

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

Minutes Of Meeting Held On Wednesday February 18, 2015

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

Absent: Sally Sharp

Meeting called to order by Ray Seigfried as Committee Chairman at 7:02 PM

The minutes of the meetings for November 2014, January 2015 and February 2015 were individually reviewed, discussed and approved. There was no C.P.C. meeting held in December 2014.

The topics addressed in this meeting include: (1) Vacant Housing Ordinance.

Guest Appearance: John Cartier, New Castle County Council Representative

Village of Arden Vacant Housing Ordinance

The Village's Vacant Housing Ordinance has now been in effect for three years with Ray briefly reviewing the monies collected to date. Ray reiterated that the C.P.C. must spend the collected fines in a manner consistent with the ordinance in order to preclude being represented as a tax.

John Cartier attended our meeting to review New Castle County's recently approved ordinance on vacant housing. A summary of the ordinance was provided to all attendees. The ordinance has been under negotiation since circa 2008-2009 and was recently approved by unanimous consent (13-0) by the New Castle County Council. The ordinance is projected to be approved shortly by the County Executive and will become effective during C.Y. 2015.

The County's Vacant Housing Ordinance is a complaint driven system which will be handled by administrators employed in the Land Use Department by New Castle County. The ordinance was deemed necessary since the related expense in protecting its neighborhoods against the negative impact of abandoned and foreclosed homes was being borne exclusively by New Castle County. The negative impact of vacant/abandoned homes was putting undue pressure on the budgets/manpower of law enforcement, fire service, community service and code enforcement. John mentioned that foreclosing banks were incredibly remiss in preserving/maintaining foreclosed homes.

The County Ordinance stipulates that all residential homes must be registered by the legal owner with the County's Land Use Department if the premises have been vacant in excess of 90 consecutive days. Foreclosing banks must register the premise if vacant within 10 days of foreclosure. The annual registration fee is \$100 per year if the home remains vacant during the first two years of registration. If the home remains vacant after two years, the annual fee will scale higher annually up to \$5,000 per year by year 10, subsequently increasing by 10% per year thereafter. In addition, it is also noted that the registered owner remains responsible for compliance with all other N.C.C. Code requirements. Lastly, all unpaid fees and penalties will become legal tax liens against the real estate until paid in full.

Ray indicated that C.P.C. must now make a presentation to the Village Assembly on whether the Village should continue to either administer its own Vacant Housing Ordinance or officially become subject to the County's new Vacant Housing Ordinance. The Village of Arden as an incorporated village has the legal right to continue administering its own program, however, the Village Assembly must officially vote on which Vacant Housing Ordinance best serves the community.

Consequently, the C.P.C. will begin identifying the positive and negative features of each ordinance with recommendations for presentation at the Village Assembly in June 2015.

The meeting was adjourned by Ray Seigfried as Committee Chairman at 8:20 PM

Meeting minutes compiled and prepared by Dan McNeil.