The regular meeting of the **September 2026** Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:35 pm on **Monday, September 14th 2026**, in person at The Candlelight Theatre. Jessica Riggleman, Town Chair, presiding. A quorum was present. All proposed motions were deferred to future Town Meetings due to an error in the mailing of the meeting agenda and minutes through the United States Postal Service.

In Attendance:

1. Pat Lane
2. Mike Magee
3. Jill Emery
4. Daniel Emery
5. Alison Waklin
6. Lisa Wilson Riblett
7. Oliver Gutsche
8. Mhairi Craig
9. John McCormick
10. Cindy Cohen
11. Steve Cohen
12. Maura Lynch
13. Lindsay Sherwood
14. Beverly Bizup-Hawkins
15. Edmound Bischoff
16. Judy Glenn
17. Cody Palmer
18. Jessican Riggleman
19. Stuart Craig
20. Marian Pione
21. Michael Pione
22. Shari Phalan
23. Gayle Lafferty
24. Marc Morfei
25. Allen Riblett
26. Elaine Schmerling
27. Peter Slattery
28. Sofia Hogan Shanbhag
29. Uttam Shanbhag
30. Lee Painter
31. Shelley Robyn
32. Dela Muhlenberg
33. Bethany Rees
34. Susan Mearkle
35. Joan Fitzgerald
36. Mary Ann Patterson
37. Ester Golton
38. Will Ryan
39. Colin Consavage
40. Hillary Daye
41. Melissa Parsonson
42. Sharon Kleban
43. Maureen Gordon

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

TREASURER'S REPORT:

4/1/2026 - 6/30/2026
General Funds

Income	Q2	YTD	Budget	Difference
Transfer from Trust	0.00	13,500.00	13,500.00	0.00
Donations	7,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	0.00
Telecom Fees	0.00	692.17	3,300.00	-2,607.83
Interest	385.37	385.71	700.00	-314.29
Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Income	**7,385.37**	**34,577.88**	**37,500.00**	**-2,922.12**
Expense				
Town Secretary Salary	500.00	500.00	1,000.00	500.00
Website Maintenance Salary	300.00	300.00	600.00	300.00
Town Treasurer Salary	0.00	0.00	400.00	400.00
Administrative Costs	216.25	341.25	1,200.00	858.75
Subtotal Administrative Costs	**1,016.25**	**1,141.25**	**3,200.00**	**2,058.75**
Playground Committee	9,401.67	17,434.17	15,000.00	-2,434.17
Registration Committee	0.00	0.00	100.00	100.00
Memorial Garden	0.00	0.00	300.00	300.00
Assessment Committee	0.00	0.00	300.00	300.00
Community Planning Committee	0.00	0.00	500.00	500.00
Public Works Committee				
Paths and Natural Areas	1,075.08	2,558.41	5,600.00	3,041.59
Signs	66.72	614.72	500.00	-114.72
Snow Removal	0.00	10,000.00	5,500.00	-4,500.00
Subtotal Committees and Works	**10,543.47**	**30,607.30**	**27,800.00**	**-2,807.30**
DLLG Annual fee	0.00	0.00	525.00	525.00
ACRA	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Arden Library	0.00	0.00	400.00	400.00
Arden Page	0.00	0.00	800.00	800.00
Arden Craft Shop and Museum	0.00	0.00	850.00	850.00
Buzz Ware Village Center	0.00	0.00	1,400.00	1,400.00
Subtotal Memberships & Donations	**0.00**	**0.00**	**4,975.00**	**4,975.00**
Total Expense	**11,559.72**	**31,748.55**	**35,975.00**	**4,226.45**
Net Profit	**-4,174.35**	**2,829.33**	**1,525.00**	

Restricted Funds/Special Projects	Income	Expense	Balance
Municipal Street Aid (MSA)	0.00	0.00	27,330.85
Recycling & Trash	18,500.00	22,182.30	-3,682.30
Memorial Gardens	0.00	0.00	1,392.23
TEDI Grant Tree Installation	11,822.61	11,822.60	0.01
TEDI Grant Ash Removal	9,000.00	9,000.00	0.00
Restoration Donations	0.00	0.00	1,027.68
Playground Donations	20,000.00	17,434.17	2,565.83
ORPT Grant-Playground	0.00	8,000.00	-8,000.00

