

Advisory Committee Quarterly Hybrid Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2023

Attendance: Jeffrey Politis, Skip Bailey (zoom), Elizabeth Varley, Simon Hamermesh, Carol Larson, Bev Clendening (zoom), Steve Benigni, Betty O'Regan, Deborah Ricard, Jennifer Borders, Helen Ohlson, Lisa Mullinax, Toby Ridings, Cecilia Vore, Sachin Puranik

Guest: Rachelle Zazzu

Advisory Chair, Sachin Puranik, convened meeting at 7:35 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Acceptance of previous Advisory Minutes.

January 2023 Advisory Quarterly Meeting Minutes and Advisory/Community Planning Retreat February 4, 2023.

Both approved as presented.

2. Set Agenda for next Town Assembly: March 27th

The following will be added to the standard agenda postcard mailing:

- Elections of Officers & Committee Members (present following call to order)
- Advisory Committee Report
Motion: The Advisor moves to broadcast June Town Meeting via zoom to residents of town.
- Board of Assessors Report
Public meetings: May 8 and June 12 @ 7 p.m. BWVC.
- Community Planning
Report on Advisory Retreat
- Playground
Discussion: interest for exercise stations
- Registration Motion: First reading of 3 changes to voting procedures defined in the Charter.

Agenda approved.

TYPICAL TOWN MEETING AGENDA:

2) Discussion of Items to be Listed on Town Meeting Agenda:

2a) Call to Order

2b) Elections of Officers & Committees (present at beginning of meeting).
The note at the bottom of the Postcard Agenda mailing reads: “Ballots distributed at start of meeting. Voting continues throughout meeting. Eligibility, candidate statements, SAMPLE ballot at arden.delaware.gov.”

Proof Ballot - List of nominees for Election of Committees & Officers was passed around and requests initials from each committee for accuracy.

To date full rosters except for Civic and Safety.

Civic has 5 candidates but will be electing 2 candidates (additional nominees: Deborah Ricard, Eric Reed, Larry Walker).

Safety Committee still needs one more nominee.

Discussion about Volunteerism

Jeff was wondering how hard was it to get people to put their names up to run for a committee position? Specifically, were people reaching out at the last minute or was it an all-out effort? Cecilia references the Advisory Retreat held in February where the demographics reflected that a large % of residents age 60 and older (Total % age 60 and Older is 53.2%) which means they are the majority of volunteers and many are retired. So, there is a strong need to recruit younger volunteers. Cecilia proposes three remedies. 1) hire help from outside of the community. 2) Change the timing of elections because the majority of committees elect three members in the odd years which means they need a lot of nominees to fill the ballot. Only two committees were created by the Charter: Budget Committee and Registration Committee which has the authority to change the number of candidates that are needed. All the other committees were created by the town assembly and they can present a motion at the town meeting to change the timing of their elections so that it can be even up more. 3) Changing how many nominees are required to fill a position. For example, Ardencroft requires as many people as they are electing plus 1. They don't require 2 for each position.

2c) Approval of minutes

2d) Recognize New and Departed Residents - Connee McKinney

2e) Visitors None

2f) Officers/Trustees

- o Town Chairman's Communications Report – Jeff Politis

Time to sign the Mosquito contract

- Trustees – Carl Falco

- Treasurer – Skip Bailey

The Bookkeeping duties are being transitioned from Dave Mickelson to Carole Connor and should be finalized in the next few weeks. Skip would like to present David Mickelson with recognition for all his good work. David and Gary will be out of town during the March Town Meeting. Suggest to delay and put it under Old Business for the June Advisory Meeting. Remind all to continue to report on ARPA in their Quarterly town meeting reports.

- Advisory – Sachin Puranik

Report on Hybrid Town Assemblies (Present as a sub heading under the Advisory Committee Report)

Simon Hamermesh: A group comprised of Jeff Politis, Deborah Richard, Liz Resko, Cecilia Vore and himself were tasked by the Advisory Committee to look into phasing in total hybrid town meeting. The role of this group was not to present all the myriad options but to establish that it is technologically feasible and to provide some options. Some Options:

1 People can call in and listen but not participate.

2 People can call in and ask questions If they can't vote, then they are not part of the quorum.

3 Full hybrid - People can participate in voting, ask questions

Even though they looked at several options-Zoom is the answer on all of those fronts.

The Advisory Chair put forth a vote to the Advisory Board to see if there is interest in broadcasting a hybrid Zoom June Town Assembly. Voice Vote:2 nays 14 ayes (it is simply a public broad cast that would be limited to the residents of the community). Motion Approved.

Guidelines for presenting Hybrid Zoom Motion at the March town meeting.

