

Introduction

The New Community Planning Committee Guidance Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Guidance Policy is to clarify and give specificity to the Community Planning Committee (CPC) description so that the Committee can operate from year to year in a focused and consistent manner that furthers its mandate “to plan the physical and cultural future of the Community” (see page 3 for full CPC description). No changes have been made to the existing CPC description. The intention of this Guidance Policy is not to replace that document, but rather to aid the Committee in carrying out its goals and enlist the help of Town Assembly, committees, Trustees, and residents to do so.

Process

As the new Community Planning Committee got to work in the spring of 2019, a need was identified for more clarity and specificity around the Committee’s description. The heart of the description says that CPC should “plan the physical and cultural future of the Community and advise the Town Assembly and Trustees on all matters relating to the betterment and development of Arden”. What does the “physical and cultural future” mean? What’s most important to the Town? What do “betterment and development” mean? How can we go about advising the Trustees and Town Assembly when we don’t know what is most important? What tasks-- long-term-- are important to the Town? What “future” is intended in this description—the next year, five years, ten, more?

We realized that we needed to elucidate answers to these questions for the CPC to move forward in a way that fulfills the goals of the Committee’s description. And, we had to have a way to extend the projects of the Committee beyond year-to-year elections if we had a reasonable chance of implementing three-, five-, or ten-year plans for the Town.

We also realized that the large sweep of the Committee’s description allows for projects, plans and the focus of CPC to change. Future committees need to have flexibility to address Town issues as they come up from year to year as well as be sure to continue the work of implementing longer-term plans. We have endeavored to allow for that by creating a document that is specific enough to give guidance while broad enough to allow for flexibility.

Drafting

To draft this Guidance Policy a six-step process is being followed:

1. Research—
Review of the existing CPC description as well as minutes from CPC and Town Assembly; research of Arden’s historical community-defined goals through documents such as the founding documents, the National Register of Historic Places applications, and the Landmark status application. Focus on what the community-defined goals of the Village are. *
3. Drafting—
Draft of the document over the course of the year with members of the CPC, Trustees and residents to be able to fulfill the goals of the Committee description and the community-defined goals of the Village.
4. Feedback—
Invite discussions and feedback on draft Guidance Policy from other Town committees, officers and the Trustees.
5. Revise—
Revise documents to reflect feedback.
6. Discussion and vote at Town Meeting—
Bring to Town Assembly for discussion at September 2020 Town Meeting. Hold public meeting(s) to allow for more input if TA thinks appropriate. Bring to January Town Meeting for a vote.

Conclusion

The Community Planning Committee wishes to enlist the help of the Town to finalize and approve a Guidance Policy that will provide more clarity and focus for the actions of the Committee. To achieve this, a Guidance Policy must be both broad and specific, both consider Arden’s past and its future. For these reasons, we bring the new Community Planning Committee Guidance Policy for approval to the Arden Town Assembly. We welcome feedback at any time at planning@arden.delaware.gov.

- * The CPC identified the following community-defined goals after reviewing founding documents, the National Register of Historic Places applications, and the Landmark status application. These goals were used to write the Guidelines Policy.
- a. Promote the arts in all forms
 - b. Preserve the single tax land reform principles of Henry George
 - c. Advance the stewardship of communal lands for residents and the greater environment
 - d. Encourage cultural, racial, ethnic and economic diversity
 - e. Foster a sense of community
 - f. Foster community involvement and volunteerism
 - g. Support Town Meeting and direct democracy

Community Planning Committee Guidance Policy

Community Planning Committee Description

“The Community Planning Committee shall consist of five residents of Arden, elected by a majority of those voting at the regular March meeting. The term shall be two years, three members elected on the odd numbered years and two on even numbered years.

“It shall be the duty of the Community Planning Committee to plan the physical and cultural future of the Community and to advise the Town Assembly and Trustees on all matters relating to the betterment and development of Arden.”¹

“Long Range Planning is the responsibility of the Committee with the advice of the Trustees and the Advisory Committee.”²

DRAFT POLICY STARTS HERE

The role of the Community Planning Committee (CPC) is to assist the Town Assembly, Town Committees and Trustees to develop and implement plans that preserve and improve the Village of Arden. These plans should support current and future community-defined goals of the physical, cultural and social development activity of the Village of Arden.

To implement this the CPC will:

1. Develop and review short-term and long-range plans based on community-defined goals. The Committee assists the Town and Assembly to develop goals by communicating with other Town committees, Trustees, surveys of residents to identify preferences and, if appropriate, referenda. Community-defined goals and long-range plans should be surveyed and reviewed at 10-year intervals at minimum.

2. The following long-range plans should be developed and maintained for the Village by the CPC. Each plan will be created in conjunction with the appropriate Town committee(s) if any:

a. a community-wide environmental stewardship plan including forests, greens, leaseholds, and storm water management with input from Ardentown and Ardencroft.

b. a zoning, land use, and development strategy that takes into account New Castle County, State and federal regulations as well as Arden community character.

For example, this could include considerations of population, housing growth/density, potential expansion of boundaries, development or annexation of existing or adjacent areas, redevelopment, abandoned housing policies, parking policies, Americans with Disabilities Act, and common grounds.

c. a cultural health of the community plan that strategizes how to nourish, preserve, and develop the arts, culture and understanding of the history of Arden.

d. a periodic review of our documents, systems of governance, facilitation of participation in our direct democracy form of government, updating of The Red Book including associated policy statements, and efforts to foster volunteers throughout the community.

3. Each year the newly elected members of CPC should review existing and develop new specific tasks for the committee that are in alignment with and further the goals and plans that are described in the CPC description and this document. Tasks should include:

a. monitoring of local, State and federal trends, policies and legislation to take advantage of or anticipate the impact upon the Town or residents.

- b. creating or developing short-, medium-, and long-term plans as per above.
- c. assisting the Town Secretary to collate records of Town committee projects, policies and ordinances that will be provided annually to newly elected committees to ensure governance continuity and maintain institutional memory.
- d. continuing oversight of the Arden Memorial Gardens, the G-Ardeners community garden at the Buzz Ware Village Center, and Vacant Dwelling Ordinance 15 implementation.
- e. other tasks as approved by the committee or assigned by the Town Assembly.

4. Proposed projects developed within CPC will be approved, returned for further drafting/research, or rejected by the Town Assembly. If a project is approved, the Town Assembly or Advisory Committee will assign the project to the applicable committee(s) for implementation with the assistance of CPC, if needed.

Footnotes

1. Minutes of the January 1968 Town Meeting establishing the Community Planning Committee.
2. Page 5, "Village of Arden Handbook" -- Red Book, July 29, 1996 edition.