

Gifford Park Association
General Membership Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 16, 2017

In attendance: Chris and Karen Bach, John and Carol Anderson, Kevin and Natalie Kearney, Don and Karen Spencer, Dan and Pat Miller, Warren Tejes, Barbara Evans, Paul and Susan Kuester, Parker Thompson, Paul Bednar, Caryl Clement, Jean Clement, Laura Almasan, Mark Preradovic, Robin Leabhart, Deborah Allan, Liz Marston, Officer Ramirez, Officer Brooke Risotto, Colby Basham, Colleen Jaltuch
The meeting came to order with attendees introductions. President Dan Miller passed around an Elgin calendar of events.

Rope Officer Report: Officer Ramirez stated that since our last meeting there were 330 service calls. This included 88 traffic stops, a burglary on Fulton, a juvenile in Gifford Park with a weapon which turned out to be a BB gun, three vendors soliciting sales in the neighborhood, and some problems with delivered packages being stolen from porches. The Police Department also has several upcoming events including the Citizens Police Academy, and Senior Citizens Police Academy, a Teen Distracted Driver Course, Coffee with a Cop, and the Chief's Monthly Meeting. Go to the Police Department's [Facebook page](#) or the [Elgin Police web page](#) for more information and to sign up.

Dan introduced Colby Basham who talked about what he does as Elgin's Citizen Services Director which includes 311. Questions ensued about street lighting, plowing, and neighbor complaints. Dan and Colby both encouraged everyone to download the Google or Apple app for Elgin 311 services. It's a great way to receive announcements and report problems.

Colby then introduced Colleen Jaltuch who is a Senior Project Engineer at EEI (Engineering Enterprises, Inc.). The city of Elgin outsources many city projects to EEI including the Chicago Street Reconstruction Project. The project encompasses improvements to Chicago Street from Center Street to Liberty. The project is still in its planning stages with actual work beginning in early 2018.

Colleen says she has been working on the project for 2 years. Plans include:
Shared motorist/cyclist lanes on concrete pavement with parking on both sides of the street (odd/even parking as is done throughout the neighborhood).

New curb, gutter and sidewalk.

New traffic signals at Gifford and Channing.

Existing decorative street lights would be reused.

Colleen's power point presentation included a diagram of the proposed roadway.

Some of the concerns voiced were about the aesthetics of painted parking lines, as well as general parking problems involving people parking too close to corners, driveways and crosswalks. Paul Bednar asked if the trees that will be lost could be replaced by 3 1/2" diameter trees instead of the more common 2 1/2" size.

The proposed street improvements include:

Existing combined sewer system will be separated.

New storm sewer will be added with oversized pipes for detention.

Existing sanitary sewer system will be lined and services repaired or replaced as needed.

Existing water main and services will be replaced.

Colleen said that during construction temporary easements will be needed and they are working with IDOT for approval on traffic control. There will be one lane open for east-bound traffic and west-bound traffic will be detoured. Joe Evers

(Evers.j@cityofelgin.org) is the City Engineer who will be overseeing this project.

When asked, Colleen could not say how long the project will take to complete but she thought it was not feasible to expect everything to be totally finished in 2018. It may extend a bit into 2019.

There were several comments and questions at the end of the presentation.

Paul B. asked about the new sidewalks and if parkways would be established where none currently exist in front of a few churches and other buildings.

Paul K. asked if the sewer would be done before the road but Colleen assured us they would be done together. Paul B. asked if overhead utility lines could be run underground but the general opinion was that while it would be the coolest thing ever, it would be price prohibitive. Parker T. asked about bus pads and was told that four large pads would be added.

Dan thanked Colleen for the presentation and Colby encouraged people to call 311 for updates on the project.

Secretaries Report: Pat Miller made an amendment to the minutes from the last meeting. She said that the treasurer's report should have stated \$99,642.48 instead of \$105,642.48. A motion was made to approve the amended minutes by Warren T. It was seconded by Chris Bach and passed.

Treasurer's Report: Pat Miller reported that the current balance in our accounts is \$99,619.

