

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

Minutes Of Meeting Held On Wednesday October 15, 2014

Present: Ray Seigfried, Cynthia Dewick and Larry Strange

Absent: Ron Meick, Dan McNeil and Sally Sharp

Meeting called to order by Ray Seigfried as Committee Chairman at 7:00 PM

The minutes for the two September meetings were reviewed. A motion was made to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved.

The topics addressed in this meeting include: (1) Vacant Housing – 2101 Marsh Road; (2) F.E.M.A. Resolution; (3) Village of Arden Community Garden; and (4) Nominations For March 2015 Election

Guest Appearance: Mike Curtis representing the Trustees of Arden

Village of Arden Vacant Housing Ordinance

The vacant home at 2101 Marsh Road has been in violation of the Village's Vacant Housing Ordinance as well as multiple New Castle County Ordinances related to appearance and safety. The house has been vacant for 10+/- years since the death of its long standing owner and an unresolved Estate. Consequently, the property has fallen into a serious state of disrepair and is effectively uninhabitable and an eyesore to the surrounding homes. Nonetheless, it is noted that the land rent is current, but the fines from this violations are still outstanding and continue to accrue.

The reason that no action has been taken to date is the fact that the prior owner died intestate without a will. As such, N.C.C. has been precluded from any action until the legal ownership is clearly established. The prior owner has a daughter who has an interest in the Estate, but who lacks the financial resources to take her rightful ownership through succession.

Mike Curtis is currently examining this dilemma along with the potential options legally permitted under their leased fee estate for assisting in establishing "clean" ownership of the leasehold estate. Potential options include calling upon New Castle County to take action and removing the existing improvements. This is problematic since New Castle County is unlikely to take any action until the issue of succession/ownership is resolved.

As such, Mike has asked the Village Attorney (Ted Rosenthal) to offer his services to the late owner's daughter in resolving the issue of ownership and preparing for an arms length conveyance of the leasehold estate. The legal fees can be paid from the proceeds of the future sale. The Trustees are interested in acquiring the property and are prepared to offer the market value. Mike indicated that the monies are available through the bequest from the Schroder Estate.

Ray thinks that a more prudent course of action is for New Castle County to exercise its legal right under the applicable county ordinance subsequent to clearing up the legal issue on the current ownership. Ray feels that the risk is excessive in light of the severely deteriorated state of the existing improvements and the potential liable to the Village of Arden. Ray agreed to discuss his views and opinions in a letter to the Trustees.

Lastly, Ray indicated that a request will soon be made to the Registration Committee for its latest list of vacant homes.

F.E.M.A. Resolution

Ray continues to work with John Cartier (Arden's County Representative) and Dave Carpenter (County's FEMA Specialist) on the Village's official induction into the F.E.M.A. program. Ray indicated that an update on our application status is expected in December 2014.

Community Garden Club

The Community 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 residents of Arden, Ardentown and Ardencroft who are interested in planting and maintaining designated plots during the spring, summer and fall seasons.

C.P.C Minutes – October 2014 Meeting

Page 2

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.).

A motion was made at the Village Assembly of January 2009 to more closely examine the organization with the intention of officially recognizing and designating it as a sub-committee of an existing committee. There was, however, no further action.

During C.Y. 2014, Toby Ridings and Alex Rudzinski appeared at (3+/-) C.P.C. meetings with the intention of promoting its official recognition by the Village consistent with the motion in the January 2009 Village Assembly. Background and financial information has been regularly provided.

Ray discussed this topic with the Advisory Committee in June 2014, however, no action was taken at the September 2014 Village Assembly. Ray now indicated that the chairman's of the Buzz Ware Center and Civic Committee will be invited to a future Community Planning Committee meeting in order to discuss expediting the group's official recognition.

Nominations For Upcoming Election in March 2015

Ray indicated nominations for the Community Planning Committee are required for the election in March 2015. Five names are required for the two members up for re-election. Ray indicated that Dan McNeil and Ron Meick will once again be placed on the ballot along with Mark Wood who has agreed to participate. Two more names are needed of which Ray agreed to ask Sally Sharp for her participation. Ray requested that committee members come up with an additional name to be placed on the ballot.

The meeting was adjourned by Ray Seigfried as Committee Chairman at 8:07 PM

Meeting minutes compiled by Larry Strange and prepared by Dan McNeil.