Tree City status each year (reading of the Proclamation).

- Stuart Craig - Asbury, Inc., who own Ivy Gables, are presently finalizing the work plans for the Carriage House on the corner of Millers Road across from the Candlelight. Due to the money that will be required for these renovations, this project will span several years. They are making an effort to restore the Carriage House both aesthetically and trying to keep the historical elements. The first phase, which they hope will begin this year, will involve work on the sides of the building facing Millers Road. The second phase, planned for next year, will work on the other sides. Once the scope of the work is finalized, Asbury will share more information with us.
- Annie Gutsche - Candlelight Bldg Update: The Candlelight Theatre is currently in the middle of major improvements to the building, including a new floor, upgrading bathrooms, and a new back exit stairway. In the meantime, the Candlelight plans to hold 2 events outdoors in their parking lot, a band on May 31, 5-10 pm, and a craft fair/food truck event on June 14th. The majority of the parking will be at Ivy Gables but we expect there will be some overflow, maybe about 20 cars. The Candlelight has asked for permission for patrons to park on the streets. We still have not received any news from New Castle County about the Reassessment and how that affects our taxes.

**TOWN CHAIR REPORT:** Melissa Parsonson reported the following -

1. **Vegetation:** Ensure vegetation on your leasehold is cut back. Be aware if there is a road sign that you do not have vegetation covering it.
2. **WILMAPCO:** There will be a WILMAPCO meeting for Philadelphia Pike on May 16, 2025 from 7-9 PM
3. **SEM/Trash Tech:** The current litigation between SEM (formerly Trash Tech) and the 3 Ardens is moving forward with the 3 Town Chairs and our attorney. At this time, we would like to vote to give the Town Chair, Melissa Parsonson, the authority to make decisions for Ardentown on any potential settlement.

**MOTION: TO GIVE TOWN CHAIR, MELISSA PARSONSON, AUTHORITY TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR ARDENTOWN ON ANY POTENTIAL SETTLEMENT WITH SEM (FORMERLY TRASH TECH).**

Motion seconded.

Vote: 39 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained. **Motion passes.**

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **WILMAPCO:** Bethany Rees reported there is going to be a 3-Ardens WILMAPCO Meeting at the Buzz on: Wednesday, June 4, 2024, 5:00 - Refreshments, 5:30 - Presentation of Concept Illustration Sketches of these 5 locations: \*Crossing of Harvey Rd at Little Lane path, \*Crossing of Harvey Rd Connecting Club House path with Milky Way path, \*Ardens Entry on Harvey Rd from 95 & over the CSX tracks, \*Crossing of Veale Rd at West Greenbriar Road, \*Crossing of Veale Rd at Sunset Lane. You can go to the Wilmapco

website for more info: <https://www.wilmapco.org/ardens/>. Ardentown applied for an AARP grant to paint the 11 grey utility boxes along Harvey Rd. We should hear back by the end of May.

- **ArdensReady:** A committee has been established to address emergency issues as they arise—particularly those related to severe weather or unexpected events, such as incidents involving the nearby train tracks. The goal is to stay informed, increase awareness, and be better prepared as a community. The committee is currently working on organizing the area into smaller zones and will provide guidance on how residents can get involved. More detailed discussions and planning will take place in the coming weeks.
- **Transmission Line Infrastructure:** First Reading of Revised Ordinance – Melissa Parsonson read the following proposed ordinance (first reading of revised ordinance since November 2024 Town Mtg): The second reading will occur at the next Town Meeting in September 2025.

### **Transmission Line Infrastructure**

**Purpose:** High voltage electrical transmission lines, towers, and poles are, at this time, a critical component of modern infrastructure that supports our way of life. However, the current alignment of transmission lines, towers, and poles has caused almost 100 years of unnecessary harm and avoidable risk to our Village.

#### **Findings:**

1. **Environmental Impact:**
  - The construction and maintenance of transmission lines through the heart of our Village's residences and our forest ecosystem invite non-native and invasive species and leave scarred landscape on residents' properties and through our forest.
  - The non-discriminant use of pesticides by power companies is detrimental to long-standing Village efforts to save native plant species and can impact the ecosystem.
  - Existing transmission towers and poles have contributed to significantly high levels of lead in the surrounding soil, and new construction will disturb these contaminated areas.
2. **Health and Safety:**
  - With the known or unknown health effects and close proximity of existing transmission lines, towers, and poles, residents are exposed to electromagnetic fields with intensities far above typical background levels, potentially harming their health.
3. **Financial and Maintenance Costs:**
  - The proximity of transmission lines, towers, and poles to residences can depress property values.
  - Maintenance costs for the Village increases due to the presence of these transmission lines, towers, and poles.
4. **Legal and Compliance Issues:**
  - Delmarva Power has demonstrated willful disregard of their existing transmission line agreements and backpedaled on prior agreements.
5. **Alternative Routes:**
  - Alternative routes exist consistent with nearly all the transmission lines sitting along the former B&O railway alignment that minimize proximity to residences and impact only the edges of low-quality forest areas already bisected by the railway clearing.
  - Other alternative routes may also exist.

