

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

Minutes Of Meeting Held On Wednesday November 18, 2015

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

Member Absent: Sally Sharp

Sub-Committee Present: None

Meeting called to order by Ray Seigfried as the Committee Chairman at 7:03 PM

The minutes of the meeting for October 2015 were reviewed, discussed and approved.

The topics addressed in this meeting include: (1) Village Transformation Project; (2) FEMA Resolution; (3) Memorial Garden / Community Garden Sub-Committees; (4) Vacant Housing Ordinance; (4) Comprehensive Land Use Plan; (5) Firearms in Public Facilities; and (6) Village Hiring Practice

Guest Appearance: Jeff Politis, Village Chairman on Village Transformation Project and Mike Curtis, Village Trustee on 2101 Marsh Road

### **Village Transformation Project**

In the May and October 2015 C.P.C. meetings, Jeff Politis as Village Chairman indicated a strong interest in actively investing available funds in projects benefiting the Village. Jeff suggested that the C.P.C. begin a substantive discussion which commenced with this November 2015 C.P.C. meeting.

Jeff envisions project(s) which are capable of favorably impacting the entire Village. A multi-step process was identified in which suitable projects are initially identified by a voluntary committee of village residents. The list of ideas/projects are then transferred to another volunteer committee who will address all aspects of the project planning including cost. A final volunteer committee will oversee the execution of the approved projects.

The methodology for establishing and overseeing all aspects of this project are subject to the input and approval from the Village Assembly. It is hoped that an announcement can be made at the January 2015 Village Assembly.

### **F.E.M.A. Resolution**

Ray has been diligently working over the past two years 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. The application was approved by both New Castle County and the State of Delaware and on May 29, 2015 was officially submitted for approval to F.E.M.A. The application was subsequently returned with F.E.M.A. requesting updated mapping information. Jeff Politis agreed to follow up and provide this updated information. Ray will continue to follow up and move toward final approval and enrollment in the program.

### **Memorial Garden / Community Garden Sub-Committee**

There were no updates on the Memorial Garden or by the Community Garden.

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

The Village of Arden as an incorporated village has the legal right to continue administering its own program in lieu of participating within New Castle County's program. This was affirmed by consensus at the Village Assembly in March 2015 that the Village of Arden will continue to administer its own program. An official resolution was delivered to the County stating such, however, it still had not been acknowledged and approved.

Ray subsequently requested our county representative (John Cartier) to set up a meeting with the County Attorney in order to help expedite approval. A meeting was arranged and the County Attorney agreed to approve and submit to the County Council for final approval in November/December 2015. Timing has become critical since the Village of Arden can not file any liens without NCC approval of this ordinance.

The latest list provided through the Village Registration Committee was reviewed and discussed in detail with Ray updating the master list for the current fiscal year.

John Cartier subsequently reported in early December that the resolution was acknowledged and accepted by the County, thus legalizing the Village's ordinance.

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Mike Curtis updated the C.P.C. on the recent acquisition by the Trustees of Arden of the Eachus leasehold at 2101 Marsh Road. The existing improvements have been vacant for 20+/- years and a serious eyesore to the surrounding leaseholds. The leasehold had also accumulated several thousand dollars in outstanding violations under the Vacant Housing Ordinance.

Mike indicated that the acquisition was finalized and the outstanding fines paid through the assistance of the Village Attorney (Ted Rosenthal). Plans are currently underway for razing the existing improvements. Mike lastly indicated that the property will be now be sold in an arms length transaction as a development site. The Trustees have posted a “For Sale” sign and are accepting bids.

### **Comprehensive Land Use Plan**

Discussion on the stewardship of open public space and creation of a land use plan was identified in the September 2015 C.P.C. meeting as worthy of future discussion and potential action through the C.P.C. It was suggested that a Village Approved Master Land Use Plan created with professional assistance could address these questions/concerns in a comprehensive format. It was decided to explore initial assistance through the University of Delaware and Temple University which have established programs for such in their Schools of Public Policy/Government, et al.

Ray indicated that no action had been taken to date, but indicated the topic would be addressed in future C.P.C. meetings.

### **Firearms in Public Facilities**

Ray indicated an interest in the October 2015 meeting of pursuing the creation of a Village Ordinance prohibiting firearms in public facilities. A Village Ordinance is legally permissible under Delaware State Law. Ray subsequently reviewed the law in greater detail and concluded that the law as written shifts enforcement on local municipalities. The C.P.C. members concurred and no further action was deemed reasonable.

### **Village’s Employee Hiring Practice**

Larry questioned the current process for deciding whether a prospective job candidate is hired as an employee of the Village or as a private vendor under a contract with the Village. This topic has come up in prior C.P.C. meetings and addressed in the June 2015 Advisory Meeting, however, nothing conclusive has been forthcoming. Ray and Larry both reiterated the need for the Village to have an official and “best practices” policy on Village employment. Larry suggested introducing a motion at the next Village Assembly which would address the Village’s legal responsibility and need for transparency in its hiring practices. Larry agreed to prepare a motion for the next Village Assembly in January 2016.

The meeting was adjourned by Ray Seigfried as Committee Chairman at 8:50 PM

Meeting minutes compiled and prepared by Dan McNeil.