

Introduction

1. 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 4 for the full official 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 mandate and enlist the help of Town Assembly, committees, Trustees, and residents to do so.

Planning can take long periods of time to develop and may take many years across multiple Town committees and entities to achieve. While the CPC’s core mission is “to plan the physical and cultural future of the Community”, its annually rotating committee, its yearly list of shorter-term projects can make it difficult to accomplish its mandate to do long-range planning. At its essence, this document recommends a list of long-range plans for the Town, and elucidates some short-term tasks for the CPC, that are to be created collaboratively with Town committees, residents and other Town entities.

The CPC hopes to build more focused and collaborative working relationships with Town committees and other Town entities in which we can plan the future of the Community together. It is not the role of CPC to oversee or supervise the work of other committees and this document does not seek to do that. With this new Guidance Policy, CPC anticipates that resulting long-term plans and policies, after being developed collaboratively with the relevant committees, will be written down and passed along from year to year in order to foster a system of institutional memory and enable the Town to move forward on long-range community-defined goals. Additionally, this process aims to preserve the efforts of the Town’s current and past hard-working volunteers so that their projects and work are not ignored or accidentally forgotten from year to year.

This does not mean that plans and policies remain the same from elected committee to committee or year to year, but that the ideas and projects started by one committee are provided the respect of being passed along to the next in the form of written documents and plans. Although many committees have made sure the next committee comes in with all the plans and documentation they need, it has been an inconsistent effort in Town and has resulted in many valuable ideas, projects and

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documents being dropped or lost. Written long-range plans will enable committees and the Town as a whole to envision a comprehensive view of the Town's needs.

2. 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.

3. Drafting

To draft this Guidance Policy a six-step process was 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.

The CPC identified the following community-defined goals after reviewing founding documents, the National Register of Historic

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Places applications, and the Landmark status application. These goals were used to write the Guidelines Policy.

Community-Defined Goals:

- 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

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—

Invited discussions and feedback on draft Guidance Policy from other Town committees, officers and the Trustees. Two public meetings on this topic were held.

5. Revise—

Revision of document to reflect feedback.

6. Discussion and vote at Town Meeting—

Brought to Town Assembly for discussion at September 2020 Town Meeting; two public meetings were held; bring to January 2021 Town Meeting for a vote.

4. Conclusion

The Community Planning Committee enlisted the help of the Town to finalize and approve this 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.

Community Planning Committee Description

Adopted by the January 1968 Town Assembly

“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

GUIDANCE POLICY STARTS HERE

The role of the Community Planning Committee (CPC) is to fulfill its mandate as stated in its official description to develop and implement plans that preserve and improve the Village of Arden. “Long-range planning is the responsibility of the Committee with the advice of the Trustees and the Advisory Committee.”² These plans should support current and future community-defined goals of the physical, cultural and social development activity of the Village of Arden. 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.

Community-Defined Goals:

- A. Advance the stewardship of communal lands for residents and the greater environment
- B. Preserve the single tax land reform principles of Henry George
- C. Encourage cultural, racial, ethnic and economic diversity
- D. Foster a sense of community

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- E. Foster community involvement and volunteerism
- F. Promote the arts in all forms
- G. Support Town Meeting and direct democracy

To implement this the CPC will:

1. Develop and review long-range and short-term plans based on these and future community-defined goals. The Committee assists the Town and Assembly to develop these goals by surveying Town committees, officers, Trustees, and residents on a periodic basis. This process should identify current Town committee plans, preferences, and policy directions so that short- and long-term plans can be developed among Town entities. 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 jointly and maintained for the Village by the CPC. Each plan will be created in conjunction with the appropriate Town committee(s) if any:
 - a. in conjunction with Forest, Civic, Playground, and/or Trustees: a community-wide environmental stewardship plan including forests, greens, leaseholds, and storm water management with input from Ardentown and Ardencroft [Community-Defined Goal A].
Examples: storm water planning, long-range plans for the greens, Forest Committee Stewardship Policy, parking policies, planning for current and future climate changes.
 - b. in conjunction with Civic, Safety, Forest, Officers, Assessors and/or Trustees: a zoning, land use, and development strategy that takes into account New Castle County, State and federal regulations as

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well as Arden community character [Community-Defined Goals B, C, D, E].

Examples: development or annexation of existing or adjacent areas, vacant housing policies, housing growth/density, racial and economic equity, parking policies, use of common grounds, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other demographic considerations.

c. in conjunction with Archives, the Arden Craft Shop Museum, ACRA and/or the Arden Club: 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 [Community-Defined Goal F].

Examples: surveys of cultural activities and resident artists to evaluate community needs, planning for artists-in-residences in conjunction with ACRA, planning of grant-writing activities to support the arts.

d. in conjunction with Advisory, Registration and/or Town Officers: a plan for the periodic review of our documents, systems of governance, facilitation of participation in our direct democracy form of government [Community-Defined Goals E, G].

Examples: planning for Town documentation and communications, e.g., “Red Book”, the official Town web site, or other communication vehicles; a plan to enhance volunteer participation in Town activities possibly aimed at certain demographics.

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:

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- a. with the Advisory Committee: facilitating communications and organizing projects, when needed, if multiple committees or other Town entities are involved.
- b. working with Town Officers to monitor local, State and federal trends, policies and legislation to take advantage of or anticipate the impact upon the Town, residents or other governmental and community organizations.
- c. creating or developing short-, medium-, and long-term plans as per above.
- d. with Town Officers, Advisory and Committee chairs: collating records of plans, projects, policies and ordinances so that they are communicated to incoming committee members to assure governance continuity and maintain institutional memory.
- e. continuing oversight of the Arden Memorial Gardens, the G-Ardeners community garden at the Buzz Ware Village Center, and Vacant Dwelling Ordinance 15 implementation.
- f. other tasks as approved by the Community Planning Committee or assigned by the Town Assembly.

4. Proposed long-term projects developed within CPC or jointly with other Town entities 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.

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2. Page 5, "Village of Arden Handbook" -- Red Book, July 29, 1996
edition.