

Community Planning Committee (C.P.C.) - Village Of Arden

Minutes of Meeting Held On Wednesday February 19, 2014

Present: Ray Seigfried, Ron Meick, Cynthia Dewick, Dan McNeil

Absent: Michael Falstad, Sally Sharp

Guest Appearance: Bill Theis

Meeting called to order by Chair Ray Seigfried at 7:03 PM

The topics addressed in this meeting include: (1) The final village and county authorizations needed for the FEMA Resolution scheduled to be voted upon in the March 2014 Village Assembly; (2) Follow-up on the Conflict of Interest Policy; (3) A vote on the liens to be filed for the current fiscal year for those leaseholds in violation of the Village's Vacant Housing Ordinance; and (4) Village Government's compliance under the Freedom of Information Act (F.O.I.A.).

The individual topics are addressed as follows.

FEMA Resolution in the Village Meeting

Ray stated the village and county authorizations for the inclusion of the Village of Arden into the FEMA Program are coming together in anticipation of voter approval at the March 2014 Village Assembly. Ray is working with John Cartier (Arden's County Representative) and Dave Carpenter (County's FEMA Specialist) in order to finalize the authorizations.

Conflict of Interest Policy

Initial feedback on Ray's draft Conflict of Interest Policy was provided from the Advisory Committee. The feedback came from Cecilia Vore, Registration Committee Chair, who drafted a second Conflict of Interest Policy. The ensuing discussion focused on the pros and cons of each policy. It was decided that the two policies should be submitted to the Village's Attorney for legal review and recommendation. Ray will present the policy recommended by our attorney before the Advisory Committee for a final vote and acceptance. The approved Conflict of Interest policy will be incorporated into the official Village Manual.

Village of Arden Vacant Housing Ordinance

Ray indicated that (6) of the (8) leaseholds identified as vacant homes are now deemed to be delinquent and in violation of the Village's Ordinance. Liens will be registered with the county including the cost of both the registration fee and fine will be recorded. The leaseholds for the other (2) homes recently completed the registration form and paid all outstanding fees. Thus, no further action is required.

The committee reviewed the list of eligible charges. A charge of \$1,100 is proposed for the following leaseholds: 2101 March Road, 2033 Marsh Road, 1904 Harvey Road, 2100 Harvey Road and 2007 Harvey Road. A charge of \$600 is proposed for 2115 March Road. It is also noted that any unpaid liens from the prior year under this ordinance will remain in place.

The committee members then approved authorization of the individual liens. It is noted, however, that Ron Meick recused himself from voting on the lien for 1904 Harvey Road as a board member of the Arden Building & Loan. The Arden Building & Loan legally obtained the leasehold interest in 1904 Harvey Road through a deed in lieu of foreclosure during early January 2014.

The Freedom of Information Act (F.O.I.A.) and local governmental compliance

Ray briefly discussed the Freedom of Information Act (F.O.I.A) and the fact that all municipalities within the State of Delaware are subject to its rules and regulations. Ray further mentioned that the rules and regulations have been expanded over the past decade and are quite explicit in scope. A handout was provided which presented a general checklist from the State of Delaware on municipal activities covered under F.O.I.A

Items for public disclosure covered under F.O.I.A. include sufficient notification of upcoming meetings, access to the specific responsibilities of the individual committees, availability of the detailed minutes of committee meetings, availability of details on the bidding process for the Village's service contracts (snow removal, garbage removal, road maintenance, et al). In addition, Ray stated that the rules and responsibilities of the individual committees must be clearly outlined and disclosed under F.O.I.A.

Ray and Bill Theis next discussed the prospects for expanding the scope of the Advisory Committee to arbitrate unresolved issues between committees and to officially challenge committee actions, also with the intention of minimizing the potential for litigation and financial penalties arising from F.O.I.A. access. Ray agreed to prepare for the Advisory Committee a proposal outlining the aforementioned in greater detail.

The C.P.C. meeting was adjourned at 8:17PM.

Meeting minutes compiled and prepared by Dan McNeil.