Account Balances	3/31/2026	6/30/2026
Checking	38,066.87	9,110.79
Savings	19,800.04	19,800.53
AB&L	19,403.41	19,788.29
Total Cash	**77,270.32**	**48,699.61**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **Archives (Arden Craft Shop Museum):** The Arden Craft Shop Museum has had a busy summer and has several upcoming projects and events. On August 16, the Museum hosted an Afternoon with the Artist featuring the work of David Burslem. These events continue to be successful in showcasing local artists while increasing museum visitation, which also supports the Museum's eligibility for grant funding. This summer, three University of Delaware students worked on projects with the Museum. Two assisted with conservation work on Arden paintings and murals, while Sophia Wackett developed a community survey to gather information about interest in and visitation to the Museum. The survey will also help inform planning for the

Museum's 25th anniversary, a future capital campaign, and needed building repairs and maintenance. Survey stations with forms and QR codes will be available throughout the three villages, and residents are encouraged to participate. Sophia will compile the results and present them to the Museum Board. The Museum is also preparing its annual fundraising letters, which are expected to be sent to residents of the Ardens by September 29. The Arden Craft Shop Museum has also loaned several items to the Philadelphia Museum of Art for its current Arts and Crafts exhibition highlighting the roles of Arden, Rose Valley, and Bryn Athyn in the Arts and Crafts Movement. Museum representatives attended a private tour of the exhibition in August. On Saturday, October 3 at 2:00 p.m., Barbara Macklem will represent Arden in a panel discussion at the Philadelphia Museum of Art on Arts and Crafts communities, along with representatives from Rose Valley and Bryn Athyn. The panel is free, although museum admission is required, and attendees should reserve a seat in advance. At the Craft Shop Museum, the current exhibition is being taken down in preparation for the 2026–2027 exhibition, "All the World is a Stage – Shakespeare in the Ardens," which will open on Sunday, October 18. A free opening reception will be held that day from 1:00–3:00 p.m. The Museum is also planning conservation work on the two portraits in the Gild Hall auditorium, which had been placed on hold until after the Arden Fair. The next Afternoon with the Artist will be held Sunday, November 15, from 1:00–3:00 p.m. and will feature the work of Will Ramirez. The Museum also has a new website, and residents are encouraged to visit both the website and the Museum. When visiting, please remember to sign the guest books, as visitor participation helps document Museum activity and supports future grant opportunities.

- **Assessment:** Nothing to report.
- **Audit:** Nothing to report.
- **Budget:** Nothing to report.
- **Buzz Ware Village Center:** Office optimization is continuing. When completed, there will be meeting space for small groups and better organizational systems. Peddlers, Potions and Practitioners on Arden Fair Day was once again successful, for its 21st year. PPP brought in over $7900, including the raffle. These funds are used for building maintenance and renovations. A big thank you to all of the Ardentown folks who were able to help out with this event. The committee discussed eliminating single use plastic, specifically bottled water. Filtered water is available for refilling reusable water containers. Regular programming open to the community will continue in October: First Friday Art Loop, Coffee House, BWVC Bookies, Tai Chi, Monday night art studio.
- **Community Planning:** Canned food drive tonight, donations will go to Claymont Community Center for their distribution.
- **Memorial Garden:** Late spring and early summer were active in the garden. The crew removed numerous saplings and suckers along Harvey Road to allow more afternoon and evening sunlight along the fence line. Wood chips were spread in this area to help support vegetation and grass growth. Poison ivy continues to spread into other areas of the garden, including up trees and shrubs, so caution is advised. A large overgrown bush in the back corner was cut back to a manageable size, and ivy was removed from that area. Dead branches, brush, and additional ivy were also cleared along the ivy gables fence line. The garden sign was removed for maintenance, including wood filler on the top corners, fresh outdoor paint on the front and back, and new hardware. A meeting with Lisa resulted in securing three dogwood trees through a grant, which are expected to be planted in late October. Plans are also underway to aerate bare areas and spread grass seed later this fall.
- **Playground:** The Ardentown Playground swing set and seesaw have been replaced. As part of the wider vision for a multi-generational area, a pull-up and dip bar was also added. The focus is on completing the work started in '25-'26 with a gap year before applying for any additional grants. We are addressing drainage issues which appear to be exacerbated due to the recent frequent and intense rainstorms. Once this drainage issue is resolved, we will complete the project with mulching. Elaine is helping with some native plantings including pachera, amsonia and mountain mint. Plants will not only be good for wildlife and aesthetics but hopefully facilitate some rain water absorption. However, the runoff is more significant than these plants as a solution. Stay tuned for an announcement of a work party to move playground mulch and clean all the equipment and benches, general tidying once drainage issues are resolved. The Playground Committee appreciates the on-going work of Brandon Paris and Jessica Rigglemen in helping with leveling and framing. We also had so many to thank in the July-August Arden Pages for generous cash donations and for so many who showed up to help at our work party in May. Cort has completed the border to hold mulch around the swing, once landscape fabric is put in, we will need volunteers for mulching.
- **Public Works & Safety:**
  - Woodland and Appletree were paved and potholes were filled around town. Rich Cropper is in the process of looking into repairing the storm water pipes around Sconset and the playground he will give us a quote. We are waiting for the last three speed signs to be installed, once the posts are dry, they will be put in.
  - **Environmental and Stewardship:** Nearly 100 beech trees were treated this year with two applications of phosphite, including 33 trees in the Glen, 16 large trees in Sunnyside, and approximately 40 trees between Chestnut Street and Marsh Road; most were marked with metal identification numbers, and several additional trees received one treatment so their condition can be

