

## **Gifford Park Association**

### **General Membership Meeting**

Thursday, August 16, 2018

Members Present: Dan & Pat Miller, Chris & Karen Bach, Warren & Chris Tejes, Officer Ramirez, John Boline, Tom & Moe Lee, Bill Briska, Jim Berry, Paul Durrenberger, Jaime Garcia

Dan Miller called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

**ROPE Officer's Report:** Since the last meeting there were 3 burglaries to vehicles. ALL the vehicles were left unlocked. Officer Ramirez reminded us yet again to always lock our vehicles which is the biggest deterrent to this kind of theft. There was a total of 270 calls for service with 45 traffic stops.

School is back in session so be aware of increased activity around the schools and try to avoid school areas at arrival and dismissal times.

There is a new stop sign on the corner of Gifford and Ann Streets.

There are many upcoming events: Monday, August 20th is "Cone with a Cop". Come by the McDonald's at Tyler Creek between 1 - 2 pm for a free ice cream cone. Also on the 20th is "Coffee with a cop" at 6 pm at the Gail Borden Library Rakow branch. The Chief's Meeting will be August 27th, 6 pm at the Police Department. Go to the Elgin Police web site to sign up for their free three hour class entitled "Security through Surveillance". This informative class is from 9 am - noon on Saturday, September 15 at the Police Department and focuses on the use of home surveillance cameras. Cameras can even be linked to the police! Also on September 15th from 11 am - 4 pm is the Disaster Preparedness Expo at Hemmen's Auditorium. Meteorologist Mike Caplan will give a presentation on weather, the SWAT team vehicle will be on hand as well as the National Guard.

**Secretary's Report:** Tom Lee moved to accept the minutes from the last meeting. Warren Tejes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Pat Miller reported that we have two CDs and a checking account whose total balance is \$108,699.75 Thus far we have received

\$3440.70 (the odd number is because PayPal takes a commission) in Housewalk sponsorships.

Tom Lee moved to accept the report and it was seconded by Moe Lee. The motion passed unanimously.

**Historic District Report:** Dan Miller reported on the Great Unveiling last weekend at 28 N. Porter. A huge thank you goes out to Paul Bednar for arranging the event and the homeowners, Tom & Deb Dempsey. Lots of people came out to help - 21 volunteers in all! Kudos goes to Jackie Settiani and Cyndy Inden for providing a wonderful lunch for the workers. [Click here to see pictures from the event.](#)

**Membership:** Moe Lee reported that membership stands strong at 193 members.

**Housewalk:** Bill Briska, Tom & Moe Lee reported that everything is pretty much in order for the upcoming Historic Elgin House Tour. Dan Miller is still looking for decent alternates so give him a call at 224-245-7226 if you are available. [Click here for more info.](#) Dan added that it is nice to see the Housewalk banners on poles downtown.

**Other concerns:** Tom Lee voiced a concern about the recent "Neighbor Works day" program. Tom said that 2 of the houses that were given money and volunteers are in disrepair again. A discussion ensued on how to stress to homeowners the importance of maintaining the exterior of their property.

Karen Bach brought up the wonderful community art project that the History Museum is sponsoring called "Cobblestone Reflections". The project focuses on The Nancy Kimball House. Area artists are encouraged to participate. [See the flyer for more details.](#)

Dan Miller introduced our guest speaker, Jaime Garcia, co-founder and Executive Director of Centro de Informacion. Mr. Garcia told us that Centro de Informacion was founded in 1972. The hispanic population of Elgin was growing at that time with about 5,000 people in the area but there were no bi-lingual people in government offices, banks, doctor and dentist offices, etc. Garcia wanted to form a place where immigrants could go if they had a problem. Referral advocacy remains a major part of their business to this day. As of 2016 the city of Elgin now has a population of 48,000 hispanics making them the largest group of people in the area. Last year about 13,000 people came through the

agency's doors. Centro de Informacion's main office is located behind St. Joseph hospital at 1885 Lin Lor Lane. They have two satellite offices in Hanover Park and East Dundee. The agency is funded primarily by grants and government contracts with other sources of income coming from the townships, United Way, fundraisers, and private donors. People in need of their services hear of them through word of mouth and social media.

Jaime talked about many of the problems that immigrants may have when they first come to this country and how they can be easy prey for unscrupulous people. Centro de Informacion helps them learn the laws and the ins and outs of U.S. society. They encourage people to take English lessons and help them with immigration issues. Clients are also encouraged to become U.S. citizens and to get involved in their community.

The agency also gives many seminars on various current topics such as fraud and foreclosures. They are also the only agency offering parenting classes in Spanish as well as English.

The group also offers an emergency food pantry. They have health fairs and recently had the kidney mobile unit at the office screening people for high blood pressure and diabetes. They work with clinics and hospitals to find people needed health care.

As the agency looks towards the future, they are seeing more second generation hispanics coming to them and expressing gratitude for the help their parents were given and to volunteer their time in an effort to give back to others.

Dan Miller thanked Jaime Garcia for coming to speak to GPA and giving us an overview of the role Centro de Informacion plays in the lives of many Elginites.

Dan asked for a motion to adjourn which was provided by Warren Tejes and seconded by Tom Lee. The rest of us reluctantly agreed to end the meeting and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by substitute Secretary Karen Bach.