

Community Planning Committee Meeting
9/15/2021 7:00 PM
Via Zoom

Minutes

Attending: John Scheflen, Pam Politis, Ron Meick, Jennifer Borders; absent: Mark Wood

Guest: Ben Gruswitz

1. Minutes from August --accepted as written.

2. ARPA Covid relief fund

It was decided that a brief presentation of eligible spending categories of projects should be presented to the September Town Assembly. Ideas will be solicited from each Town Committee. Uses suggested so far include broadband technology, funds to replace BWVC income losses, replace an aging BWVC sewer system, rain water management--funding items in the Storm Water Management Plan, economic need - - direct assistance for families and individuals, supporting economic diversity in the Ardens, new playground equipment, and support for aging in place/homecare.

A process for deciding how to spend the funding was approved by the Committee. Whereas the Committee has taken on the responsibility of shepherding the process, the decisions on how the money will be spent will be decided at the Town Assembly. The process and timeline are as follows:

1. A brief presentation of eligible spending categories will be presented to the September Town Assembly. The Town Assembly will be asked to comment on this process and timeline.
2. Proposals will be solicited from each Town Committee via email or phone.
3. An article in the November *Page* will ask residents to submit ideas to the Planning Committee and notify them of a public meeting on Wednesday, November 17, at 7:00PM to discuss all ideas. A second public meeting will be held on January 19, 2022, at 7:00PM.
4. A list of eligible projects with ballpark cost estimates will be presented to the January Town Assembly for a vote to narrow the list.
5. A final approval vote will be held at the March 2022 Town Meeting; if needed, a referendum will be held.
6. Funding can start to be spent after during the FY2023 budget year starting in March 2022.

Guidance will be needed to make sure the Town is complying with appropriate spending categories. Ron Meick volunteered to call our federal reps to explore this. Jennifer will send the federal code for the ARPA law and an article that outlines how the City of Wilmington is spending their money.

2. Ben Gruswitz-- Works for transportation planning for PA & NJ counties. He proposed to work across the three villages to do something about mobility and safety in the Ardens. He lives in Ardentown. We have assets such as open space, walking trails, etc. We could connect these assets such as the Wilmapco program for trails that Ardentown has used. Transit -- how do people feel about bus stops? How about being able to commute to the new transportation center in Claymont on buses from the Ardens? What about sidewalks to be able to connect to Marinis and along Harvey Road? Perhaps there can be innovative sidewalk designs (grass?). A "Three-Ardens Working Group for Mobility and Safety" could be started. When the Traffic Calming Task Force attempted something on Harvey Road in the early 00's, the Claymont Fire Department objected to many of the proposals. We need to make sure to talk to them. Step 1: Draft a general statement describing issue; Step 2: Go to each of the three Town Civic Committees/Public Works to discuss; Step 3: Go to Town Assemblies and propose the Working Group.

4. Governance Task Force formation

The Committee discussed and approved for circulation the attached Governance Task Force formation document. * It will be presented to the Town Assembly in September for a vote to create the Task Force in accordance with the document.

5. Ordinance 15

Letters were sent to two leaseholders this year to notify them of the need to register their vacant properties. This information will be included in our Committee's report for Town Meeting. The need for revisions to some of the wording for Ordinance 15 remains and issue.

6. Old/New Business

OLD: Jennifer didn't want us to forget that we had discussed an economic diversity informational panel for the Town/Committee. Proposed for January 2022.

New: The Community Garden is in need of a web presence on the Town website to make its leadership and presence more transparent.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 18, 2021, 7 PM, via Zoom.

* Governance Task Force
Draft as of September 7, 2021

General

The Village of Arden Town Assembly is creating the Governance Task Force (GTF) to review and suggest changes to the Village of Arden's Governing documents including the Town Charter, ordinances, policies, and motions. The Governance Task Force shall conduct this review with the assistance of the Arden Committees, town residents, the Village attorney, and other parties they

deem helpful. The GTF will work with Town committees that enforce ordinances to determine the need for potential updates. The GTF shall meet at least monthly and report their work at the quarterly Town Meetings.

Purpose

1. The Arden Charter and Town Committee structure have remained largely unchanged since their creation during the 1960's and 1970's. Since then, new ordinances and policies have continued to be added, edited and re-interpreted. There has not been a comprehensive review of how those new documents fit into the existing governing documents and inconsistencies have arisen. At times this has created non-compliance with governing documents, confusion, piece-meal corrections and "work-arounds" to assure compliance.

2. In addition, today we live in an environment much different than just ten years ago. Arden is confronted like every other local government with the effects of climate change, global pandemic, social and political polarization, the need for social justice for all, and the need for public trust in our government as well as democracy itself. Given these challenges, it is time to evaluate our governing process and assure that we are living up to the community goals that we have set for ourselves as well as to evaluate our governing process against others throughout the state.

Governance Task Force Formation

The GTF will be made up of five (5) residents of the Village of Arden, including at least one from the Community Planning Committee, nominated by the Town Chair with consent of the Advisory Committee. The Town Assembly will approve the final members of the Task Force.

The Task Force will present its findings within one year of its formation to the Town Assembly. A second year may be granted by the Town Assembly if needed.

Topics for the GTF to consider include but are not limited to:

1. Village boundaries
2. Budget process and timeline
3. Voting

Output

The Task Force will present its findings within one year of its formation to the Town Assembly. A second year may be granted by the Town Assembly if needed. At its discretion, the Town Assembly will enact the recommendations of the Governance Task Force.