

The regular meeting of the **May 2026** Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:35 pm on **Monday, May 11, 2026**, in person at The Candlelight Theatre. Jessica Riggleman, Secretary, presiding in place of Melissa Parsonson, Town Chair. A quorum was present.

In Attendance:

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|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Jessica Riggleman | 8. Hillary Daye | 15. Peter Slattery | 22. John McCormick |
| 2. Stuart Craig | 9. Steve Cohen | 16. Joan Fitzgerald | 23. David Girolami |
| 3. Cheryl Regan | 10. Cindy Cohen | 17. Marian Pione | 24. Sharon Kleban |
| 4. Bethany Rees | 11. Pat Lane | 18. Michael Pione | 25. Suzanne Cherrin |
| 5. Jill Emery | 12. Mike Magee | 19. Elaine Schmerling | 26. Shari Phalan |
| 6. Dan Emery | 13. Lisa Wilson Riblett | 20. Janna Scheflen | 27. Dennis Dorsey |
| 7. Mhairi Craig | 14. Maura Lynch | 21. Cort Hayflinger | 28. Maureen Gordon |

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes for the February 2026 meeting are approved as submitted.

NEW BUSINESS: As many of you may have noticed, our Town Chair, Melissa Parsonson, is not here tonight. Unfortunately, Melissa is currently in the hospital due to a health issue. Please keep her in your thoughts and send along your well wishes for a smooth and full recovery. Melissa will be stepping down as Town Chair, and Jessica Riggleman, will be serving as Town Chair through the remainder of her term, which runs through November 2026. While we will certainly miss Melissa’s leadership, I am committed to helping ensure a smooth transition and continuing the important work of supporting our town and community. Cindy Cohen has kindly agreed to take meeting minutes tonight, and I appreciate her stepping in to help. If anyone is interested in serving as Town Secretary moving forward, please let me know. I look forward to working with all of you and continuing to support this wonderful community. Thank you for your continued kindness, involvement, and commitment to our town.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Peter Slattery distributed the ARPA report submitted to the U.S. Treasury as requested at the February 2026 meeting (copy on file). For Town Budget: The Q1 2026 finance report was distributed (copy on file)Municipal Street Aid Affidavits are due Friday, May 16, 2026. The money is to be used for street improvements of municipal maintained streets. “Street improvements” means construction, reconstruction, repair and maintenance of streets, including paving, repaving, grading and drainage, repairs, acquisition of rights-of-way, extension and widening of existing streets, elimination of railroad grade crossings, acquisition of trucks and other equipment necessary in the construction and maintenance of streets, removal of snow and ice and the laying of materials for traction, purchase and installation of street identification signs and traffic control signs, construction, reconstruction and repair of sidewalks and underpasses and overpasses necessary for pedestrian safety, relocation of above ground utilities, mowing, trimming and removal of trees impacting a street, administration and other necessary expenses in connection with such street improvements.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **Archives (Arden Craft Shop Museum):** The Arden Craft Shop Museum continues to advance and grow in an appropriate and meaningful direction, publically. Two of our biggest challenges are (1) building maintenance (repairs and parking) and (2) space (for display and storage). The next AWTA is May 3rd with Lee Hoover, August 12th David Burslem, November features artist Will Ramirez. Again this Summer, ACSM will host Ardentown, Arden and Ardencroft history strolls and those dates will be announced in advance. On May 31st, the Ardentown Craft Shop Museum together with the Scholars Gild will host an annual Walt Whitman birthday celebration with poetry, reading and birthday cake in the Bernie Schwab room and by the lilacs on the Main Green. On July 5th at the Philadelphia Museum Of Art there will be an opening exhibition for arts and crafts in America and the ACSM is featured in the exhibition with a selection of our

pieces on loan to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The exhibition runs through October ([Workshop of the World: Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia](#)).

