

Notice of Next Village Meeting

List of Officers and Committee Contact People

Chair	Ben Gruswitz	(302) 385-6222	chair@ardencroft.delaware.gov
Secretary	Jennifer Abernethy	(302) 588-2219	secretary@ardencroft.delaware.gov
Treasurer	Don Lipari	(302) 272-5746	treasurer@ardencroft.delaware.gov
Archives	Mary Brent Whipple	(302) 584-6786	
Assessors	Wyn Achenbaum	(203) 722-1644	
Finance	Lorna Lee	(302) 475-1198	
Public Works	Chris Raia	(617) 620-3978	
Recreation (Indoor)	George Taylor	(302) 416-1269	
Recreation (Outdoor)	Ken Rosenberg	(302) 475-1198	
Registration	Linda Toman	(302) 475-7508	
Safety	Jay Morente	(302) 420-3307	

Village Assembly Meetings Currently Scheduled For 2024

March 21, 2024

May 16, 2024

The next Village Assembly Meeting is March 21st, 2024. This meeting will be held in person. Meetings are held at 7:30pm at the Buzz Ware Village Center, typically in Room 1. Please check the sign at the entrance of the building on the day of the meeting for any changes to the room number. Refreshments are provided by the Recreation Committee. All Village Assemblies and any other Meetings by Committees who provide the Village Secretary with the info in advance will now be listed on the Delaware Public Meeting Calendar. The Calendar can be accessed at <https://publicmeetings.delaware.gov/>. Search by Keyword – Ardencroft.

Special Village Assembly Meeting at 7:00pm

1. Second reading of the proposal to remove the Village ordinance on the Nomination & Election of Officers & Committees

Village Assembly Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order/Minutes Approval
2. Guest speakers (e.g. elected officials)
3. Officer's Reports (Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer)
4. Directors' Report
5. Standing Committee Reports
 - a. Coordinating Committee
 - b. Archives
 - c. Assessors
 - d. Finance
 - e. Public Works
 - f. Recreation
 - g. Registration
 - h. Safety
6. Special Committee Reports
7. Unfinished Business:
 - a. second reading of a number of ordinances to accompany Charter change [items C - I]
 - b. vote on the proposal to remove the Village ordinance on the Nomination & Election of Officers & Committees
 - c. vote on the proposed draft budget extension [attached]
8. New Business, as brought to the Town at the Meeting
 - a. draft budget for next fiscal year
 - b. draft ballot
9. Good & Welfare

CALL TO ORDER/MINUTES APPROVAL

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Village of Ardencroft was called to order at 7:37 pm on January 18th, 2024 by Ben Gruswitz, Chair in attendance. The minutes of the previous November 16th meeting were mailed to residents' homes along with the January meeting announcement. The minutes of the November 16th, 2023 meeting were approved with no corrections.

GUEST SPEAKERS Councilman John Cartier attended. He shared the Code Enforcement report from NCC and the NCC police community venue report. There were 0 code cases and a small community venue report. He discussed the recent ribbon cutting and opening of the 83-million dollar Claymont Mass Transit Center, a multimodal mass transit center with a new train station, a trail system, car access, and DART buses. It's named after former State Senator and our longest-serving public official in the state of DE, Senator Harris McDowell. Councilman Cartier discussed his run for re-election and his dedication to serving the Ardens.

State Senator Kyle Evans Gay attended. The second leg of the 152nd General Assembly is back in session. Senator Gay and Representative Lambert are trying to get Ardencroft reimbursed for the tree work we got done. They will continue to work with the Village regarding infrastructure. This year, the General Assembly will break for their annual finance period in February. There are a lot of infrastructure and educational needs in DE. The past two years have seen the largest bond bills for infrastructure and educational investments that are fueling our local economy. Senator Gay will continue to fight for early education and K-12 funding. Some of the work she is doing is in the criminal justice and voting rights space. Senator Gay has a community meeting every month—probably the first week in February. Email her or reach out to her with any questions or feedback. Senator Gay announced her run for Lieutenant Governor and asked for Ardencroft's support in this coming election. Her website is <https://www.kylefordelaware.com/>. Primary day is September 10, 2024.

