

## **Conflict of Interest Policy for the Village of Arden, Delaware**

Adopted by the Town Assembly on Monday, September 22, 2014

### **Purpose and scope:**

This policy is created to prevent the existence or appearance of any acts of favoritism, cronyism, nepotism and personal gain or undue advantage which interferes with fairness because such acts undermine trust and the common good of the Village. Service to the Village is always about protecting the common good, which may be defined as the common conditions that are important to the welfare of everyone. Conflicts of interests make the Village lose faith in the integrity of our governmental decision-making processes. This policy covers all elected officers, committee members, employees and contractors.

### **Definition:**

A Conflict of interest can be defined as any situation in which an individual is in a position to exploit a professional or official capacity in some way for his or her personal or financial benefit. Conflicts of interest occur when an officer, committee member or employee and contractor puts his or her personal or financial interest ahead of the Village interest. No officer, committee member, employee or contractor shall use his or her position to secure privileges, private advancements or gains.

### **Process:**

When a conflict of interest appears to exist, an officer, committee member, employee or contractor is expected to declare the conflict and recuse oneself by abstaining from the discussion and the vote. It is not sufficient for officers and committee members to declare the conflict. They must take themselves out of the decision-making process altogether. This includes discussion and debate as well as actual voting.

If an officer or committee member does not declare a conflict and another person believes a conflict exists, he or she should bring this forward to the officers or committee as a potential conflict. In turn, the committee or officers have the responsibility to investigate, verify and resolve the issue as soon as possible. If the conflict of interest is verified, the committee or officers could consider the original decision voided and take a new vote without the person who has the conflict. In the case where a signed agreement has already been engaged for services to Arden by an officer, then the officers would use their best judgment to resolve this conflict. The process and results of all conflicts of interest verified or unverified will become a part of the committee or officer official report presented before Town Assembly at the next Town Meeting.