Jeff - The motion will be presented with some short background but it is not a first step moving forward using technology to phase in total hybrid

meetings. It is more an experiment for the June town meeting that enables the residents to view the town meeting remotely. Be clear in your presentation to all residents that it is not participatory, that they will not be able to vote and strongly encourage all to attend in person so they may fully participate in direct democracy.

He points out that when you present background for this motion you are speaking for the Advisory Committee. The presentation of the background of this motion has some criteria based on input from the Advisory board and the background needs to be the way the Advisory Committee wants to present it. Simon notes that the Advisory Committee commissioned the subcommittee to specifically look into phasing into total hybrid meeting and this group was not formed just to try it out for June Town meeting. This was absolutely done as part of the exploratory process towards the hybrid meetings. He does not feel as though he would be overstepping anyone if his presentation explained the subcommittee Advisory Committee assignment of exploratory process toward the hybrid meeting. Simon believes they are legally obligated to offer this technology; Village Chair respectfully disagrees that they are legally obligated to offer it.

Lisa Mullinax wants to know does the Charter allow for Hybrid Zoom town meetings? Jeff - The first two options where people can call in and not voting is easy. The question is about voting and being a part of the meeting. There is a new law that passed in FOIA last year that should provide the opportunity to allow this. The Delaware law overrides the State Charter.

2g) Assessors – Deborah Ricard

It has been brought to Assessor's attention that public meetings need to mail out notices and must list date, time and place on postcard. Next public meetings: May 8 and June 12 @ 7 p.m., BWVC. They will notify residents of these two upcoming public meetings on the Town Assembly March Agenda postcard mailings.

2h) Committees' Reports (Ascending Order)

(Descending: Jan & June. Ascending: March & Sept)

- Archives - Lisa Mullinax
- Audit - Cookie Ohlson

- Budget – Deborah Ricard
 - Three-year Financial forecast
 - Deborah sent out a notice to all committees about not receiving more money because of the unknown of the New Castle County reassessment. She will make note of this in her report.

- BWVC - Betty O'Regan & Toby Ridings
Will provide refreshments for the March town meeting.

- Civic – Steve Benigni
Civic Committee will inform the town that they would like to extend the parking area in order to preserve the Green by installing more mat.

- Community Planning – Jen Borders
Advisory Retreat report (list on postcard agenda mailing).

- Forest Carol Larson & Bev Clendening
In the Forest Committee town report, they will provide information about their Tree Policy.

- Playground – Mark Wood
Elizabeth Varley - Workout stations
There is an interest from all three Ardens to install exercise equipment throughout the community. If playground is sponsoring this, then it can go under Playground Committee Report in which they can present the idea of what they want to do, have a discussion and get the feedback that is needed. At the June Town Assembly or at a later town meeting they can present an actual proposal that would detail costs, specifications and present a motion. For the March Town Meeting no need to be concerned with how to fund this project.

Put on postcard mailing agenda Discussion interest for exercise stations

- Registration – Cecilia Vore
Motion: First reading of 3 changes to voting procedures as defined in the Charter. For the town meeting they will have the entire written motion.
The three changes to the Charter are as follows:
 1. The changing the requirement for passage of the referendum from the majority of all eligible voters to a majority of those who vote.

2. Codify absentee voting. This will now include the two committees that were created by the Charter. So, all committees will have codified absentee voting.
3. To change the schedule for the election of the Board of Assessors so it is in sync with the timeline of the budget.

The motion is to create a referendum and voting for the town to approve this idea. The town approves these changes and then sends it to referendum. It must have the support of the town meeting before it goes to referendum. In order for this to pass, this change has to be approved under the existing rules by majority of all residents. When the Governance Task Force comes forward with any changes to the Charter, it will be under the new rule and it will be easier to make those changes. There is no specific procedure defined in the Charter about how to change the Charter. This has been an ongoing problem and by presenting this motion this will establish a procedure to change the Charter. The Governance Task Force has been provided a draft of the motion.

Jeff is ok with the process that Registration wants to put out but he is not comfortable with Registration creating this process as the mechanisms as the precedent on how to change the Charter.

Cecilia -The Charter can be changed through Referendum. The Charter was approved through a referendum and therefore to make changes to the Charter you need a referendum. First step is the motion that presents the 3 changes and looking for town support. Second part if approved, then the Registration will hold a general referendum presenting all those changes to all the residents.

- o Safety – Simon Hamermesh

2i) Governance Task Force– Ray Seigfried

2j) Old Business

2k) New Business

2l) Good and Welfare

2m) Adjourn

3. Old Advisory Committee Business

4. New Advisory Committee Business

5. Guest Comments & Questions

6. Adjourn 9:08 p. m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Resko,

Village of Arden Town Secretary

Next Hybrid Advisory Quarterly Meeting is June 5, 2023, 7:30 p.m. @ BWVC