

Three Villages, One Buzz?

Meeting of the Chairs of The Ardens, Saturday, January 4, 2014
to discuss joint responsibility for the Buzz Ware Village Center

On Saturday, January 4, the chairs of the three Ardens met. Jim Schwaber, an Ardencroft director, had asked us to explore how the three villages might share in the governance of, and fiscal responsibility for, the Buzz Ware Village Center.

Our exploration of possibilities has just begun. Before it concludes, there will be ample time for all residents of the three villages to have their comments heard. Now is not that time. Even so, feel free to call your village's chair if you have questions or comments. Note that nothing can be formalized without the approval of each village in an open vote. Below are Enno Krebbers' notes from our meeting.

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NOTES BY ENNO KREBBERS:

Main points from three town chair discussion on Buzz Ware Village Center matter 1/4/14

1. The Buzz Ware has been an important part of village life in all three villages for many years. It is important that the three villages work together to make sure that continues.
2. Historically there have been occasional problems, and recent events show that the time has come to deal with the core issues underlying those problems. It is not unusual as circumstances change that older structures need revision.
3. While human nature is such that personalities sometimes play a role, it is clear to the outside observer that the fundamental problem is structural – how the governance and administration of the center is organized.
4. The town chairs agreed that the best way forward is to examine options for different types of structure and organization, using some of the other organizations in the three village community as examples.
5. To avoid possible problems in defining alternative structures and to have the best possible skill sets involved, the chairs agreed involving one or more outside experts is most likely to lead to success.
6. It was agreed that the first step would be to have an informal discussion with Ted Rosenthal, an attorney with a long history of connection to the three villages but who lives in none of them, and so can be accepted to give a neutral point of view.
7. He will be asked, either himself or someone he feels better placed, to provide some options for the villages to consider. The chairs will work with their respective village governance groups to ensure that the necessary funding for this work can be found.

8. The core principles will be:
 - a. A structure which makes the organization running the Buzz Ware independent, rather than part of one or more of the three villages governance apparatus.
 - b. That organization will be filled with people from the three villages proportional in a way to be agreed upon (population, financial factors, others).
 - c. Once the group is formed, it will be independent and each member will have fiduciary responsibility to the Buzz Ware Center, not to the villages from which they were appointed. The villages will set terms and provide new people when appropriate.
9. Mr. Rosenthal will be asked to compare and contrast different possible type of structures, including:
 - a. A unitary structure, meaning the organization and activities but also the physical building are all part of the unitary structure. This might or might not involve a "501-3C" type of organization, as it done with other Arden community organizations. The Gild Hall is an example of this type. The land itself would remain administered as at present, consistent with the principle covering all land in the three Ardens.
 - b. A split structure, in which the organization and activities are run by the group, but the building remains owned by the village that currently does so. In this structure, some sort of "rent" for structural maintenance and so on would be paid to that village, instead of the new Buzz Ware group being responsible. This is also done in some community organizations, such as the Candlelight Theater.
 - c. Each of the above, and variations thereof, will involve different arrangements for maintenance of the building, responsibility and action should the Buzz simply fail, and so on. This complexity is why a careful, formal examination of the alternatives is necessary.
10. Definition of options for the three villages to consider will take significant time, perhaps 6-12 months. During this period, the town chairs and appropriate structures within each village will work with those currently on the Buzz Ware committee or representatives to it to ensure flexibility while the work on the longer term solution is done.
11. The final solution will have to be approved by all three villages.