

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

### **Minutes Of Meeting Held On Wednesday April 16, 2014**

Present: Ray Seigfried, Ron Meick, Cynthia Dewick, Larry Strange and Dan McNeil

Absent: Sally Sharp

Guest Appearance: Bill Theis

Meeting called to order by Convener Cynthia Dewick at 7:10 PM

Cynthia called the meeting to order and requested a motion to elect a committee chairman. A motion was made to re-elect Ray Siegfried for the next year. The motion was seconded and Ray was re-elected with a unanimous vote.

The topics addressed in this meeting include: (1) The Village Authorization to the County/State/Federal authorities for participating in F.E.M.A.; (2) Update on the official filings related to the Village's Vacant Housing Ordinance; (3) Follow-up on the Conflict of Interest Policy and Freedom of Information Act (F.O.I.A.); (4) Update on dispute between the Village's Civic Committee and Arden Clubs; (5) Update on Storm Water Drainage by Forest Committee; and (6) Update on negotiations between the (3) Arden's on the operation of the Buzz Ware Community Center

The individual topics are addressed as follows.

#### **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. 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. Ray had no additional information on this topic.

#### **Village of Arden Vacant Housing Ordinance**

Ray indicated that the authorization identifying those leaseholds in violation of this ordinance was submitted to the Village's Chairman (Danny Schweers) for signature, notarization and official filing with the New Castle County Recorder of Deeds. Ray indicated that the document was being reviewed and will likely be filed shortly.

#### **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 in late March/early April. As you may recall, Ray initially prepared a policy which was countered with a policy prepared by Cecilia Vore, Registration Committee Chair.

Ray is still 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.

#### **Status on negotiations between the Civic Committee and Arden Clubs on the location of the outdoor stage**

During Q4\_2013, the Civic Committee officially assumed the responsibilities of the C.P.C. in its oversight of the Arden Memorial Gardens. The Civic Committee subsequently declared that the Arden Clubs' outdoor stage was done without a building permit while encroaching on the lands of the Memorial Garden. It was demanded that this be cured immediately. New Castle County was also notified of this illegal construction and encroachment.

Since the outdoor stage is effectively a permanent fixture and this issue is not new, it was requested that the two groups arrange a mutually agreeable land swap. C.P.C. member Ron Meick, as a board member of the Arden Club's, indicated that an easement agreement has recently been agreed upon by the two parties. Final approval is now required from New Castle County which in turn will issue the permit approving development.

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Bill Theis indicated that as a result of this conflict there is a growing consensus that the Community Gardens should be a full committee and no longer a sub-committee of the Civic Committee. Further discussion will likely continue at the upcoming Advisory Committee meeting in June 2014.

### **Storm water drainage and Naamans Creek**

Carol Larson as Chairman of the Forrest Committee reported in the January 2014 C.P.C. meeting that a grant from the State of Delaware was being solicited (\$50,000) for the purpose of addressing the issues related to excessive storm waters flowing into Naamans Creek and the ensuing soil erosion occurring on its banks. This is related to storm waters running directly through the Village of Arden as well as high volumes of upstream water attributed to the excessive impervious coverage along Naamans Road. Carol indicated that grant monies are available through the State along with assistance through the University of Delaware.

Ray has heard nothing further on this initiative from Carol Larson.

### **Debate on Governance of the Buzz Ware Community Center**

Discussions are underway between the three villages on the operations of the Buzz Ware Community Center. The Villages of Ardentown and Ardencroft have expressed a strong interest in obtaining a greater voice in the operations of the B.W.C.C. since this community center is considered to be serving the (3) Arden's. Nonetheless, the B.W.C.C. is owned and operated by the Village of Arden which has sole responsibility and liability for its operations. While the Village's of Ardentown and Ardencroft have expressed an interest in a greater voice in its operations, they are showing a reluctance to operate within a transparent operational framework and accepting any of the financial responsibilities.

### **Miscellaneous**

The last topic discussed was originated by Cynthia Dewick regarding the creation of a new committee overseeing the rules governing the Village's Community Meetings. Cynthia feels the lack of any official guidelines on parliamentary procedures is resulting in the appearance of chaotic meetings which quickly lead to a lack of civility. These chaotic meetings are considered to be a likely factor in keeping many Arden residents from actively participating in village government. It was the general consensus that official rules on parliamentary procedure can be addressed within the upcoming discussions on Conflict of Interest, F.O.I.A. and improved transparency in local government.

The C.P.C. meeting was adjourned at 8:05PM.

Meeting minutes compiled and prepared by Dan McNeil.