Drew Jordan, the President of the Swim Gild, attended. His goal is to reach out to the community to seek engagement and feedback after a year of decreased membership. Any ideas, suggestions, and feedback can be shared with Drew Jordan. The Swim Gild is also seeking board members, volunteers, skills [i.e. carpentry, accounting]. His information is in the ACRA directory.

OFFICER'S REPORTS

Chair's Report Ben Gruswitz reported. "It's another packed agenda tonight with some important votes, so I'll just mention one thing for my report. The Brandywine School District will be holding an Operational Budget Referendum on Tuesday, February 13. A district representative reached out to myself and the other villages' chairs about presenting at our respective village meetings, but we decided to host him for one event for all the Ardens focused on the District's referendum. That event will be held on Wednesday, January 31 at 7:30 pm here at the Buzz. Note that the Arden Page incorrectly states it will be held at the Gild Hall. It will, in fact, be at the Buzz. The presentation will be 20 to 25 minutes long and be followed by Q&A with attendees." A resident asked about where voting will take place. All Brandywine schools [other than Harlan Elementary School] will be polling places on February 13, 2024.

Secretary's Report No report.

Treasurer's Report Don Lipari reported. Since the last report, there have been nominal charges like trash and admin expenses. We have dipped \$750 into our ARPA funds, which means we are zeroed out, but we are expecting cash from the Association by the end of the month, which they did last year. That money—\$20,000—will put us back in the black. A resident asked why the Verizon fee isn't higher. Don discussed the breakdown of the franchise fee(s).

DIRECTORS' REPORT Wyn Achenbaum reported. We understand that we'll be asked for \$5,700 for the extension period 3/26/2024 to 6/30/2024, and that the next expected request will be in 2025 (that is, not in the Association's current budget year).

For 2024-2025, the Ardencroft Association Directors will be increasing the land rent by 2%. While the Brandywine School District, which represents about 80% of AA's tax bill, is seeking a 10% increase this year (effectively 8% on our aggregate 2024 tax bill) and an additional 8% the following year, we will buffer this year's increase. As we

reported 2 months ago, salaries represent 80% of BSD's costs. This is possible in part because, in anticipation of New Castle County's reassessment, originally due in 2023, land rents had been increased to insure that we'd be able to handle whatever increase the County's rebalancing might cause. That said, you should anticipate a larger land rent increase next year, to be sure AA can handle whatever property tax bills come our way in 2025, the current effective date for the revaluation, as a result of the County's and Brandywine School District's rebalancing of their respective costs.

We anticipate seeking assistance from the Finance Committee in analyzing NCC's tentative assessments, which we think might come in November with a fairly short window for appeals. But determining whether any of the individual assessments should be appealed could prove valuable to all ArdenCROFT leaseholders over a longer period of time. We know from Arden's minutes that they made some appeals of the 1983 assessed valuations. Going forward, the valuations will be updated every 5 years (or sooner), but the 2023 valuation will be the basis for what will likely be smaller adjustments. (We refer to it as the 2023 valuation because its goal is to determine each home's value as of June 30, 2023.) There have been no new leaseholders since November's meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Coordinating Committee Ben Gruswitz reported. "The Coordinating Committee last met on January 9th. We discussed tonight's agenda along with a proposed draft budget extension to keep funding until our newly rescheduled Fiscal Year starts in July. Don will now walk you through the proposed budget extension."

Don Lipari discussed the draft budget extension from 3/26/24 - 6/30/24. This draft budget will get us through to the new fiscal year. The default amount of money is three months' worth, which is $\frac{1}{4}$ of a year, as shown by the .25 portion. Contributions were avoided because those are made before this extension kicks in. There will also be no snow removal reflected in the budget this time of year. The liability insurance and any other line item that does not fall within these three months are noted with dashes. This draft budget will be voted on in the next meeting and another draft budget will be discussed for next fiscal year.

Ben Gruswitz continued, "The Coordinating Committee also discussed preparations for implementing the transition to our new committee configurations and charter changes should the changes we'll vote on later tonight pass. At our next committee meeting, we will be bringing forward names of people we'd like to nominate for committee members and officers on a draft ballot. If you're thinking about running for any of these positions, please reach out to myself, any committee chair, or any of the Registration Committee members. We're looking for some folks who are motivated to help make our new committee configuration a success. I'll also add that there's nothing wrong with adding competition in our ballot for those who wish to run for our officer positions of chair, secretary, or treasurer. It's always great to give people a choice in a democracy."

