

Village of Arden, Governance Task Force

Meeting Minutes: April 28, 2022

Attendance:

Committee members: Ray Seigfried (Chair), John Scheflen, Barbara Macklem, Lynda Kolski, Beverly Clendening, Steve Benigni, Kate Threefoot

Ray called the meeting to order 7:36 PM.

Minutes

GTF minutes from 3/31/2022 were approved and will be posted to the GTF Webpage.

Going forward, minutes of the full GTF meeting will be reviewed and approved in the next meeting and then posted to the Webpage.

Minutes of the Sub-Task Force meeting will be approved by the committee and posted without sharing with full committee.

Schedule of Meetings

A chart showing scheduled dates for all meetings of the full GTF and the two Sub-Task Forces was reviewed. The new version includes two Zoom meeting in July and August. Lynda requested that the January, February and March 2023 meetings be changed tentatively to Zoom meetings.

Report from Sub-Task Force on Ordinance and Policy

John reported that the Ordinance and Policy sub-Task Force had completed a review of his memo that defined ordinance, resolutions, policies and motions and made recommendations relating to each. The recommendations related to ordinances had been introduced and discussed at the March meeting. The recommendations related to resolutions were introduced. A discussion about recommendation 2, *“Consider implementing a method to compile and retrieve resolutions adopted by the Town Assembly by date and content,”* ensued. The purpose of the database would be to keep track of motions and to make sure they are easily accessible. A partial database is available on the Arden Webpage in the Town Assembly drop down menu. This database contains motions from January 1985 to September 2019 and it is searchable. It was suggested that this database should be expanded to include all motions going back to 1970 using minutes from Town Assembly meeting. The need for doing this was questioned given that the GTF was formed with the goal of identifying inconsistencies between the way the town operates and what the Charter and ordinances dictate. It was suggested that all committees

should be consulted for their views on the discrepancies and to address these. However, it was pointed out this approach does not address the intention of the recommendation as a way to organize current and future governance practices and to allow interested parties to find the documentation for these practices. John began to share the sub-Task Force recommendations regarding policies. Because all members of the GTF did not have access to a copy of John's memo about Ordinances, resolution and policies, this discussion was tabled until the next meeting of the full GTF. Bev will send an updated copy of the memo to all GTF members.

Despite the fact that we had agreed to table the recommendation about policies, there was a lengthy discussion about this, specifically about the recommendation that committees be required to report any new policies or changes to policy to Town Assembly. It was clarified that the recommendation does not intend this to mean that the Town Assembly needs to approve all policies. It was pointed out that many Committee policies affect only the committee and should not need to be shared with TA. Only policies that will affect the Village more globally need to be shared (examples include reporting of problems with village services such as waste management, policies about requests for disbursement of funds and hiring policies). This discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

John also shared that the sub-Task Force has discussed Ordinances #1 and #2, dealing with Safety. Because the full text of Ordinance #1 has been lost, The sub-TF recommends that Ordinance #1 and 2 be repealed and that a new Ordinance that references to Delaware Code be adopted. The committee still needs to determine if there are any parts of the code (for example, vehicle speed on Village streets) for which the Village may want to request an exemption.

Report from Sub-Task Force on the Charter

The sub-Task Force on the Charter focused on Charter Section 1 A & B, Name and General Powers, and 2 A & B Territorial Limits. Section 1 looks good and should be maintained as is. The territorial limits of Arden (Section 2) have changed but the sub-Task Force recommends keeping it intact to maintain an historical perspective and adding amendments to expand the boundaries. The total acreage for the Village would also need to be amended. This strategy has the advantage of allowing for the addition of new property in the future by amendment rather than a change in the Charter. The following motion was presented to the GTF prior to the meeting:

Motion

The GTF reconfirms Section 1 [a] and [b] and Section 2 [a] and [b] of the Charter.

GTF recommends all acquired land be reflected in the charter by amending Section 2 [a] with a new amendment for each land purchased. Such modification should state the territory boundaries, date purchased, total acres of the new land, and the total acres for the Arden with the new addition.

In the ensuing discussion John pointed out that leaving Section 2A intact and changing the limits by amendment would result in discontinuity in the description of the territorial limits of the village. It is unclear how the new territorial boundaries would be added. Do we start with the new property and add language to extend these boundaries based on points in the current description? Kate will talk to Jeff Politis about this. Kate raised the concern that Section 2 does not contain procedures for further amendment. For example, it is unclear who is responsible for bringing amendments to territorial limits to the Town Assembly and who brings the amendment to the legislature. More globally the Task Force recognizes that the procedures for many actions need to be codified. The GTF decided to hold the motion until we have a procedure to codify any changes.

New Business

Steve brought up the letter that the Task Force received from Mike Curtis concerning assessment vis-à-vis the true rental value of property. The Task Force will address this when it deals with the Board of Assessors, Section 7.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.