

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

Minutes Of Meeting Held On Wednesday January 18, 2017

Present: Ray Seigfried, Ron Meick, Mark Wood and Dan McNeil

Member Absent: Cynthia Dewick and Sally Sharp

Sub-Committee Present: None

Meeting called to order by Ray Seigfried as the Committee Chairman at 7:04 PM

The minutes of the meeting for November 2016 were reviewed, discussed, approved and posted by December 29, 2016. There were no C.P.C. meetings in October and December 2016.

The topics addressed in this meeting include: (1) Candidates 2017 Election; (2) Village Transformation Project Ad hoc Committee; (3) Memorial Garden/Community Garden Sub-Committees; (4) Vacant Housing Ordinance; (5) Public Land – Deed Restrictions; and (5) Wetlands Parcel on North Bank of Naamans Creek

Guest Appearance: Jeff Politis

Candidates For 2017 Election

The Committee briefly reviewed the list of six candidates in the March 2017 election for the three open seats on the C.P.C.

Village Transformation Project

The only update was that Pam Politis was replacing Steven Threefoot in leading the Village Transformation Project.

Memorial Garden / Community Garden Sub-Committee

There was no update from either The Memorial Garden or the Community Garden.

Ray will follow up with Toby Ridings on beginning a dialogue with the local residents claiming that the practices of the Community Garden of allowing the same plots to be used by the same individuals over consecutive seasons is outside “Georgist Principles”. Ray hopes to have Toby Ridings reach a reasonable compromise and will bring into the discussion Mike Curtis, Elizabeth Varley and Sadie Somerville since each is considered knowledgeable on Georgist Principles.

Village of Arden Vacant Housing Ordinance

The latest list identified six leaseholders which appear to be in violation of the Vacant Housing Ordinance. The notifications were sent in December 2016 and the leaseholders must now respond to the Village Secretary by January 31, 2017.

Ray indicated that one leasehold is challenging the current violation as well as the violations and fines accruing over the past four years. Ray suggested sending a copy of Section 3B3 of the Village Ordinance outlining the evidence which must be provided to prove occupancy for the applicable periods. Ray requested a motion which was duly made and seconded by the C.P.C. members in attendance and everyone voted in favor of the motion. Ray will coordinate the response to the leaseholder through the Village Secretary.

Public Land – Deed Restrictions

Since April 2016, Ray has initiated a governmental review of the covenants, conditions and restrictions in the 1973 deed between the Trustees of Arden and the Village of Arden. The deed addressed (7) common area tracts of forest and green space which were conveyed to the Village as part of its incorporation in accordance with State Law.

Ray believes that the current Deed Restrictions are not clear and has recommended the Village retain an attorney specializing in land use law for the purpose of preparing a legal opinion addressing the covenants, conditions and restricts affecting the (7) common area tracts of forest and green space.

On-going discussions have been occurring between Ray and Jeff Politis as Village Chairman with Michael DeNote, Esq. Mr. DeNote is a land use attorney at Drinker Biddle & Reath, LLP in Wilmington. Ray expects to receive a draft opinion and/or prospective revision of the deed for the next meeting.

Available Wetlands Site on Naamans Creek

Jeff Politis reported a 1.5+/- acre environmentally sensitive wetlands site was acquired during C.Y. 2016 with county approvals for development of four residential homes. The site is located on the northerly bank of Naamans Creek, opposite the Village's forest lands, and extending through to Mill Race Road.

The site work commenced during December 2016, but was abruptly halted after major errors were identified in the approved site plan. The owner subsequently began legal proceedings against the engineering company and offered to sell the site to the Village of Arden.

We examined the pros and cons of the Village acquiring this site and came to a consensus that it is in the Village's best interest to acquire the site to further protect Arden's forest and the Naamans Creek watershed.

Ray requested a motion which was duly made and seconded by the C.P.C. members in attendance to support the Village Chairman in his efforts to acquire the site. Every member voted in favor of this motion. Ray will make an announcement in support of this effort at the upcoming Village Assembly.

The meeting was adjourned by Ray Seigfried as Committee Chairman at 7:50 PM.

Meeting minutes compiled and prepared by Dan McNeil.