A resident asked if the Coordinating Committee will help draft the ballot for committee seats. It is the Coordinating Committee's charge, in addition to the budget.

Assessors Committee No report

Finance Committee No report.

Public Works Committee Chris Raia reported. Public Works has a draft RFP to repair several path issues in the Village in order to get proposals from a few contractors. These areas include safety improvements to the Curtis Bridge, replacement of the handrails at the Sanctuary Path stairs, and replacement of the Rocky Walk bridge that has rotted at grade. We are still in need of recommendations for contractors who will engage in this type of work.

We also repaired some damaged bridge boards and cleared fallen beech trees from the woods path—with thanks to committee member Scott Bowers for the chainsaw and screw gun work.

Finally, we thank residents for continuing to attend to dead and dying ash trees and submitting permit applications for their removal. These are a liability to all, and insurance will not cover any damage resulting from a fallen dead tree. Please keep an eye out for trees that start to lean, especially with the high winds of late, and consider replacement with a native, low-to-medium height tree as appropriate for the landscape.

A resident asked about a fallen pine tree on Harvey Road and whether the Village helps to take care of that; however, the responsibility is on the leasehold.

A resident asked if any of the bridge repairs and other similar projects can fit into ARPA funds. Public Works have a provisional list of potential uses for the ARPA funds, and these projects are on that list. Ben added that they look into grants to see if they can get ARPA funds matched 50/50 to save money on projects, but timing is dependent.

A resident asked if there's an incentive program to plant a tree that could help offset the loss of the ash trees. While no program came to mind, Ben mentioned "free native" events and suggested Scott Bowers and Lisa Surbrook be contacted regarding resources. The DE Center for Horticulture is also a good resource.

Chris also mentioned that the next time that the snow is removed, it will be removed more comprehensively with two plowings. The current contract does not specify the amount of snowfall before removal.

Recreation Committee No report. Thank you to George Taylor for bringing and donating snacks for this meeting.

Registration Committee No report.

Safety Committee Jay Morente reported. Safety Committee Meeting: No meeting since July, email discussion on-going.

- Pedestrian Safety concern reported at the crosswalk at Harvey & Sconset Roads – DelDOT notified and discussion in-progress.
- Dog on Dog incident – loose dog, bit dog on leash Sunset Lane area, consulted Delaware Animal Control.
- The Curtis Foot Bridge – showing signs of wear, may require maintenance this spring.

Leaseholder street gutters & drains – Please clear snow from storm water drains adjacent to leaseholds – this will allow snow & ice melt to drain from village streets.

Coordinating Committee Meeting - online on Tuesday 1/9/24. Safety will work on defining its responsibilities and procedures.

The Arden's Emergency Preparedness Planning Group

- On Thursday, December 14th discussed individual items to stock around the house in the event of an emergency, power outage, etc. (Flashlights w spare batteries, portable radio with batteries, sleeping bags, alternative heat source if extended power outage, candles. Know your neighbors – check on each other. Also New Castle County Vial of Life program,
- Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training is scheduled for five evenings in January 2024 - 6:30-9:30 each evening
 - o Tuesday, January 9th (postponed due to weather)
 - o Thursday, January 11th
 - o Tuesday, January 16th (postponed due to weather)
 - o Tuesday, January 23rd
 - o Thursday, January 25th
- Arden's Emergency Reception Centers – a member is pursuing grants to assist with whole-building generators for each location.
- Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 6th 7:00pm at The Buzz (BWVC)

Please contact any Safety Committee member with questions or concerns.

Special Committees

Archives Mary Brent Whipple reported on behalf of Kathleen Jost. The Arden Craft shop Museum's November Afternoon with the Artist event featuring linocut prints and cards and photographs by Sadie Sommerville was very well received with nearly 75 visitors and more than 60 print sales. This was Sadie's first foray into exhibiting her work and she is very pleased with the venue and the response.

The November 26th Holiday Shop holiday card sale to benefit the ACSM was very successful. The Museum made a record \$496 from the sale.

