

# Arden Advisory Committee Meeting, 5 June 2006 - uncorrected

Present: Mike Curtis, Trustee; Christine Demsey, Audit; Aaron Hamburger, Trustee; Matthew Lo, Budget; Denis O'Regan, Safety; Danny Schweers, Secretary; Steven Threefoot, Town Assembly Chair; Elizabeth Varley, Advisory Chair; and Larry Walker, Playground.

Elizabeth Varley, called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

She read a letter from Ruth Bean asking that Village only allow houses to go unoccupied for two years, noting that one house has been unoccupied for 12 years. When this was discussed later in the meeting as new business, Aaron Hamburger noted that Trustees have examined issue extensively and can do little if the exterior of a house is presentable and the yard maintained. A number of people did not think it a problem worthy of legal remedy. It was recommended that Ruth submit her letter to Community Planning, which had no representative present.

Later in the meeting Elizabeth explained that the Advisory Committee was formed to set the agenda for the Town Meeting, to provide communication between committees, and, once a year, usually in November, to hold a meeting to discuss long-range issues facing the Village.

TOWN CHAIR: Steven Threefoot said that DelDOT is under budgetary pressure. We may have a year contract for a speed indicator sign on Harvey Road that would appear perhaps 12 times at various times during the year. The archways are less likely to survive the budgetary crunch. Aaron noted that Village has \$993 left from a state grant for capital expenses along Harvey Road.

Since last meeting, Steven noted that the State of Delaware has passed a new election law, one that specifically exempts the Ardens from the exacting requirements that would have drastically changed the way we conduct elections.

Steve Cohen, Ardentown Chair, recently held a public meeting about a potential bird flu pandemic and Steven will report on that at Town Meeting.

TRUSTEES: Aaron Hamburger reported that Trustees have the draft of the auditor's report. Discussion ensued about how the BWVC funds are accounted for within the Village budget. Agreement seems to be that BWVC budget should be incorporated into Village budget just like Civic and other committees.

Multiple Domiciles will be discussed at the Town Meeting, as will the Buckingham Green court case. That case has shown some movement.

ASSESSORS: Next meeting is tomorrow night and a report will be made at Town Meeting.

BUDGET: Matthew Lo will present the 3-year budget projection and will report that expected expenses will, over the years, increase significantly, probably 5% a year or

more, even though state, county and school district are cutting expenses themselves as best they can. Part of the discussion centered on whether the Village has an adequate reserve and how prepared residents are for many years of increased land rents to match increased county and school district taxes.

Budget Committee sees little that can be cut from Village budget other than the Buzz Ware Village Center.

CIVIC: Sue Rothrock said the next meeting is in two days. Shelley Robyn and Mary Marconi are new co-chairs of Forest Sub-Committee. Alton Dahl has joined the Forest Sub-Committee as a member. Dave Gerbec from Civic is working with Alton on a policy to deal with trees on border of Village, looking at best policies already in place in other villages.

A big issue coming up is our trash issue. Yard waste will be banned from landfill this year. We have a new local business mowing our greens. We have a new trash can corral in front of the BWVC.

PLAYGROUND: Larry Walker says Mr. Mulch has been providing high quality wood chips at \$15/yard for years but their supplier has gone out of business. Now they have an engineered wood product for twice the price, \$30/yard, a finer product than we've been using, but it is ASDM certified for playground use. 90% of playground accidents are caused by falls, so it is good to have a shock-attenuating surface under playground equipment. We might have a budget problem if we cannot find another supplier at the same price. Denis suggests using the fallen and felled trees we already have in the village as raw material and manufacture our own chips. Denis, who has two trees coming down soon, will try to produce playground-quality chips from them.

SAFETY: Denis O'Regan says there is more youth activity at the start of every summer. Burning ban is on at the moment and a resident was cited recently. (Even so, fires are allowed for ceremonial and recreational purposes says Sue.) We will have problem with fireworks; Ardentown already has had a small fire. Battle of the Bands drew a complaint last Friday night but neither Denis nor Christine (who lives next door) saw anything worthy of complaint. Neither did police.

OLD BUSINESS: Will have 3rd reading of Woods Closing ordinance this next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: Unoccupied houses issue discussed.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:08 p.m.

Faithfully submitted,  
Danny N. Schweers, Secretary