Historic District Report: Dan said that Bowes is owned by Mutual of Omaha Bank and they would like to give the building to GPA but we could not accept because of the colossal cost of taxes and insurance. However, if the city accepted ownership of the property, those issues would be resolved. GPA could then partner with the city to remove the building additions, make exterior improvements, and return it to a single

family residence. Dan pointed out that there are other mansions in the neighborhood which are single family. Dan got an estimate of \$105,000 to remove the additions. He also contacted David C. Cook Publishing (D. C. Cook was the original owner of the home) and talked to the CEO's secretary. Dan reported that she was excited about the idea of partnering with us to save the mansion and stated that it is being discussed at board meetings. Dan also discussed other sources of funding that could be used for the restoration.

Dan went on to report that he is now a board member for the Elgin Community Network and that ECN is now the administrators of the Elgin Neighborhood Improvement Grants. He talked about the many great projects that have been accomplished with the grant money since 1997 and encouraged people to apply for a grant through ECN. Past grant projects and ideas are listed at the end of the minutes. Dan also mentioned a wonderful upcoming program sponsored by ECN on February 21. Code 2.0 and Citizens Code Academy to be held on February 21st at 7:00 pm at the Library.

Barbara E. asked about Milan Shaw, the guy was contracted with to make our walking tour app. The discussion centered on various ways to pursue the return of our money for services that were never completed and/or provided. Hiring an attorney was one suggestion and Deborah A. proposed asking Milan what kind of work he may already have that may perhaps be of value to us and could help to offset the amount owed us. Paul Bednar is having a Historic District Committee meeting at his house at 16 Rugby Pl. on Monday, February 20 at 7 pm. Come with creative ideas for this great committee. **House Tour:** Pat Miller says the next planning meeting is Monday, February 27 at 7pm at the Historical Museum on Park Street. Much progress has already been accomplished but lots of work (and fun!) still lies ahead.

Other Business: Deborah A. brought up that there will be a referendum question coming up at the April election. We will be asked to lessen the bond amount returned in our tax dollars so the Forest Preserve can purchase more land. Deborah talked about the benefits of increasing the amount of acres the Forest Preserves have which will increase our green space, sustain wildlife in the area and improve air quality and quality of life with new paths and connectivity.

A motion to adjourn was made by John Anderson and seconded by Barbara Evans. We were all grateful that the motions passed and that this long meeting was concluded.

Deborah Allan's great treats did make it a little more palatable.

Respectfully submitted by,

Karen Bach

Neighborhood Improvement Grants awarded to GPA in the past

1997 – Street name signs – \$15,000

1997 – Original East Side Neighbors – traffic circle – \$15,000

1999 – Parkway tree planting – \$11,600
2000 – Historic Home Marketing program – \$13,125
2001 – Street tree planting phase II and landscaping – \$13,741
2003 – Neighborhood Plan – \$15,000
2005 – Chamber after hours at 132 N. Channing – \$911
2007 – Photographic survey – \$3450
2013 – Historic District signage – \$1756
2015 – Walking tour brochure – hard copy – \$3702

Below is a list of neighborhood matching grant projects from prior years. Along with the rest of the information in the Program Guidelines, feel free to use these examples to generate ideas for a Matching Grant in your neighborhood:

- Installation of decorative neighborhood signs – street sign toppers & entry signs
- Entryway beautification
- Traffic circle landscaping
- Neighborhood picnics
- Tree planting (along streets or in underutilized open spaces or parks)
- Pocket Park Development
- New neighborhood association start-up
- Neighborhood clean-ups
- Playground improvements
- Organizing a neighborhood book drive — collection and purchase of books for neighborhood elementary school kids to take home over the summer
- Stream restoration (trash clean-up, invasive species removal, replanting with native species)
- Trail development and trail access
- Neighborhood web site or newsletter
- Neighborhood photographic survey
- Neighborhood planning handbook
- Neighborhood butterfly garden
- Veterans memorial
- Community building rehab
- Historic sites tour
- Historic district signs
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