

GPA General Membership Meeting

Thursday, July 20, 2017

In Attendance: Dan Miller, Chris and Karen Bach, Tom and Maureen Lee, Joshua Von Dran, Ken Kendzy, Caryl Clement, Mark and Glenna Preradovic, Barbara Evans, Paul and Sue Kuester, Officer Ramirez.

Introductions: All present stated who they were and where they live.

Guest Speaker: Dan introduced the new Code Compliance Officer for our neighborhood, Josh Von Dran. With no thought to tradition (aren't we supposed to be bribing him?) Josh tried to win over our affections by bringing us cookies which were much appreciated since our usual snack providers were not in attendance.

Josh began by telling us about his background: he is 38 years old and married to a wonderful woman. He was in the Army for 17 years and credits that experience for his discipline and his cool head and demeanor. He had also worked for the railroad for two years. Josh grew up in Bolingbrook as one of 7 kids.

Josh says he has been working his way through the Elgin zoning ordinances for some light summer reading and is still learning. Josh has been on the job for 8 months and says he is pro-active on code enforcement. Josh went on to say that he is one of 5 Code Officers – one in four quadrants of the city and one floater. He states that he is solution minded instead of problem minded. He told us to call 311 if we spot a code violation but if it needs quick attention, to also email him at vondran_j@cityofelgin.org. He may have many cases he's working on so this is a sure way for him to see your complaint. He also reminded us to tell the 311 operator that we would like a follow-up on the complaint. He told us he does most of his paperwork while sitting in his car. He often chooses a nice shady tree to park under while he works so don't panic if you see him sitting in front of your house – he just may be enjoying your parkway tree and not writing you up! He welcomes neighbors to come out and say hi and a nice cool glass of lemonade would not be amiss!

Josh went on to say that peeling paint is a big problem in our area and a source of many of the violations he writes up. He feels it's important for our old houses to be properly painted since it protects the wood and the beautiful decorative elements that adorn many of our homes. Josh also told us that if a code officer is trying to get in touch with you, do not ignore it in the hopes that the problem will go away. Both code officers and homeowners just want to be able to discuss a potential problem in a cool, calm way and figure out the best solution for all.

Josh kept his speech short and sweet but left time for questions of which there were plenty. Some of these were as follows: Tom Lee asked what the process is for non-compliance. Josh replied that a complaint gives 30 days for compliance and can

receive a 30 day extension. A homeowner can write to request an additional extension. Eventually a complaint could go to court and fines can be assessed at up to \$50 per day.

Rental properties were discussed. Josh said that a property should be 100% compliant in order to get a rental license. He also said that if a landlord does not respond to a complaint, it could lead to a suspension of the property's rental license.

Both Sue Kuester and Tom Lee complained about nearby homes that left garbage cans out in the front yard including a rental property.

Paul Kuester asked how long after calling 311 can we expect to have resolution of a problem. Josh responded that it typically takes him 2 to 4 days to get out to evaluate the situation.

Barbara Evans asked if she needed a permit to replace a door and frame. Josh replied that she would if she was not just replacing the door (or window or screen) but was replacing the frame as well. Barbara was heard to utter, "oops". (Dan's comment: If you are replacing an outside door in the Historic District you have to get a Certificate of Appropriateness.)

Moe Lee wanted to know what we could do to make our area better.

Josh said that he is trying to focus his attention on just a few blocks at a time and that it would be helpful if we also put our attention on those same blocks. He is currently working on the Porter and Hill area.

Tom Lee asked if we are supposed to get an immediate answer on whether or not we passed inspection when we complete permit work. Josh said yes, they will tell you if it is approved or call if it is not approved.

Dan Miller said that he is impressed with Josh's new boss Colby Basham and Josh agreed that Colby offers good leadership. Josh is excited for the future of the department and stated that both he and Colby agree that communication is extremely important in the work they do.

Dan Miller thanked Josh for taking the time to speak with us this evening.

ROPE Report: Officer Ramirez reported that within the last month there have been 406 calls for service. 20 % were traffic stops. There were only 2 calls for fireworks in our area and 23 for loud music/parties. There were 2 burglaries of which one was a civil dispute. In addition, there was one attempted burglary of a home undergoing rehab. There was one shooting at 310 E. Chicago Street on the 10th of July at 2 pm. Police found 2 shell casings but no one was hit. The suspect fled in a vehicle and the police are still investigating. The Chief planned a "Walk & Talk" for a day shortly after the incident. Elgin Police have found this is a good way to learn of other problems. Officer Ramirez reminded us how important it is to call in potential problems before they have time to escalate.

On the lighter side, Officer Ramirez said that he took 3 neighborhood kids to ROPE camp and that everyone had a good time. He thanked GPA for contributing to that endeavor. He also talked about National Nite Out from 6 – 8 pm on August 1st in Gifford Park – a fun evening of music and food. He hopes we all attend.

Dan Miller thanked Officer Ramirez for coming

After a call for any new business brought no response, Paul Kuester made a motion to adjourn that was seconded by Barbara Evans. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Bach

Respectfully submitted by Karen Bach, GPA Secretary