In February Clare Consavage will be our featured local artist and it is her first solo show. The event on Sunday February 11th from 1pm to 3pm will feature the theme of "Love" for Valentine's Day. Pink Prosecco as well as sweet and savory treats will be served for the event. Please stop by for a celebration of this Ardens' artist. Clare's work will be on display in the Bernie Schwab room until February 28th.

The late Phil Fisher's son, Phil Jr, has offered to donate one of Phil Sr's outdoor to the Museum. A piece has been selected and will be installed in front of the Museum so stay tuned.

Our ongoing photo-digitization project will be selecting 3 interns from UD to work on the project this year.

Buzz Ware Village Center No report.

Forest Stewardship Committee Ben Gruswitz reported. The Forest Stewardship Special Committee met earlier this week. We're happy to announce that Ardencroft and some other partners were awarded a TEDI grant for \$28,000. TEDI stands for Tree for Every Delawarean Initiative and is run by DNREC. [Ben clarified that the TEDI grant is for public land, not private leaseholds.] With these funds we will plant 125 low-canopy trees on either side of the 30-foot-wide powerline easement in our forest and 75 trees in other areas of our forests to help mitigate the loss of so many ash trees in recent years. These trees are also intended to diversify species near beech trees, as a new disease may be impacting beeches in future years. Another 50 trees are slated to be planted upstream from the Ardens on either side of Naamans Creek in Harvey Mill Park. This area lacks critical shade to cool the stream and the new trees will also help control stormwater runoff and erosion. For matching funds, we plan to contribute \$1,000 we raised through a GoFundMe campaign and about \$3,000 in ARPA funds.

All planting will be done in the fall to reduce the need for watering. We're planning on all but 50 of our trees to be planted by Davey Tree Service. We'll organize a planting event with volunteers from Ardencroft and the surrounding community as planting time draws closer.

We're also making plans for managing the cleared area under the powerlines this spring and summer. We're planning to approach the other villages' forest groups about setting up regular coordination meetings, as well. Something the other villages do from time to time is hold ivy pulling volunteer events. Winter is the perfect time to identify and pull invasive English Ivy, as it's one of the only green things around and poison ivy is less of a concern than in other seasons. Ivy is a real hazard to the health of our trees. We encourage residents to clear it from your trees, and from the edge of your properties so that it won't spread to your neighbors or public lands. Or feel free to get rid of it entirely.

Our event to clear Ivy on select areas of public lands will be on Sunday, January 28 at 1 pm, weather permitting. Sunday, February 11 will be our backup day. A signup sheet is going around. This is a bit of an experiment to see what we can do and what impact it has in the coming year. We also don't know how much weather conditions will cooperate, so please put your contact information on the signup sheet so we can keep you up-to-date if there are any changes to our plans. Thanks!

A resident pointed out that there may be volunteer recognition for hours of time removing invasive species. Elaine Schmerling and Carol Larson may be good resources for further information.

Governance Documents Special Committee Jennifer Abernethy reported. The Governance Documents Special Committee met twice since the last Village Meeting. The Chair met with the Village attorney, Ted Rosenthal, regarding his final review of the charter changes. We sent a copy of the "clean" final draft charter to all households earlier this month and gave a link to the copy displaying changes from the current charter in that mailing. We also posted a link to the charter changes in the January *Arden Page* and the chair emailed links to all resident email addresses he has earlier this week.

To date, the committee has successfully

- Clarified that the Village Bylaws were only relevant to our municipality prior to its incorporation in 1976
- Passed a resolution to tie our officer and committee member terms to the Village's fiscal year cycle

- Passed an ordinance change making the fiscal year start July 1st and end June 30 in alignment with the County and State

Tonight we aim to pass the proposed reconfiguration of committees by ordinance and a fairly comprehensive update to our village charter (the founding document of our incorporated municipality). This was done after a lot of thought and public outreach on both measures. We also will read, for the first of three times, proposals for a number of ordinances that relate to the charter changes, should the charter vote pass.

One of the ordinances proposes a reduction of village meetings per year from 6 to 4 and sets the timing of when those 4 meetings happen. For this first reading, the committee has proposed a time we think may work but we want to get feedback from residents on what timing would most likely allow their participation. So between now and the second reading of the ordinance in March, we will put out a survey to residents. If the survey results show a compelling alternative to the proposed timing, in March, we'll propose an amendment to the ordinance to reflect that timing.

Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee Ben Gruswitz reported on behalf of Tiffany Stigler. The Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee held its second meeting, this time in person, on January 5th and intends to gather virtually the first Monday of each month at 1:30 pm. Interested community members are welcome to attend to observe the meetings. Zoom links will be sent to anyone on the email list for the plan, so if you would like to attend or receive any content WILMAPCO sends out on the plan, please visit wilmapco.org/ardens to sign up.

We continued conversations on funding and grant opportunities to help implement projects in the plan. The committee learned that WILMAPCO has designated funding to study the impact of reducing down to 1 lane the 2 lanes approaching the Ardens from Claymont on the I-95 overpass by conducting a computer simulation to prove no significant change to traffic delay will take place if we make this improvement. DelDOT wants to see this before such a project goes into engineering design.

We learned that, perhaps in two or three years, DART transit intends to offer microtransit options in the Ardens to allow on-call transit connections to various destinations including the new Claymont Train Station and standard bus lines, while discontinuing the current Route 11 bus line. Before any of these changes take place there will be public hearings.

We also formed a subcommittee that will work with a consultant hired by WILMAPCO to better inventory potential context sensitive materials that might be used in various segments of our roadways and visualize what they could look like. The subcommittee will also be identifying opportunities for integrating art work into the plan's projects to further give a sense of place and community identity.

We selected a couple items from the plan that could be implemented in the short term. These are likely non-controversial, but since our approval of the plan was predicated on seeking approval of individual projects from the villages impacted prior to implementation, we will vote on approval of these two items tonight in New Business. They are

1. Reducing the Veale Road speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph from Marini's and St. Edmond's to Harvey Road in both directions.
2. Introducing signage on Harvey Rd displaying the 25 mph speed limit at the CSX train tracks overpass as you enter the Ardens from Claymont.

There were a couple other things mentioned in the meeting that did not come out of the transportation plan but could help if implemented.

- Work has just started on improving the intersection at Harvey, Sconset, and WMS by improving the existing crosswalk on Harvey, adding a crosswalk across Sconset, and running a walkway for pedestrians alongside Sconset until you're down the hill a safe distance from cars with low visibility turning into Ardentown.
- At the same intersection, residents have requested that green lights turn red in all directions while the pedestrian walk light is on, similar to the light at Harvey and Orleans. This location has had a recent collision and a number of near-collisions with pedestrians crossing as motorists exit WMS or Sconset.
- At the traffic light for the I-95 off ramp, residents have requested a stop line be painted in front of the light for motorists traveling from Claymont towards the Ardens to help avoid people running the light.

A resident expressed concern about the timing of meetings [during the work day]. The purpose of the committee is to relay information to the Villages, like Tiffany did via this report. Minutes will be made available. Those not on the committee can view the meetings in person as observers. There are three committee members per Village. Any time they need to approve something in the plan, it will be put up to a vote in the Village meetings. Senator Gay added that votes of the community are helpful for her and Representative Lambert when they fund projects.

Unfinished Business

Motion for Ordinance Revision

Third reading of a motion for an Ordinance revision by Lorna Lee on behalf of the Governance Documents and Coordinating Committees: "I move that the language in Village Ordinances pertaining to committees be changed as written in the handout and go into effect with the Village's next ballot and election."

Ken Morrison proposed the following amendment suggested by the Governance Documents Committee: "I move that the first sentence of the Environmental Committee ordinance be made consistent with other committee statements of purpose: 'An Environmental Committee for the Village of Ardencroft is hereby established to represent and be responsible to the Town Meeting for matters concerning stewardship ~~be stewards~~ of the Village's ecosystem, fostering healthy forests and public spaces, and advising on leasehold plant life.'" The amendment passed with unanimous support.

The motion for ordinance revision passed as amended with unanimous support. The language in Village Ordinances pertaining to committees will be changed to go into effect with the Village's next ballot and election.