- **Assessment:** Nothing to report.
- **Audit:** The Audit Committee met and audited the town and trustee books. There were a few small open items which have been addressed. The audit is now closed for the 2025 books.
- **Budget:** Nothing to report.
- **Buzz Ware Village Center:** BWVC Emergency Resilience Hub: The new shingled roof and solar panels were installed in February. Batteries have also been installed. Everything is in place for the Buzz to be an emergency hub, and also provide energy credits. Some system glitches are being addressed. Building Renovations: Room 3 ceiling tiles and updated lighting was completed in February. An estimate for new kitchen cabinets, sinks and countertops has also been obtained. Targeted projects include ceiling Rm 3, back office, back hallway & closet, kitchens rooms 1 & 2, flooring 1 & 2, and interior trim painting. Rentals: The Wilmington Sudbury School will not be renewing their lease for the 2026-2027 school year, due to lack of enrollment. Purchases: A new podium was sourced and purchased. The committee is looking into new audio equipment. Cecelia Vore offered a \$200 donation toward this equipment. Peddlers, Potions, and Practitioners: This fundraiser is going into its 21st year. It supports renovations to the building, raising over \$7,000 per year. The committee is in search of someone that Toby can train to take over the leadership of this event. Vendors and volunteers are also needed.
- **Community Planning:** Canned food drive tonight, donations will go to Claymont Community Center for their distribution.
- **Memorial Garden:** After a hard winter, the grounds are still recovering from cleanup efforts, including the removal of several large branches and tree limbs and repairs to the split rail fence. Moving forward, work will continue on removing and thinning bushes with ivy and dead branches along the fence line to further expose the split rail fence for additional repairs. Along Harvey Road, plans are underway to remove sucklings and saplings, which should allow for more late afternoon and evening sunlight to reach the undergrowth, including grass and plants. Ivy Gables has changed lawn and grounds service companies, which may impact the Memorial Garden boundaries, so we will wait and see how that develops. Plans for the area around the sign and bench include covering the ground with fabric and cardboard topped with wood chips, followed by planting native flowers. The Committee is actively looking for additional members, not only to help maintain the grounds, but also to assist with administration, recordkeeping, and serving as a spokesperson for the Memorial Garden. An overview of the tree line along Harvey Road shows that years of line trimming have caused many of the larger tree limbs to extend outward, and the Committee is asking the Trustees/Town to consider hiring a tree company to remove some of these limbs; we would be happy to research costs and obtain quotes from several companies. One tree in particular is showing more dead wood and has a history of slow growth and limited new foliage. The Committee is also interested in increasing the yearly budget from \$200 to a total of \$500, which would help support new native plantings, repair and seal coating of the sign, cleaning and sealing the bench, fuel costs for operating grounds equipment such as the aerator and tractor, and ongoing efforts to manage the ginkgo fruit. Finally, the plastic chairs have been removed from the grounds, and we are currently exploring replacement options. Several distributors offer teak benches ranging from approximately \$800–\$1,200, not including shipping and installation, while another option would be concrete or stone-cast benches available through big box stores for approximately \$80–\$125, or potentially real granite benches. We are also open to accepting family donations for a bench, provided it aligns with the overall plan for the Memorial Garden.
- **Playground:** Playground equipment delivered to local installer, no date yet for installation, will be one-day install. When they are available they will do the install, hopefully in June. Cleanup day May 30th 9-Noon,

bring tools, come join us! After playground equipment installation, topsoil removal for wood chips will be underway.

● **Public Works & Safety:**

- **Roads & Stormwater:** (1) We are awaiting a Tarquini proposal to fill all potholes and to propose what remaining street repairs they can do with our street aid funds (\$29,000 – to confirm). (2) Storm water piping Ray Seigfried helped put us in touch with Mike Popovick. (3) Street signs- the committee is evaluating existing signs for maintenance and installing new signs for speed limits and the Petit Green.
- **Paths & Restoration:** (1) Beech trees – Phosphite, a nutrient, treatment that Arden is doing looks promising. I am planning to treat a few in Ardentown this year. Arden is training volunteers – it’s an easy spray of a simple nutrient. Is anyone interested in helping a few beech trees in woods near you? (2) Compost area –we are still working on dismantling it and getting others to take the compost. We think a lot of it can be smoothed over and distributed, but we still have a way to go (and weeds especially in the middle). If you get - screen out any orange roots. Thanks to William Parsonson who disassembled the left-most side. (3) Earthday Cleanup - Thanks to Will, and others who helped me w/ the Earthday Cleanup: Colin Consavage, and new residents Dana and Ronan Arnold! (4) Deer subcommittee – PW&S Comm folks present at the meeting thought it should be under PW&S Comm. Might also put under a new Sunnyside Management Committee. No decision yet. (5) TEDI GRANT – this grant planting and caging 165 new trees is almost finished, and the final report will go out by Friday to reimburse us the remaining \$5,911.30. Contractor delivered, planted & caged 58 trees in Sunnyside and 31 in the Glen, in early April, so they’ve already had a good amount of time to get more established before summer. Thanks to Bethany for organizing volunteers for the remaining 24 in the Glen. Thanks to Oliver Gutsche, Marc Morfei, and Janna who helped me plant & cage the rest in the Chestnut St. and Old Mill areas. (6) Rain gardens – Elaine & Lee have cleared out debris, and weeded a few times. Gerry Altman has dug out the intake to the top rain garden. HG garden looks better since debris was removed (A LOT - it is right under trees which drop many leaves, sticks, cones, needles). (7) Invasives: last chance to get garlic mustard! Pull head first INTO a trash bag as seeds may be popping soon...pull stilt grass & mile-a-minute early, as they both are starting to come up.
- **WILMAPCO:** Applied for TAP Application for funding for improvements to the pedestrian crossing on Harvey Road connecting the Clubhouse and Milky Way paths.
- **Registration:** Town Meeting refreshments were provided tonight by the Registration Committee. Recent resident changes include Dana Rasnake and young son, Ronan Arnold, who moved into 1517 Woodland (Joe & Lee Painter’s rental) in April. They are already getting involved - they were spotted recently helping Elaine and team clear invasives in the woods. If you see Dana and Ronan, please reach out and welcome them to the neighborhood. If you know of any new residents in Ardentown, please let the Registration Committee know. Next Registration Committee Meeting: Sunday, August 30th at 3:00 pm, at Cindy & Steve Cohen’s.

