

Arden Election of the 2019 Board of Assessors

Don't forget to vote: Ballots were mailed to all eligible voters in Arden on Oct 4.

Ballots must be returned by 7:30pm, **Tuesday, Oct. 30, 2018.**

Ballots will be counted at the Buzz Ware Village Center. The public is invited to attend.

For questions about the election, contact the Registration Committee at: registration@arden.delaware.gov

Candidates state their positions

Below are statements from candidates running for 7 seats on the Arden Board of Assessors.

Please check back for any revisions that include updated or additional statements.

BROOKE BOVARD (2014 statement) I'm a native Ardenite and raising my family here, and I've had the honor of serving on the Board of Assessors for most of the last 10 years. I am also the founding mother and first gildmistress of the Georgist Gild. My leasehold is medium sized, on Harvey Road. This is my take on what's important in a member of the Board of Assessors. MOST important is a sense of perspective, and a willingness to get on with the business of governing. People have all kinds of notions about what method we should use to assess. They have all kinds of ways to weigh data, all sources for data (including plain imagination) and a wide variety of political or other agendas. That's how people work, and it's great in a debate society, or an academic setting. But the work the Assessors do impacts, directly, the families in this town. We need a Board of Assessors who understands that, who respects the needs of our neighbors to have an affordable, predictable, fairly administered assessment, so that ordinary people can plan their budgets and do what they need to. We have, over the years, had highly ideological assessors, assessors who served without ever signing the assessment, assessors who never came to meetings, and assessors who proposed an alternate assessment when the votes didn't go their way. Please send assessors who will work, reach a reasonable, real-world group product, and keep the town running, without a lot of drama and grandstanding. That's my priority.

MARIANNE CINAGLIA I have been a leaseholder for 47 years and have served the Village as a Trustee, Chair of the Advisory Committee, a member of the Budget Committee and now, the Transformational Committee. My professional background includes work as a chemist, 7-12 science teacher in New Castle County and a professor at Rowan University. My community-based interests at present are Board membership of the Council of Civic Organizations of Brandywine Hundred (CCOBH), the Naamans Creek Watershed Association and the Christina Conservancy. Assessors have a tricky job that requires study, listening skills, an awareness of the Arden community, potential expenses in the next few years and a knowledge of what belonging to a single-tax community based on Henry George's economics is all about. If elected, I would serve the Village conscientiously.

CHRIS JUNK

MICHELLE LAUER It's an honor and a privilege to be a candidate for the Arden Board of Assessors. Having never served in this capacity before, one thing I guarantee I would bring to the role is a beginner's mind! And although I've only been a resident of Arden for a short time, I am no stranger to our community. I was born and raised in Ardentown. Throughout my childhood, I witnessed both my parents serving in some capacity of town government, and felt awed by their tireless dedication. For my part, I had a paper route that wound through all three Ardens, which got me involved in meeting many neighbors in an enterprising sort of way! So, when asked to run, I enthusiastically agreed, as I feel inspired to get involved and give back. I have been described as someone who sees the big picture yet is also detail oriented. I believe both of these traits, along with a willingness to learn, a commitment to remaining open minded and an ability to work well with others, would enable me to meet the needs of this important role.

Lastly, I am learning, it really does take a village to run a village. As an assessor, I would work hard to learn the nuts and bolts of this role, take my commitment seriously, yet also keep my sense of humor, and consider all factors to ensure our stability and continued growth.

JOHN MARTIN (2014 statement) I am honored to be a candidate to serve as a member of the Board of Assessors in Arden. I want to thank you for this opportunity and for your consideration of my candidacy in the upcoming election. While new to Arden itself, I am quite familiar with the work and theory of Henry George. I happen to teach him, among others, in an upper-level course I teach yearly at UD in American Political Thought. I would do my best to ensure his founding principles are upheld in any and all considerations regarding the tax responsibility entrusted to the Assessors. A 30-year career as an educator has, I think, helped me develop a number of skills that would be considered useful for serving in this position. I am open and tolerant of a wide spectrum of opinions and points of view. I work hard to listen to what others say, and mean. I try hard not to pre-judge matters. And, I like to think that I can work cooperatively with others.