Motion for New Charter

Jenn Abernethy proposed a motion for the new charter: "I move that the Village Charter be revised according to the draft mailed to each household in Ardencroft." A discussion ensued, with resident questions and clarifications about specific language. It's appropriate not to be too stringent with this document going to the state; we can be more specific regarding operations through our internal processes—ordinances, policies, etc.

Bob Pollock proposed an amendment to section 11, item b: "I motion to omit 'at a regular Village Assembly meeting' in the sentence 'Officers and committee members shall be elected by secret ballot ~~at a regular Village Assembly meeting~~.'" The amendment passed with unanimous support.

After discussion of absentee ballot, Lorna Lee proposed an amendment to section 11, item b: "I motion to add 'or by absentee ballot' in the sentence 'Officers and committee members shall be elected by secret ballot ~~or by absentee ballot at a regular Village Assembly meeting~~.'" The amendment was later withdrawn due to the general agreement that "secret ballot" can constitute an absentee ballot or mail-in ballot. The Village can dictate that internally via ordinance or policy.

Wyn Achenbaum proposed a two-part amendment: "I move to amend the charter with the following additions to the Definitions section:

b) Meetings of the Village Assembly are events held at various points in the year. At such meetings, whether regular or special meetings, eligible voters choosing to attend conduct Village business by hearing updates from officers and committees and by debating and voting on issues at hand. Village Assembly meetings are open to the public, but only eligible voters may vote.

d) Resident is defined as a person residing in the Village for a period of thirty (30) consecutive days who ~~that~~ currently resides in the Village for the majority of the calendar year. Residents include those renting housing units in the Village, as well as resident leaseholders." The proposed two-part amendment passed with unanimous support."

The motion for the New Charter with the amendments above passed with 18 votes in favor, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention. The Village Charter be revised and sent to the State's General Assembly for approval and subsequent signature by the Governor. Copies of the approved Charter will be in welcome packets after the Governor signs it and our fiscal year begins on July 1, 2024.

New Business

A. Motion for Ordinance Removal

Ken Morrison made a motion for ordinance removal: "I move that the current ordinance 'Nomination and Election of Officers and Committees of the Town Meeting' (in handout) be removed from the Village's ordinances, due to its obsolescence." This motion will be read at the March meeting and voted on at the May meeting.

B. Motion to Hold a Special Village Assembly Meeting

Ken Morrison made a motion to hold a special Village Assembly meeting: "I move that the Village Assembly holds a special meeting on March 21 at 7:00 pm at the Buzz Ware Village Center in order to expedite a second reading of the proposal to remove the Village ordinance on the Nomination & Election of Officers & Committees." The motion passed with 16 votes in favor and 3 abstentions.

C. Motion to Revise Ordinances for Consistency with New Charter Language

Jenn Abernethy made a motion on behalf of the Governance Documents Committee to revise ordinances for consistency with new charter language: "I move that the ordinances in the handout under letter "C" be changed according to the revisions therein, in order to conform to language in the new Village Charter (highlighted text) and reflect the current practice in our meeting agenda order of business." This motion will be read at the March meeting and voted on at the May meeting.

D. Motion for New Ordinance on Municipal Fine Structure and Related Revisions

Jenn Abernethy made a motion on behalf of the Governance Documents Committee for a new ordinance on municipal fine structure and related revisions: "I move that a new ordinance, found in the handout (under letter "D"), be added to define the "municipal fine structure" referenced in the new Village Charter; the changes identified in the current ordinances that seek payment of fines for violations (D. 1-10) be updated according to the handout; and a penalty for violation of the Village's "Trucks and Heavy Equipment" ordinance be added (D. 11) according to the handout." A discussion ensued. This motion will be read at the March meeting and voted on at the May meeting.

E. Motion for New Ordinance: Notice of Village Assembly Meetings

Jenn Abernethy made a motion on behalf of the Governance Documents Committee for a new ordinance on the notice of Village Assembly meetings: "I move that a new ordinance be added stating: 'Notice of upcoming Village Assembly meetings shall be sent to eligible voters seven (7) or more days prior to the meeting date. Residents may opt for electronic or tangible delivery of meeting notices. For those voters opting for tangible delivery, one notice delivered to the household shall constitute notice to all eligible voters living in the household.'" This motion will be read at the March meeting and voted on at the May meeting.