TRUSTEES REPORT:

- **Carriage House at Ivy Gables:** The Trustees plan to meet again soon with the representatives at Ivy Gables regarding the Carriage House. At our last meeting with them, they did not seem very willing to help renovate the Carriage House in accordance with our lease. We hope we can all agree on a long-term plan for the Carriage House that complies with the lease terms. We will keep you posted.
- **Arbor Day Proclamation for 2026:** Ardentown received a letter of recognition from the Arbor Day Foundation for being a member of Tree City USA for 17 years (copy on file). Reading of the Arbor Day

Proclamation occurred, which is required by the Arbor Day Foundation, is to be recorded in the Town Minutes (copy on file).

- **2026 Hazardous Ash Tree Removal Matching Grant:** Last year, we received a matching grant regarding hazardous ash trees, and we applied again this year. Recently, we received approval from the Delaware Forest Service for a \$4,838 matching grant to cut down 10 ash hazardous trees in the Glen. This work will begin soon, weather permitting.
- **New Castle County Regulations re: Airbnbs and VRBO:** In New Castle County, short-term rentals, such as Airbnb's and VRBOs, are not allowed in residentially zoned districts, such as Ardentown. Short-term rentals are considered "commercial lodging" and are restricted to areas like commercial neighborhoods. We ask everyone to be mindful of this regulation.
- **Walking Area on the bend of Millers Roads by Candlelight:** An area along the Playground side of Millers Road, on the bend by the Candlelight Theatre, will be cleared to create a designated walking path. This narrow, grassy strip will give pedestrians a safe place to step off the road when cars approach the bend.

TOWN CHAIR REPORT: Jessica Riggelman reported the following:

- See NEW BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Delmarva Power:** Lisa Wilson Riblett has reported: On May 6, 2026, there was a walkthrough with Delmarva to review the upcoming lead remediation and installation of the new transmission line. (1) Update on Lead Remediation Work: There are seventeen towers and poles that require lead remediation as part of the new Delmarva transmission line rebuild between Darley Road and Silverside Road. The remediation process is currently scheduled to reach Ardentown in mid-June. We will inform you promptly of any updates as we receive them. (2) Update on Contractors' Availability for the Tower & Pole Replacements: At this time, the concrete bases for Towers 7 and 11 are scheduled for late September or October. The bases for Poles 8, 9, and 10 are scheduled for November. We will also inform you of any updates we receive on this work. There was a question from the floor about whether the permits for the projected soil rehabilitation work had been received from DNREC and the Army Corps; Lisa Wilson Riblett answered that so far as she knew they had not been received.

ELECTIONS:

- **Audit Committee** - 3 positions up for May 2026: Jill Emery (Chair), Stefanie Lombardo, Uttam Shanbhag
 - Jill Emery (Chair), Stefanie Lombardo, Uttam Shanbhag have been unanimously re-elected to the audit committee for the May 2026-May 2027 term.
- **Playground Committee** - 2 positions up for May 2026: Annie Gutsche and Lee Painter
 - Annie Gutsche and Lee Painter have been unanimously re-elected to the playground committee for the May 2026-May 2028 term.
- **Public Works and Safety Committee** - 3 positions up for May 2026: Bethany Rees, Elaine Schmerling, Paul Romagano
 - Bethany Rees and Elaine Schmerling have been unanimously re-elected to the public works and safety committee for the May 2026-May 2028 term.
 - At this time, we have not heard back from Paul Romagano on his position. This position will be pushed to the September 2026 town meeting.

GOOD & WELFARE:

- Thanks to Jessica for stepping up to serve the town as Town Chair.
- Best wishes to Melissa Parsonson for her speedy recovery.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Cohen, filling in as Town Secretary