

Community Planning Committee
Minutes, 9 June 2010

Present: Committee members Cynthia Dewick, Ron Meick, Danny Schweers, Ray Seigfried, and Sally Sharpe; Arden Trustee Mike Curtis; residents Carol DiGiovanni and Larry Walker; and, briefly, Town Assembly Chair Steven Threefoot.

Ray Seigfried, chair, called this meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in Room 1 of the Buzz Ware Village Center.

The Committee discussed four different situations and will bring some of these before the Town Assembly on Monday, June 28.

Occupied Houses in Compliance with County Code

Everyone agreed there was no issue with occupied houses in compliance with county codes.

Occupied Houses Not in Compliance with County Code

The committee voted that:

New Castle County's "Instant Ticketing" should continue in Arden as long as leaseholders ticketed are told what their violation is and not simply told they are in violation of some unspecified code. This is a much better process than the old one, which had higher fines and could involve court appearances.

There should be no Arden amendment to Section PM 302.4.2 of the County Code. That is, grass and weeds shall be no more than eight (8) inches tall. There are already exemptions for ornamental shrubs and trees, and for wildflower meadows more than 10 feet from the lot line.

Arden should be exempted from Section PM 302.8.6. That is, vehicles do not need to be parked on a hardened surface. Arden would not be exempt from other sections of Section PM 302.8 governing vehicles including off-highway vehicles, inoperable and unregistered vehicles, oversized vehicles, and recreational vehicles.

Tree branches in Arden should be exempted from Section PM 302.11. That is, except during construction, there should be no outside storage of debris except for stacked firewood and fallen tree branches. Right now the code says there shall be no wood in the yard. County inspectors now include fallen branches as wood debris.

Vacant Houses in Compliance with County Code

The committee will pursue details of collecting vacant domicile fees, perhaps similar to the fees charged in Wilmington. Vacant domiciles would be given a year without any fee, but would be charged fees starting at \$500 for the second year increasing by \$500/year every year to a maximum fee of \$5,000/year, which would continue until the residence was occupied. Many details of

this need to be worked out before it is presented to the Town Assembly. How would vacancy be determined? What counts as occupancy? How would owners be notified? Could a lien be put on properties if owners refused to pay? What if there were extenuating circumstances? What would the money be used for?

Vacant Houses Not in Compliance with County Code

These vacant domiciles would be subject to the fees described above. But, since anyone can make a complaint to the county about code violations, there is no need for the Village to make complaints. A flyer giving a summary of codes and describing the complaint process will be made available at the next Town Meeting.

Next Meeting, Adjournment

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, June 23, 7:00 p.m. at The Buzz. This meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectively submitted,
Danny Schweers, Committee Secretary