

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

Minutes Of Meeting Held On Wednesday March 19, 2014

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

Absent: Michael Falstad

Guest Appearance: Toby Ridings & Alex Ruzinksi representing Garden Group

Meeting called to order by Chair Ray Seigfried at 7:04 PM

Ray requested a motion to approve the minutes of the C.P.C. meetings for January and February 2014. The motion was made and unanimously approved for submission and posting to the official web site of the Village of Arden.

The topics addressed in this meeting include: (1) The future of the Garden Group (2) The Village Authorization to the County/State/Federal authorities for participating in FEMA; (3) Discussion and vote on a one-time waiver to the Arden Building & Loan (AB&L) for its violation of the Village's Vacant Housing Ordinance; and (4) Follow-up on the Conflict of Interest Policy and Freedom of Information Act (F.O.I.A.).

The individual topics are addressed as follows.

The Village of Arden Garden Group

The Garden Group is an unofficial village organization which has been operating seasonally since C.Y. 2008 within a former toddler's enclosed playground located on the grounds of the Buzz Ware Community Center. Utilizing an irregular site containing 3,750+/- square feet, this organization is open to all village residents interested in planting and maintaining designated plots during the spring, summer and fall seasons. The use of the site is annually approved by the Village Assembly with no land rent charged.

Perennial and annual plantings are permitted. Individual plots are assigned on a "first come - first serve basis" with plot size contingent on individual planter experience. During its 6 years of operation, the Garden Group has annually increased its membership with currently up to 20+/- dues paying participants. All interested residents are accommodated with one plot per family with no one turned away. Annual dues currently average approximately \$20.00 per member. The annual dues collected are reported to be used in the operation and maintenance of the garden (mulch, fertilizer, tree/shrub removal, etc.). It was noted that a goodwill contribution of \$75.00 is also made to the Buzz Ware Community Center.

Toby and Alex appeared at our meeting as the unofficial voice of the group. It is now the group's intention of promoting its formal recognition by the Village and the permanent use of the existing lot area. A formalized recognition is now considered to be necessary due to the growing number of participants. The increasing number of participants requires a higher level of transparency with an established mechanism to arbitrate disputes between planters and the community. Toby and Alex envision the group as a prospective sub-committee of the C.P.C.

Ray requested further details in writing on the Group's mission statement, goals, officers, admission requirements and general operating procedures, et al. The purpose of this document represents a critical component in the formal presentation to the Village Assembly. Ray would initially prefer to review and discuss with the Advisory Committee. Ray feels this is an effective screening process in building a consensus in order to successfully navigate a formal approval through the Village Assembly.

Toby and Alex agreed to complete a proposal for Ray in order to present during the upcoming June 2014 meeting of the Advisory committee.

F.E.M.A. Resolution

Ray, with the assistance of Pat Toman of Ardentown, continues to work with John Cartier (Arden's County Representative) and Dave Carpenter (County's FEMA Specialist) in order to complete and submit a Village Resolution requesting official induction into the F.E.M.A. program administered through the federal government.

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The approval process will take up to six months as county and state recommendations are required prior to the final formal approval by the federal government.

Village of Arden Vacant Housing Ordinance

Ron Meick as a Director of the Arden Building & Loan submitted a check in payment for all outstanding fines encumbering the leasehold estate of 1904 Harvey Road through the F.Y.E. October 2013. As you may recall, the Arden Building & Loan legally obtained the leasehold interest in 1904 Harvey Road through a deed in lieu of foreclosure during early January 2014. Ray accepted the check for processing through the Village Treasurer. Ron also indicated that the property will likely be sold “As Is” over the next 30 days in an expedited arms-length sale.

Ron subsequently requested a one-time waiver for the last remaining fine for the current fiscal year ending October 2014. Ron indicated that the property was moving through the foreclosure process concomitant with the emerging expiration for registering vacant homes under the Vacant Housing Ordinance. Since the mortgagor was being unresponsive and AB&L had no control of the leasehold estate, AB&L officials were effectively unable to address the filing deadline.

The request for this one-time waiver was then reviewed with the relevant provisions of the ordinance. While the property was never properly registered, the leasehold estate was currently being sold in an expedited sale. This pending sale was considered to warrant this one-time waiver. Ron further agreed to furnish the email documenting this pending sale.

The individual committee members unanimously approved this waiver with a recommendation for approval at the next Village Assembly. It is noted that Ron Meick recused himself from voting on this waiver as a board member of the Arden Building & Loan.

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

Ray indicated that the two competing policies on Conflict Of Interest were submitted to the Village’s Attorney for legal review and comment. As you may recall, Ray initially prepared a policy which was countered with a policy prepared by Cecilia Vore, Registration Committee Chair.

Ray is waiting for feedback, but hopes to have this policy as well as other F.O.I.A. topics ready for additional analysis and discussion by June 2014.

The C.P.C. meeting was adjourned at 8:21PM.

Meeting minutes compiled and prepared by Dan McNeil.