compared over time with fully treated and untreated trees. The Trustees funded the phosphite and backpack sprayer, and additional volunteers will be welcome to help treat unmarked beeches next year. The Deer Ad Hoc Committee continues to meet, with its next meeting tentatively scheduled for October 8, 2026. The TEDI grant has been completed and reimbursed, and volunteers continue to maintain the associated tree cages by removing vines, weeds, and stilt grass. In Sunnyside, volunteers are clearing newly caged trees, removing stilt grass and mile-a-minute, maintaining the main path, and using extra tree tubes to protect naturally occurring native trees, including sassafras, hickories, and walnuts; residents interested in participating in a Sunnyside Subcommittee are encouraged to volunteer. The rain gardens have also received continued debris removal and weeding, with thanks to Mary Patterson and other volunteers assisting with their upkeep. Invasive-species work included removing porcelain berry from a river birch on Brae Road and continued efforts to identify and remove Japanese virgin's bower, also known as sweet autumn clematis, before it flowers and spreads additional seed.

- **WILMAPCO:** Melissa Parsonson is now the town representative in place of Bethany Rees.
- **Registration:** Town Meeting Refreshments were provided tonight by the Registration Committee: Mhairi Craig, Maureen Gordon, Hillary Daye, and Cindy Cohen. Recent Resident Changes: 1519 Appletree Lane - Richard Herrmann moved in in July 2026. If you see Richard and his service dog, Duchess, around town please welcome them to the neighborhood. 2204 Sconset Road - We understand new tenants have moved into Will Ryan's Sconset home. We will be reaching out to them. If you know of any new residents in Ardentown, please let the Registration Committee know. Registration Committee Elections: Mhairi Craig and Maureen Gordon - both willing to continue serving for additional two-year terms, from Sept 2026 to Sept 2028. Third Committee Member position: Is now open, as Hillary Daye has moved into the Town Secretary role, which is an ex-officio member of the Registration
- **TRUSTEES REPORT:**

- **Ardens Ready:** The three-community group working on emergency preparedness,now has three buildings ready with emergency power backups. The group raised over $300,000 to purchase two gas-powered generators and a new battery-backed solar system. The Candlelight Theatre was first completed, and now the Gild Hall and the Buzz Ware Village Center are also up and running.
- **Common Land:** Questions have been raised about the Common Land and tree maintenance. The Trustees explained that each spring, they conduct a walkthrough with a certified arborist to identify necessary tree work and establish priorities. They also consult with a certified arborist from Bartlett Tree Experts regarding tree diseases and seek input from knowledgeable community members, including Elaine Schmerling and Carol Larson. Residents are encouraged to report concerns, as individual observations have helped identify trees requiring evaluation or removal. The Trustees acknowledged growing community interest in participating in discussions about the Common Land and clarified the distinction between the Municipality's and the Trust's responsibilities. The Municipality oversees the roads, Sunnyside Nature Preserve, and municipal committees, while the Trust owns all the land in a Land Trust under the Henry George single-tax system. Although these entities have separate responsibilities and authority, the Trustees emphasized the value of open communication and community input. An informal, ongoing forum was proposed to provide residents, leaseholders, and Trustees an opportunity to discuss Common Land maintenance, share concerns and ideas, and better understand the rationale behind management decisions. The forum would be open to anyone interested, without formal membership or terms. Trustees would benefit from hearing residents' and leaseholders' concerns and ideas. Residents would benefit from hearing the reasons for decisions and actions. Stuart Craig suggested running the forum on a trial basis for a year or so, then re-evaluating.