**Ordinance:** Now therefore, in order to protect residents who live near the transmission lines, towers, and poles, and to protect our treasured forest ecosystems, it is hereby ordained by the Village of Ardentown as follows:

1. **Prohibition:**
  - No new electrical transmission lines that are at or exceed 60 kilovolts (kV) can be constructed, installed, or operated within 100 feet of any Ardentown residential housing unit or structure. All existing power lines shall be subject to the requirement of this Ordinance.
2. **Definitions:**
  - "Transmission lines" refer to high voltage electrical lines designed to transport electricity over long distances.

- "Tower infrastructure" refers to the supporting structures, including towers and poles, for transmission lines.
  - "Residential housing units" refer to any buildings or structures used for residential purposes within the Village boundaries as well as the Candlelight Theatre (Robin Hood Barn).
3. **Annual Impact Fee:**
- An annual impact fee shall be levied by the Village of Ardentown on Delmarva Power or their successors on the existing transmission line facilities based on the total taxable square footage on which the NCC School and County taxes are levied in the area as defined in the easement.
  - The fee will use the most current annual square footage charged by the Ardentown Trustees or their successors as Land Rent to Leaseholders in the Village.
  - Impact fees are due by June 1st of each year.
4. **Enforcement:**
- This Ordinance shall be enforced by the Village of Ardentown with support of the Ardentown Trustees and any designated officers or agents. Any person or entity found in violation of this Ordinance shall be subject to a fine for each day the violation continues at a rate of \$500 per day until the matter is resolved. Ardentown reserves the right to take further legal action to ensure compliance with this Ordinance.
  - Any violation or nonpayment of this Ordinance shall be subject to monthly penalties, the same that is used in Land Rent collection.
5. **Severability:**
- If any provision of this Ordinance is found to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.
6. **Effective Date:**
- This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Ardentown Roads Speed Limit:** Peter Slattery proposed a motion to decrease the speed limit on all roads in Ardentown from 20 mph to 15 mph.

**MOTION: APPROVE THE SPEED LIMIT ON ALL ROADS IN ARDENTOWN TO BE REDUCE FROM 20 MPH TO 15 MPH.** Motion seconded.

Vote: 39 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained. **Motion passes.**

- **Review of the Deer Management Plan:** Cindy Cohen read the following Deer Management Plan, with discussion afterward which included a range of community questions and comments, highlighting both support and concerns regarding the proposed approach.

### **Deer Management Plan for May 2025 Ardentown Town Meeting**

The deer population in the Ardens has been growing over the years, as evidenced by increased damage to the forests, damage to plantings on our leaseholds, and increased visibility throughout the villages and roadways. To be responsible stewards of our land, and to preserve deer health, hard decisions have to be made.

Background: Recently the Ardentown Public Works and Safety Committee formed an Ad-Hoc Ardens Deer Management Committee with representatives from all 3 Ardens, who have been meeting to address deer management in the Ardens. Those members are: Elaine Schmerling, Bethany Rees, Will Ryan, & Cindy Cohen from Ardentown; Carol Larson & Beverly Clendening from Arden; and Scott Bowers, Kevin Nemeth & Lisa Surbrook from Ardencroft.

The Committee's mission is to balance the deer population with habitat capacity, addressing issues like forest damage/conservation, deer-vehicle collisions, and to preserve deer health. The objective of our work is to be responsible stewards of our land, and offer an opportunity for sustainable management of our deer



within the Sunnyside Tract and continue to develop tree undergrowth and restore/maintain its canopy. No one wants to see harm come to our deer, but the negative effects of overpopulation, such as starvation due to lack of food sources, chronic-wasting disease, vehicular collisions, and social stress among the deer, are harmful in themselves. Our goal is to prevent suffering among the deer, not to punish them.

Research & Review: In 2008, DNREC developed a Sunnyside Management Plan for the Village of Ardentown since we accepted their request to become a nature preserve (The Sunnyside Nature Preserve). At the time of this plan the population was lower and they wrote “Although present in small numbers, white-tailed deer can have a detrimental effect on the preserve. Deer impacts should be monitored by observing browse intensity on understory vegetation.” They suggested “occasional archery hunting every two to three years” to try to “keep numbers stable.” Note that we have not followed this plan to date, to the point where the numbers are much higher than the preserve can tolerate.

This past winter of 2024/2025, a concerted effort was undertaken by members of the committee to monitor deer population and movement in the Sunnyside Tract. Scott Bowers put up 3 wildlife cameras in Sunnyside and identified over 25 deer. The DNREC wildlife biologist who specializes in deer believes that number is higher, at least 30. We believe that more walk in from the railroad tracks, from Bellevue State Park, and other overpopulated areas (Scott observed hoofprints after a snowfall).

These results were reported back to the committee for review and further discussion.

Recommendations: In consultation with DNREC, the committee feels it is time to take action, and make difficult decisions for the long-term health of our deer population and forests.

The Committee suggests allowing 12-15 deer to be removed. The 35 acres of the Sunnyside tract is greatly overpopulated from what DNREC thinks it can handle, and reducing the herd will allow for a healthier ecosystem to best support the deer.

