

GPA General Membership Meeting

Thursday, June 15, 2017

In Attendance: Dan and Pat Miller, Chris and Karen Bach, Barbara Evans, Caryl, Jean, and Jo Anne Clement, Elizabeth Marston, Bill Briska, John and Sydney Boline, Tom and Maureen Lee, Mark and Glenna Preradovic, Deborah Allan, Officer Ramirez, and Kyla Jacobsen.

Dan started the meeting by introducing our special guest, the Head of the Elgin Water Department, Kyla Jacobsen, whose (temporary?) title is Public Services Director. Kyla's educational background includes degrees in chemistry and bio-chemistry with a second Master's in engineering. She started at the Elgin Water Treatment Plant shortly after graduating. Kyla brought us a Power Point presentation of the workings of the water treatment facilities in Elgin. Her presentation has been greatly condensed in these minutes due to the use of too many big words on Kyla's part that went completely over the head of the Secretary.

The presentation included the history of water supply in the early years of Elgin. Drilled wells and the river were both used and are still used today. Kyla talked about the building of our water plants and their development as the city grew and research of water processing improved. She told us about current water regulations, hard water versus soft water, and the processing and composition of the water that flows from our home taps.

Kyla went on to discuss where the Fox River originates from and she talked about the river intake process and the waste residuals management as well as water storage. She told us how our water is tested at all levels of process. After Dan Miller expressed a concern of many old house residents about lead pipes leading from our houses to the streets, Kyla talked about further testing that is done according to EPA protocol. Many Elgin homes are used to gather this data but Kyla is always looking for more homes to add to the database. If you would be interested in your home being one of those tested, please contact Kyla at jacobsen_k@cityofelgin.org. Lead levels in Elgin water is not a concern, but Kyla went on to say that if you are concerned about your water, especially if it's been unused for a while, just run the tap briefly to flush it out. Each gallon of water is delivered straight to your house for less than 1/3 of a penny so rest assured that you will not be "flushing" your money away! Ha ha!

At the conclusion of the presentation, Kyla answered questions from the assembly which included last summer's problem of algae bloom, and how our water rates have not increased in many years even though the expense of water processing has increased. Mark Preradovic asked if any big projects are coming up. The answer was that our water towers are being painted as can be currently seen around town.

Dan thanked Kyla for meeting with us and Kyla replied that her goal is to educate and increase the public's interest in their water supply. She invited us to call her at 847-931-6160 any time if any of us would like a tour of the water facility. (The GPA Secretary has taken the tour, found it fascinating, and gives it two thumbs up.)

Resident Officer's Report: Officer Ramirez last spoke to us in March and gave us an update on the state of the neighborhood since then. There was an eviction in March on North Street after a shooting that involved gang members. There was a shooting on Ann Street in April involving another known gang house and one in May on Ann Street involving a boy/girl romance thingy/problem. Officer Ramirez stressed to us the importance of calling him at 224-760-8480 when we have a problem. It is the only way to eventually curtail activity at problem properties and to stop other problems from ramping up. He went on to state that the biggest problem since March is an increase in burglaries to mostly unlocked motor vehicles. There have been 8 such burglaries. He reminded us to lock our vehicles to avoid this problem. There has been an increase in juvenile problems with 15 calls since March. Loud music, loud parties, and loud subjects received 50 calls to round off our neighborhood list of top problems since March. He is expecting calls about illegal fireworks to start increasing soon.

Officer Ramirez said he is planning a neighborhood party for National Night Out which will take place in Gifford Park on Tuesday, August 1st from 6 – 8 p.m. He is worried that his party-hosting abilities are not as great as some of his predecessors so he is looking for donations and additional help to make it a really great party. Call him if you are able to lend him a hand.

Officer Ramirez said that ROPE Camp is June 29th to July 1st this year and that 3 – 4 kids from our neighborhood will be among the campers at White Pines Ranch. Since GPA has traditionally donated to the Camp to help defray the cost, Barbara Evans made a motion that we give \$300 towards the Camp. The motion was seconded by Mark Preradovic and passed unanimously.

Officer Ramirez reminded everyone of the 4th of July parade and fireworks downtown and ended his report by fielding a question from Tom Lee regarding a commercial vehicle that continuously parks near his home. Dan thanked the officer for his work.

Secretaries Report: A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 16th meeting by Bill Briska and was seconded by Debra Allan. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report:

Checking Account:	\$17,144.69
CD's	\$81,251.53
Total	\$98,396.22

Committee Reports:

Historic District: Dan gave a big shout-out to Paul Bednar for his work in organizing a clean-up event in our neighborhood and to Chris, Alex and Rebecca Berry for the hard work they put into the effort. Dan also thanked Paul for organizing a successful neighborhood garage sale which was a fun and profitable event.

Dan Miller reported that he, Deborah Allan, Pat Miller and Bill Briska met with city representatives over concerns about the David C. Cook mansion and possible solutions. GPA and the City of Elgin are looking for partners to team up in creating opportunities for the use of this building. The city and the bank-owner may explore a partial demolition of additions to the property which could potentially lead to some adaptive re-uses. A Rockford architect would be interested in doing a feasibility study, and financing was discussed. The City has said that they want any re-use to have a low impact on the neighborhood. They do not want to own the property but would be interested in participating in a future owner's process towards usage. Barbara Evans asked if the city could remove the additions, and Dan replied that the city does not want to.

Housewalk Committee: The next meeting for Housewalk will be Monday, June 26th, at 7 p.m. at the Wing mansion at 972 W. Highland. Jennifer Fukula has now put pictures of all the houses for this year's walk on the Housewalk Facebook page. We are in need of 6 people to walk the 4th of July parade route handing out flyers advertising Housewalk. Past parade participants said this was a fun activity and good exercise. Pat Miller said everything else is moving along smoothly and that there will be a need for many, many docents this year.

Membership Committee: Dan thanked Moe and Tom for hosting the Membership Potluck at Lord's Park Pavilion. A good time was had by all. Moe said that we still have 176 members. We did get some new members but it was evened out by some others who have left.

Other Concerns: Tom stated that in taking the pictures for the house tour homes, he noticed how beautiful and well-maintained that neighborhood is. He thinks we should be looking to reach that same pinnacle in our own neighborhood. Some stated that the difference in our area is rental properties. The importance of code enforcement was brought up and a lively discussion ensued.

Tom Lee made a motion to adjourn that was seconded by Moe Lee. Everyone heartily agreed.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Bach, GPA Secretary