F: Motion for New Ordinance: Meeting Minutes

Jenn Abernethy made a motion on behalf of the Governance Documents Committee for a new ordinance on meeting minutes: "I move that a new ordinance be added stating: 'Minutes from Village Assembly meetings shall be made available electronically. Minutes can be printed upon request.'" A discussion ensued regarding the difference between meeting minutes and notice of the next meeting. This motion will be read at the March meeting and voted on at the May meeting.

G: Motion for New Ordinance: Registration Committee Members

Jenn Abernethy made a motion on behalf of the Governance Documents Committee for a new ordinance on meeting minutes: "I move that a new ordinance be added, stating: 'The Registration Committee was established by the municipal charter. The number of committee members shall be three (3). Two (2) members shall be elected on odd-numbered years and one (1) on even-numbered years.'" This motion will be read at the March meeting and voted on at the May meeting.

H: Motion for New Ordinance: Officer Terms

Jenn Abernethy made a motion on behalf of the Governance Documents Committee for a new ordinance on officer terms: "I move that a new ordinance be added stating: 'Officers of the Village Assembly are established by municipal charter. Terms for officers shall be 2 years in length. The Chair shall be elected on even-numbered years. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected on odd-numbered years.'" This motion will be read at the March meeting and voted on at the May meeting.

I: Motion for New Ordinance: Date and Time of Regular Village Assembly

Jenn Abernethy made a motion on behalf of the Governance Documents Committee for a new ordinance on the date and time of the regular Village Assembly: "I move to update the ordinance on the 'Date and Time of Regular Town Meetings' as follows: 'Regular Village Assembly meetings ~~Town Meetings~~ shall be held at 7:30 ~~8:00~~p.m. on the third Monday of the months of February, May, September, and November ~~specified in the Act to Incorporate the Village of Ardencroft.~~'" Between now and the March meeting, we will send a survey regarding the change from Thursday to Monday. This motion will be read at the March meeting and voted on at the May meeting.

J: Motion to Approve Implementation of Two Transportation Plan Items

Chris Raia made a motion on behalf of the Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee: "I move that Ardencroft approve implementation of the following Ardens Transportation Plan items: 'Reducing the Veale Road speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph from Marini's and St. Edmonds to Harvey Road in both directions.

Introducing signage on Harvey Rd displaying the 25 mph speed limit at the CSX train tracks overpass as you enter the Ardens from Claymont.'" After short discussion, the motion passed with 19 votes in favor and 1 abstention. The approval will be relayed to DELDOT.

Good and Welfare

- The Village of Ardencroft sent get well cards to Tom Senior, and Frank Jost, both neighbors on Evergreen Lane. We would like to wish them better health in the weeks to come.
- Sadly, we send our condolences to the Sheiker family on the loss of one of their beloved twins, Berkeley, on December 23. We need to keep Tobi, Dutch, and Bronti in our thoughts and prayers.
- We also send our condolences to Ricardo and Mary Lebeis on the loss of Ricardo's sister, Jeanna Carey, who lived in Ardentown and was very active in the broader community.
- Our sympathies also go to Don and Leslie Lipari on the loss of Don's mother.
- Our condolences also go to Kevin Nemeth on the loss of his dad Paul, who used to live with Kevin here in Ardencroft.
- These are just a few of the personal notices that have happened since our last meeting. I'd like to remind folks that this is an important part of being a community. If you have some good or sad news to pass to us, please bring it up during Good and Welfare, or let one of us in the Registration Committee announce.
- Don Lipari shared that those 65 and older in DE can ride half the fare via Septa. Visit <https://www.septa.org/fares/senior-fare-card/> for more information.
- Tax refund if over 65, living in DE for 10 years. Rebate to the individual. Visit <https://finance.delaware.gov/senior-relief/> for more information. There are other kinds of rebates available for reduced tax assessments on a dwelling, which take income and disability into account. Visit the New Castle County website for more information. There is usually an April deadline to apply.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.

Submitted,

Jennifer Abernethy

Jennifer Abernethy, Village Secretary

Attachments – Ardencroft Financial Report - 11/16/2023 - 1/17/2024
Proposed Budget- FY24 Extension (March - June, 2024)
Handout of Proposed Ordinance Changes, referred to in New Business, Items A through I