The Committee’s recommendation is to hold a one-time archery hunt in late October or November 2025 in the Sunnyside Tract. The event will use ethical, humane practices, utilizing only approved, local Arden archery hunters, hopefully with some donations going to Delaware Hunters Against Hunger. Timing was chosen to avoid impacting fawns, with winter being outside of fawn season.

Notification of the event will be publicized to Ardentown residents at the town meetings and in meeting minutes. Signage and yellow caution tape to close the area will also be placed at the entrances to the Sunnyside tract at the time of the event.

Closing: No one likes to make these types of decisions. However, we feel it is best for the long-term benefits of maintaining a healthy deer population in the Ardens, and to support forest regeneration. If you have questions, please reach out to the members of the Committee.

#### **Town Meeting Discussion:**

- **Monitoring and Ethics:** Hunters will be interviewed based on established criteria to ensure they are ethical, experienced, and qualified.
- **Impact on Ecosystem:** Deer are consuming the undergrowth in the forest, which stifles natural regrowth and negatively affects the ecosystem. Deer are depleting their future food sources, which could lead to ecological imbalance.
- **Human-Deer Conflict:** While deer are eating hostas and trees, some believe this is part of a natural cycle and that intervention may be unnecessary. Instead of reducing the population, could the community create a deer-friendly environment or explore other non-lethal methods?

- **Population Control:** Culling is a recurring necessity because deer tend to reproduce rapidly in response to population declines. No specific permission is needed from DNREC for local deer management. Ensure proper due diligence before any action is taken.
- **Alternative Methods and Ethical Concerns:** Can harvested deer be donated to the Delaware Food Bank? Yes, through the “Hunters for the Hungry” program. Have contraception or relocation been considered? Relocation is not viable, as it typically leads to euthanasia. Contraception has proven ineffective. Habitat loss and the absence of natural predators have led to overpopulation.
- **Compliance and Resources:** Asked whether the 2008 DNREC Sunnyside Tract Report is available online for public review. The community is currently out of compliance with its Sunnyside stewardship responsibilities. Overpopulation can lead to disease and long-term ecological harm.

## ELECTIONS:

- **Archives** – 2 positions up for Feb 2025: Allen Kleban & Maura Lynch.  
**MOTION: APPROVE MAURA LYNCH & ALLAN KLEBAN BE RE-ELECTED TO THE ARCHIVES COMMITTEE FOR FEB 2025-FEB 2027 TERMS.** Motion seconded.  
**VOTE:** All in Favor. **Motion passes.**
- **Memorial Garden** – 3 positions up for Feb 2025: Cheryl Regan, Barbara Mondzelewski & Edmond Bischoff. [Open position & Chris Monson not due until Feb 2026]  
**MOTION: APPROVE CHERYL REGAN, BARBARA MONDZELEWSKI & EDMOND BISCHOFF TO BE RE-ELECTED TO THE MEMORIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE FOR FEB 2025-FEB 2027 TERMS.**  
Motion seconded.  
**VOTE:** All in Favor. **Motion passes.**
- **Town Secretary** - Jessica Riggelman is willing to fill the open Town Secretary officer position, effective March 2025.  
**MOTION: APPROVE JESSICA RIGGLEMAN BE ELECTED TO THE TOWN SECRETARY POSITION FOR THE CURRENT TERM ENDING NOVEMBER 2027.** Motion seconded.  
Vote: All in favor. **Motion passes.**
- **Audit Committee** - 3 positions up for May 2025: Jill Emery, Stefanie Lombardo, Uttam Shanbhag.  
**MOTION: APPROVE JILL EMERY, STEPHANIE LOMBARDO & UTTAM SHANBHAG BE RE-ELECTED TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE FOR MAY 2025-MAY 2027 TERMS.** Motion seconded.  
Vote: All in favor. **Motion passes.**
- **Playground Committee** - 1 Position up for May 2025: Cortney Hayflinger.  
**MOTION: APPROVE CORTNEY HAYFLINGER BE RE-ELECTED TO THE PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE FOR MAY 2025-MAY 2027 TERM.** Motion seconded.  
Vote: All in favor. **Motion passes.**
- **Public Works & Safety Committee** - 4 positions up for May 2025: Oliver Gutsche, Nick Liberman, Edmond Bischoff, and Janna Scheflen.  
**MOTION: APPROVE OLIVER GUTSCHE, NICK LIBERMAN, EDMOND BISCHOFF & JANNA SCHEFLEN BE RE-ELECTED TO THE PUBLIC WORKS & SAFETY COMMITTEE FOR MAY 2025-MAY 2027 TERMS.** Motion seconded.  
Vote: All in favor. **Motion passes.**

- **Upcoming September Elections:** Assessment (Janet Cosgrove), Budget (Hilary Day, Cindy Cohen, Oliver Gutsche), & Registration (Anne Lutz).

**GOOD & WELFARE:**

- Cindy Cohen has joined the board of Candlelight Theatre. She reported that everything is going well, and the venue renovations are looking beautiful.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Riggleman, Secretary of Ardentown