

## **GPA General Membership Meeting**

### **Thursday, October 19, 2017**

Attendance: Dan and Pat Miller, Chris and Karen Bach, Tom and Moe Lee, Lisandro Ramirez, Bill Briska, Paul Kuester, Paul Bednar, Peggy Bernar, JoAnne Clement, Caryl Clement, Barbara Evans, John Boline, Deborah Allan.

President Dan Miller started the meeting promptly at 7 pm.

**ROPE Report:** Officer Ramirez reported that since our last meeting on August 17th there have been 683 service calls in our area of which 123 were traffic stops. On September 12th, the 400 block of Park had an armed robbery and the McDonald's on Summit had a confrontation between a customer and an employee. On October 7th there was a use of a weapon by a felon during a domestic dispute on Gifford. There were two burglaries to cars on October 16th (Officer Ramirez again reminds us to lock our vehicles). There were 5 loud music calls during two festivals at St. Joseph's. The church did have a permit.

Officer Ramirez talked about the use of surveillance cameras to help in the solving of crimes. He said if you have a camera on your house and would like to allow the police access to the footage, please give him a call at 224-760-8480. Or if you are interested in installing a camera on your home and would like some advice from the police, you can call their technical adviser at 847-289-2602.

Caryl Clement asked about a home that seems to be dealing drugs. Officer Ramirez told her to please call it in.

Dan thanked Officer Ramirez for his report. He then had us all introduce ourselves as there was a new person to the neighborhood at the meeting. We all welcomed Peggy Bernar whose family just purchased 18 N. Porter.

Secretary's Minutes: There was a motion from Barbara Evans to approve the minutes from the September 21st meeting. Moe Lee seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** \$116,790.75 total...

A motion was made by Paul Bednar to approve the report and was seconded by Tom Lee. The motion passed unanimously.

**Historic District Committee:** Paul Bednar made a list from a past brainstorm session identifying possible projects that could be undertaken in the Elgin Historic District. Paul asked us to look at the list and pick out our top three priorities or write down ones we deem important that were not on the list. We then went around the room with each person stating their preferences. Much discussion ensued.

Of all the items on the list the following were named as priorities most often: Landscape Street corners; Return Bowes Mansion to use; work with City to get stronger apartment licensing rules and checks; lobby City to reinstate more funds for grant programs, i.e. rehab and deconversion; reinstate a neighborhood party at Gifford Park

After further discussion it was concluded that our priorities fell into one of a few categories:

Neighbor socials, including:

**Annual Night in the Park** ( probably Gifford Park) with music, food, games, giveaways  
**Halloweenfest 2018** – with pumpkin giveaways at the schools and a carving contest at the park or at a school. Event to include prizes and food/drink  
**Neighborhood-wide Yard Sales**

Neighborhood work projects, including:

**Landscape Street Corners** (Chicago St will wait til redone)

**Litter clean-up**, Spring and Fall

**Holiday décor** on Historic District signs

**Great Unveiling**

**Neighborworks type event** to include painting park gazebo and other items

Neighborhood Education, including:

**Workshops** on painting, color selection, paver installations, window repair, etc.

**House Plaque assistance**

Meetings with City, including:

Lobby for more rehab funds

Lobby for more code inspection

Lobby for stronger apartment inspections

Make appropriate repairs to lights, walks and fill in gaps in parkways with street trees and remove extra signage from poles in neighborhood.

In addition it was noted that ECN has neighborhood grants available for many of these items.

None of the projects/events can occur unless there are volunteers from the neighborhood to plan each. WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Currently there are efforts being taken to decorate the 13 HD signs and 2 fences in the neighborhood (pocket park and Chicago/Liberty) Karen B, Glenna P, Paul B

In the near future there will be a group meeting to discuss Neighbor Socials. Tom L, Dan M, and our ROPE officer

Also, in the near future there will be discussions planning Neighborhood work projects and will include Paul B, Paul K, Deb A, Barbara E, Pat M.

Meetings with City staff and council members will be arranged by Dan M and Bill B

Housewalk Committee: Pat Miller said the wrap-up meeting at the end of September went well and lots of ideas were presented. Pat attended a new group formed to coordinate events that are taking place within the city. Hopefully this will keep overlapping events from occurring.

**Membership Committee:** Moe reported that we currently have 184 members in the Gifford Park Association.

The GPA Board held a discussion within the general membership meeting to decide on a plan of action concerning the bank-owned David C. Cook mansion. Dan Miller has been working with an individual banker about a feasibility study being done for the property. A Landmarks Preservation Council Of Illinois architect had agreed to do a study for free but as he is doing all of his paying jobs first, this has never been accomplished and time is of the essence in this

matter as the bank is tiring of carrying this property. An architect from Rockford submitted a bid for the project in the amount of \$6,000. The study would include things like an assessment of the condition of the building, could it be brought back to a single family usage or what other end uses could the property potentially have. The architect would also help to find tax credits for work on the property – he thinks the end result could be an inspiration for the surrounding neighborhood. Barbara Evans asked how soon the architect would be able to do the study and Dan said he would ask. Dan said when he asked the bank to share in the expense of the feasibility study, they said they would only be able to contribute \$1,000.00. Dan said he would like GPA to contribute the remaining amount. Much discussion followed since some people felt that since the bank owns the property, they should be the ones to incur any expenses regarding it. Tom Lee asked what GPA stands to gain by paying for this. Dan replied that in all likelihood it would not be done otherwise. Tom worried about it costing lots more. Paul Kuester asked what we do with the feasibility study once it's been done. Bill Briska said we need the study for the bank. The bank is holding a \$600,000 mortgage and has to pay the taxes (\$19,000) every year. He asked why they wouldn't kick in more to see if this is still a viable building. A marketing plan would also need to be developed.

Barbara Evans made a motion that GPA have Dan and Bill talk to the bank about contributing more for the feasibility study and get back to the Board with the results. Tom Lee seconded the motion. A unanimous vote to the affirmative resulted in the motion being passed. Dan asked if there were any other concerns. Crickets could be heard chirping... Moe Lee made a motion to adjourn. Barbara Evans seconded. Motion passed. Respectfully submitted by Karen Bach, GPA Secretary.