Arden Board of Assessors • Candidate Statements *continued*

MIKE OPELKA Having lived in Arden for nearly a decade, I am a relative newcomer here and would offer a fresh perspective for this post. I am a committed libertarian dedicated to the two principles of the smaller government philosophy that states, “don’t hurt people and don’t take their stuff.” I also come from a family that shaped the world of real estate appraisal, creating the form used by virtually every real property appraiser in the country. The term “highest and best use of the land” was drilled into our brains from birth. Those who know me are likely aware my fiscal policies lean toward smaller, more efficient and less intrusive forms of government, preferring to inspire personal responsibility over meddling leadership. I would appreciate your vote.

PAM POLITIS (2017) I’ve been an Arden resident since 2000. While I have served in a variety of community activities over the years, I first served as an Assessor from 2016-17. I typically support the Assessors’ report as a member of Town Assembly, and I voted for the Assessors’ report as an assessor in 2017, but I appreciate the concern and effort of those putting forth alternative assessments. I will continue to work cooperatively and rigorously in serving as an assessor if elected.

DEBORAH RICARD Having resided in Arden for 15+ years, completed Mike Curtis’ Geogist course and thoughtfully considered the many factors involved in determining an annual land rent assessment that is fair and equitable for all Arden leaseholders, I feel that my acquired life skills qualify me to be a cooperative and productive member of the Arden Board of Assessors. I have previously served on Arden’s Archives and Forest Committees as well as volunteered at the Buzz Ware Village Center. Currently I serve on the Arden Craft Shop Museum Board and on the Arden Club Board. I am a recently retired State of Delaware educator and currently enjoy working as an independent contractor sharing a love of technology with young children as well as developing STEM curriculum units for early learners.

GRACE RESSLER

JOHN SCHEFLEN (2016) My wife Marcia and I acquired a leasehold in Arden in 2009 and moved to Arden in 2011. I have a basic understanding of the principles of Arden’s land rent system and the application of those principles to assessments by the Board of Assessors in recent years but still have much to learn. I do not have any preconceived notions about changes to assessments methodology. I would welcome the opportunity to be an assessor and to learn more about the assessment process.

ELIZABETH VARLEY (2017) My family moved to Arden in 1960 and soon became involved with all aspects of Village life. For me it was a natural thing to serve the Village when I became an adult. I have been an Assessor several times as well as taken various Henry George classes. Most of the Boards of Assessors I have served on have used the “community standard of living” approach to determining Arden assessments. While some assessors feel it is necessary to have a “domicile factor,” in my opinion it is no longer valid as we now know that all leaseholds may add one additional in-home dwelling unit. Further discussion may be needed to consider those leaseholds with more than one such unit. I have also served on the Buzz Ware Village Center Committee, Forest Committee and Registration Committee. I am currently a Trustee of Arden.

LARRY WALKER (2017) My experience includes serving as an Assessor two times, and was Budget Committee Chairman. If elected, I will not support the new ADU tax, and urge a return to the previous system. However, I feel that the “A” Rate should be increased, so that the value of simply living in Arden will be a major consideration in setting the amount of the various rates.

LAURA WALLACE

TOM WHEELER (2017) 1. Experienced as an Assessor and has also co-written 2 alternative assessments.
2. Supports the traditional land based method of finding full rental value.
3. Believes that radical change executed in a single year to any leaseholder land rent is unfair and unneighborly.
4. As a 30+ year Realtor is concerned that a community history of rent rates changing by 50% in a single year may create a lack of confidence in the stability of the village.

MARK WOOD

Thank you to all the candidates for their willingness to serve the community.