

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

Minutes Of Meeting Held On Wednesday January 20, 2016

Present: Ray Seigfried, Ron Meick and Dan McNeil

Member Absent: Cynthia Dewick, Larry Strange and Sally Sharp

Sub-Committee Present: None

Meeting called to order by Ray Seigfried as the Committee Chairman at 7:05 PM

The minutes of the meeting for November 2015 were reviewed and discussed, however, approval was deferred until Cynthia and Larry are able to review. In addition, notes of the meeting for December 2015 were provided to Dan McNeil who will compile into minutes which can be reviewed and approved in the February 2016 meeting.

The topics addressed in this meeting include: (1) FEMA Resolution; (2) Vacant Housing Ordinance; (3) Village Transformation Project; (4) Comprehensive Land Use Plan; (5) Firearms in Public Facilities; (6) Village Hiring Practice; and (7) Memorial Garden / Community Garden Sub-Committees

Guest Appearance: Jeff Politis, Village Chairman on Village Transformation Project

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 soon returned with F.E.M.A. requesting updated mapping information. The updated information was subsequently provided over the last month, and according to Dave Carpenter, our updated application is actively under review by F.E.M.A. Ray will continue to follow up and move toward final approval and enrollment in the program.

Village of Arden Vacant Housing Ordinance

The C.P.C. is moving forward in its administration of this ordinance subsequent to an official acknowledgement of its legality from New Castle County. 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.

Ray indicated that the leaseholder of 2115 Marsh Road (f/k/a Arden Sub Shop) has invited an inspection of the only legally defined commercial land use in the Village of Arden. The leaseholder strongly believes that the Vacant Housing Ordinance is not applicable to a commercial property.

In addition, further scrutiny is required of 2204 Little Lane at the Grocery Path. The existing single family home with multiple free standing bungalows is now being managed by a family member of the record leasehold owner Ronald Jarrell. Mr. Jarrell entered an assisted living facility during mid year 2015 due to declining health. The family member has proceeded to renovate and lease sections of the house and the bungalows to third party interests.

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 the 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 Ad-Hoc 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 will be subject to the input and approval from the Village Assembly. It was determined that Ray would make a very general statement on this prospective project at the January 2015 Village Assembly. In the meantime, a new draft outlining this Ad Hoc Committee will be prepared and provided to C.P.C. members for on-going review.

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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 has started making inquiries through the Urban Planning Department at the University of Delaware. Initial conversations with faculty members has lead Ray to believe that Urban Planning may be very helpful in formulating and executing plans for both land use and special transformative projects.

House Bill 192 - 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 the C.P.C. concluded that any local action would be futile since the State law shifts enforcement to the local municipalities.

It was decided in the November and December 2015 C.P.C. meetings that no further action was deemed reasonable. Ray, nonetheless, has continued looking into a viable alternative. As such, Ray presented an idea of formulating a prospective firearms policy jointly through the three Arden's and the Arden Club. Further analysis of existing legal local ordinances on firearms throughout the State of Delaware is first required before approaching the three Arden's and the Arden Club.

Village's Employee Hiring Practice

The 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 has come up in prior C.P.C. meetings and addressed in the June 2015 Advisory Meeting. Unfortunately, nothing conclusive has been forthcoming.

It was determined that the Village needed and an official and "best practices" policy on Village employment. This policy would address the Village's legal responsibility and need for transparency in its hiring practices. Larry has agreed to prepare a motion for an upcoming Village Assembly during 2016.

Memorial Garden / Community Garden Sub-Committee

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

The meeting was adjourned by Ray Seigfried as Committee Chairman at 8:14 PM

Meeting minutes compiled and prepared by Dan McNeil.