

Arden:

Here's How It Works

This is a brief guide to how government works in the Village of Arden. More information and a list of current committee members is available on the village government website: <http://arden.delaware.gov/>

We have a "town meeting" form of government; decision-making power resides in the town meeting itself, rather than in elected representatives. The **trustees** and **assessors** also have specific powers and duties separate from the town meeting.

Town meetings are held on the fourth Monday of January, March, June and September at 7:30 in the Gild Hall. You can vote if you are a resident over 18 years of age and have lived in Arden for 6 months. Town meetings are open to the public, but only residents may vote; leaseholders who are not also residents may not vote.

The day-to-day tasks of running the village are handled by **standing committees**: these residents check the roads for potholes, prepare the budget, and serve the community in many ways. If you have never served on a committee, please consider it. The village needs your help to run smoothly and democratically. If you aren't quite ready to run for a committee, you can still help count votes

Some committees (Auditing, Budget) meet several times each year, and their task is done. Some are active year round (Civic, Buzz Ware Village Center.) If you are a "hands-on" type, or an "idea" person, have a knowledge of road repair, or are a parent who wants to make sure our playgrounds are safe, there is a committee for you.

You can volunteer to run for a committee or get more information by contacting the committee chairperson. Some people may tell you that new people never get elected, but that isn't true. New residents are welcome and encouraged to get involved.

Referendums

Two important elections are held each November: the Board of Assessors (see other side) and the Budget Referendum. Ballots are mailed to every eligible voter. The budget must be approved by a majority of *all eligible voters*, not just a simple majority of people who vote.

Revised June 2015

For the latest update, go to <http://arden.delaware.gov>

Standing Committees

Nominations are made at the January town meeting and may continue up to the March Advisory meeting. Election is at the March meeting. Two names must be nominated for each position open. All terms are for two years, with half of the committee elected in odd-numbered years and half elected in even-numbered years.

Archives Committee

The Archives Committee preserves the history of the village by collecting and preserving documents, photos, etc.; presenting displays and programs about Arden's past, its people and its arts; and running the Arden Craft Shop Museum along with representatives of Ardentown and Ardencroft. The committee seeks grants to support the museum. Many volunteers assist with projects.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee has four scheduled meetings each year. (Other meetings may be held as requested or needed.) At these meetings they perform random internal audits on the books, legends, and accounts of the Village of Arden. In addition, they review annual audits from outside accountants (currently Barbacane Thornton and Company) for the village and the trustees. The results of these four meetings are reported at the town meetings.

Budget Committee

The Budget Committee organizes past and coming-year village expenditures for presentation to the September Town Assembly. It also prepares a three-year projection for the March Assembly. The September report forms the basis of the annual budget referendum. To prepare reports, committee members communicate with the other standing committees, the town secretary, treasurer and the trustees. This information-gathering activity provides an excellent overview of Arden's governmental structure and its finances.

Buzz Ware Village Center Committee

The BWVC Committee oversees maintenance, security and use of the center (2119 The Highway), which is owned by the village and formerly was our elementary school. The committee also administers leases and contracts for the building and plans programs of interest to the community. This building is a community resource, and the committee encourages its use by residents. Meetings once a month, in the evening, year round. www.ardenbuzz.com

Civic Committee

The Civic Committee supervises maintenance and repair of roads, paths, greens and storm sewers. This includes determining when repairs are needed, soliciting bids, and hiring contractors. The committee acts as a liaison with the trash collection and recycling companies. The Civic Committee also deals with encroachment issues on the rights-of-way. Email: ardencivic@theardens.com

Community Planning Committee

The Community Planning Committee plans the “physical and cultural future of the community.” It works with other committees on projects that have a major impact on the village, such as watershed protection, landscape plans for the greens, Harvey Road traffic, and historic landmark status. It monitors county and state issues (such as re-zonings) and also oversees the Memorial Garden (cemetery). planning@theardens.com

Forest Committee

The Forest Committee implements Arden’s Forest Stewardship Policy, oversees trail improvement, tree felling in the woods, plant removal, and strives to prevent encroachment and stream erosion. The committee also organizes an annual woods cleanup along with Ardentown and Ardencroft. Public Facebook page: **Forests of the Ardens**. email: forest@theardens.com

Playground Committee

The Playground Committee assures that the playground equipment on the Arden Green and Sherwood Green is in good, safe condition. The committee inspects the equipment every other month during the winter and every month during the summer. Members spread mulch in the play areas as needed and contract for painting and repair. They also recommend purchase of new equipment.

Registration Committee

The Registration Committee conducts town elections and the annual referendum on the budget and Board of Assessors (held in the fall, after the September town meeting). Keeping track of the census and the list of registered voters are additional responsibilities of the committee. **e-mail:** registration@theardens.com

Safety Committee

Broadly speaking, the committee handles safety issues. It replaces and installs stop signs, no parking signs, etc., throughout the town. It administers Arden’s off-street parking ordinance and monitors encroachments on the rights-of-way (road shoulders). It acts as liaison with the New Castle County Police, but it does NOT handle complaints that should be referred to the police. You can contact the committee at: ardensafety@theardens.com

Coordinating the Committees

The Advisory Committee is made up of the chairpersons of all the standing committees, plus the town officers, the senior trustee, and the chair of the Board of Assessors. It acts as a coordinating committee and sets the agenda for the town meetings. Chairperson of the Advisory Committee is elected each year at the March meeting.

Officers, Trustees, Assessors, etc.

Town officers (* indicates salaried position)

Elected for one-year terms at the March meeting:

Advisory Committee chairperson

(see “Advisory Committee,” at left)

Town Assembly chairperson *Jeffrey Politis, 475-3516*

Conducts town meetings, is sometimes instructed to represent the town in an official capacity, heads special committees. ardenchair@theardens.com.

Town secretary* *Liz Resko, 475-3516*

Elected for a two-year term in even-numbered years

Town treasurer *David Michelson, c.215-467-3895*

Trustees

Mike Curtis, Carl Falco, Elizabeth Varley

Office: 475-7980

The trustees administer the Deed of Trust: they collect land rent, pay county and school taxes, pay administrative costs of the trust, and provide money to the Village of Arden to spend according to the approved budget. They also invest funds and maintain a prudent reserve. They approve the transfer of leases when houses are sold; give permission to cut trees on leaseholds; resolve encroachment issues, housing code violations, and other matters related to the leaseholds. Occasionally they decide on requests to divide lots or adjust boundaries (subject to zoning restrictions). Building permits are issued by New Castle County, but the county will not approve a permit without a non-object letter from the trustees.

When a vacancy occurs, the remaining two trustees solicit input from the residents and nominate a new trustee. The nominee is then approved or disapproved in a referendum of all eligible voters. Once confirmed, trustees serve for as long as they are willing and able.

Board of Assessors

7 members, elected annually by referendum

The Board of Assessors establishes the land rent rates for Arden leaseholds, according to the Georgist principle of “full rental value” of the land. Since Henry George himself never spelled out how to calculate “full rental value,” this is no simple task. Nominations are made at the September town meeting; election is by referendum in the fall, using the Hare System of Proportional Representation.

Non-elected positions

Administrative assistant to the trustees: *Julia McNeil*, appointed by trustees. **Memorial Garden Representative:** *Ruth Bean*, appointed by Community Planning Comm.