

## What does the Arden Registration Committee do and how do we do it?

**1. We keep an accurate list** of Arden residents for the purposes of conducting elections. This is our responsibility under the town charter.

### **How do we know who lives in town?**

- We communicate with landlords, realtors and the trustees.
- We watch for “for sale” and “for rent” signs and moving vans.
- We have a standing note in the Arden Page at the end of the “Personal News” inviting newcomers to contact us.
- We ask at town meetings for newcomers to identify themselves to us.
- We ask at Advisory meetings if anyone in attendance knows of new residents.
- We maintain a database and continually update it. For instance, if a ballot is returned to us because the person has moved, we update that information.
- We regularly check with parents to see if their adult children have moved out.
- We review the voter list annually, one leasehold at a time. If we are unsure who is living at that leasehold, we note our questions and then get the answers. We make phone calls, we knock on doors, we leave notes at houses.
- When we find out about a new resident, we deliver a Welcome packet: we get the names of all those living in the household, including children. We note the birthdates of the children and regularly search our database for children who have turned 18 and are now eligible to vote.

**YOUR PRIVACY** In order to keep an accurate list of residents, we collect a lot of information. We share some of this information with other committees and community groups. A few examples: we supply the Arden resident listings to the Arden Community Recreation Association (ACRA) for their neighborhood directory; we welcome newcomers in the Arden Page; we contribute to the guest list for the annual over-80s party. But **we never share information without permission. We do not post our voter list on the Arden government website. We do not store our voter list in the Cloud.** Committees requesting a list of residents are given a redacted list that omits personal information that we have not been given permission to share.

**2. We welcome new residents.**

The “registering” part of the Registration Committee is not just about maintaining a list. The Registration Committee has always regarded welcoming and informing newcomers as part of their job. Past Registration Committees held block parties, did home visits, held receptions in conjunction with the museum’s Sunday hours. From 1990 to 1999 there was a “Village Van” (later called the “Welcome Hither” Committee) devoted to delivering welcome packets. This ad hoc committee spun off the Registration Committee and worked closely under the Registraton Committee. In 2000 the Welcome Hither Committee was desolved and its mission, “to contact new residents and provide information about the governance of the village and the social

fabric of the community,” was once again assigned to the Registration Committee. Which brings me to the next questions:

**How do we inform new residents about our government?  
How do we encourage residents to participate?**

- We deliver Welcome packets in person and talk to newcomers. We have delivered 7 Welcome packets so far in 2019. We delivered 18 in 2018, 11 in 2017 and 21 in 2016.
- The Welcome Packet includes descriptions of all committees and the Town Meeting. It also includes sources for getting more detailed information. You can see a virtual Welcome packet on the town website.
- When we deliver a Welcome packet, we take an “interest inventory,” then send a followup email connecting the new resident with members of the community who lead those activities.
- We provide committee chairs with a list of new voters to help them recruit nominees for their committees.
- We invite committee nominees and Assessors candidates to post candidate statements so voters can inform themselves. We maintain and publicize the web pages where voters can read those posts.
- We use social media to remind residents to vote.
- We send emails and make phone calls to get out the vote. For trustee confirmation referendum in 2018, we made 50 reminder emails and made 150 reminder phone calls.

**3. We conduct elections.**

A recurring concern each time we conduct a referendum is the required signature on the return envelope. Does this mean we know how you voted? The answer is: NO. Emphatically NO. This is a secret ballot. We need the signature and the printed name to log in each vote and ensure that each ballot comes from an eligible voter who has only voted once. The ballots are separated from the envelopes before they are unfolded and counted. The whole process is public and witnessed by committee members, officers and observers.

*The above article was adapted from the committee’s report to the September 2018 Town Meeting.*

Revised 9/28/2019 by Cecilia Vore