TOWN CHAIR REPORT: Jessica Riggleman reported the following:

- The Town Chair reported that, since the May Town Meeting, she has continued working with the Town Secretary, Treasurer, Trustees, committee chairs, and residents on matters affecting Ardentown. Many of the substantive items addressed during this period are reported separately under committee reports, Old Business, and New Business. The Chair has focused on coordinating communication among Town officials and committees, responding to resident questions and concerns, and assisting with matters requiring coordination with outside organizations and agencies.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Delmarva Power:** Delmarva Power: Since the May Town Meeting, Delmarva's transmission line rebuild and lead-impacted soil remediation project has progressed into the construction phase. (1) Update on Lead Remediation Work: Delmarva, AECOM, and its contractors have completed additional surveying and staking of the remediation areas in Ardentown and have begun installing erosion, sediment, and other site controls. DNREC reported on September 11 that limited excavation of lead-impacted soil was anticipated around Tower 7, located near Harvey Road and Sconset Road, because the footprint of the new foundation slightly overlaps the remediation area. Soil remediation around Poles 8 and 9 is expected to follow. DNREC will continue its oversight of the remediation work, including inspection of the required site controls. (2) Update on the Transmission Line Rebuild: Delmarva is scheduled to begin work on the new foundation at Tower 7 on September 14. The first phase will use a

smaller drill rig to locate and break up rock, followed by a larger drill for the foundation work. Once work at Tower 7 progresses, Delmarva expects to have a more precise schedule for Pole 10 and Tower 11, located in the woods at the bottom of Brae Road; that work is currently anticipated during the week of September 21. When work moves to Brae Road, roadway matting will be installed from the intersection of Valley Road to the end of Brae Road to allow the drilling equipment to enter. Temporary restrictions on regular vehicle access may be necessary while equipment is moved into position, but emergency vehicle access will be maintained, and residents will receive advance notice. Delmarva has agreed to use the previously established access route through Sconset Road, a portion of The Mall, Valley Road, and Brae Road, and to restore damage resulting from the project as necessary. The July 31 project meeting also confirmed the agreed ingress and egress route and that damage to Ardentown roads would be restored as necessary.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Proposed Bylaw Revisions:** The proposed revisions to the Ardentown Bylaws were reviewed and discussed. The proposed changes to the Assessment Committee provisions were withdrawn, and the existing Assessment Committee language will remain unchanged. Bylaw revisions were pushed to a future meeting.
- **New Castle County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Adoption Resolution:** The Town reviewed the resolution adopting the New Castle County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. The Plan is intended to guide hazard-mitigation planning and maintain Ardentown's eligibility for certain federal pre- and post-disaster mitigation funding. The motion to adopt the Resolution Adopting the New Castle County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update was pushed to the November 2026 meeting.
- **Proposed Future Common Lands Stewardship Committee:** Melissa Parsonson handed out details of a proposed future common lands stewardship committee. The handout is on file and available as requested.

ELECTIONS:

- **Registration Committee —** 2 positions up for re-election: Mhairi Craig and Maureen Gordon. Sharon Kleban has expressed interest in filling in for Hillary's role.
- **Budget Committee —** 2 positions up for re-election: Alison Wakelin and Stefanie Lombardo.
- **Assessment Committee —** 2 positions up for re-election: Janna Scheflen and Lee Painter.
  Lee Painter stepped down from the committee.
- **Public Works and Safety Committee —** 1 position carried over from the May 2026 election: Paul Romagano.
  Bethany Rees stepped down from the committee.
- All motions for elections were pushed to the November 2026 town meeting.

<u>GOOD & WELFARE</u>:

- Helping Hands has helped provide meals and assistance to those that need help. If you need assistance or want to volunteer, please contact Shelley
- Thanks to Hillary for stepping up to serve as interim Town Secretary
- The Town thanked Delaware State Representative Larry Lambert and Delaware State Senate District 5 candidates Shay Frisby and Ray Siegfried for attending the meeting and sharing brief remarks with residents.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Hillary Daye, interim Town Secretary