

Gifford Park Association - General Membership Meeting
Elgin History Museum
January 17, 2019

IN ATTENDANCE

Paul Bednar, Bill Briska, Barbara Evans, Mike Haskins, Marielle & Mark Hendricks, Paul & Susan Kuester, Tom and Moe Lee, Dan & Pat Miller, Mark Preradovic, EPD Officer Ramirez, Anthony Bernar, Patsy Hirsch, Laura Knoerr

Welcome and Introductions

R.O.P.E. REPORT (Officer Ramirez 847-289-2700)

Several robberies in our neighborhood since last meeting.

- First robbery took place on Chicago Street just to the west of Officer Ramirez's home. The robbery occurred around 10 PM, male with light complexion approached a woman from behind and stole her purse.
- Second robbery occurred at 55 Park Row. Someone called a company for HVAC assistance and when arrived no one was around. While trying to contact original caller someone approached and demanded the HVAC's cell phone, there was a bit of struggle, robber had a knife.

Stolen vehicles continue to be an issue throughout the city. Three juveniles in the neighborhood have been caught with stolen vehicles several times. Elgin Police will not give chase on stolen vehicle. Thieves are targeting idling vehicles. Do not leave your car unattended to warm it up unless you have automatic start.

Break in on Prairie Street, unlocked garage with extensive number of expensive tools taken. Homeowner did have a video camera set up, but it only recorded from the waist down. Officer Ramirez wants to remind everyone if you are installing camera's to contact the EPD. They will come out and make recommendations for purchase and set up. Ask for the Technical Investigative Unit.

- Reminder to record serial numbers of your valuables, and electronics. Pawn shops are required by law to check with "Leads on Line", prior to taking in these items. Also taking pictures of jewelry is helpful to recover if stolen.

Wayside Ministries has moved into the neighborhood and is currently at the Bethesda Church of God in Christ at 453 Fremont St. They are there for assisting with job searches, food, support etc. from 8 – 2.

Officer Ramirez reminds everyone to check the Elgin Police Facebook Page for all upcoming police events as well as their website.

SECRETARY'S AND TREASURER'S REPORTS

Minutes from November 2018 meeting approved as presented.

Treasurer's report

Pat reported the change to First Federal Savings Bank on Randall and South Street has been completed. We already had two CD's with a good rate at this bank. As our other CD's come up for renewal, we will switch to First Federal.

Checking account balance is	\$44,486.21
FFSB CD #1	31,371.44
FFSB CD #2	10,436.51
PNC CD #1	10,169.22
PNC CD #2	<u>30,599.13</u>
Total	\$ 127,063.01

Expenses over the last two months related to ordering new checks and deposit slips, Website maintenance, Christmas wreaths for the Historic District signs. Deposits included donations from Symonds Funeral Home for the Fall Festival, donation from online auction purchase of built in cupboard dumpster dived by Dan, and sale of 30 books to the Historical Society. GPA had the book entitled The Elgin Historic District by E. C. Alft reprinted and the Historical Society bought some at cost to resell.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMITTEE (Paul Bednar paul@paulbednar.com)

Thank you to Paul Kuester for purchasing the wreaths and helping Paul Bednar hang them in the rain.

Community Garden – Proposal for a community garden at the open space at the corners of Division and Channing. The city is at this time not interested in developing the land into a neighborhood park. Laura Knoerr along with Paul Bednar have been communicating with the city regarding developing this area for a community garden. Laura invited Patsy Hirsch one of the master gardeners from the Sherman Hospital Community Garden to provide information on how to proceed.

The city is willing to move forward on some of the land for a garden but requires an umbrella group to oversee the maintenance of the program. Paul Bednar showed aerial views of the site and explained how much space the gardens would take. Laura feels there is a lot of interest for the garden. She feels a lot of younger people living in the neighborhood would also be interested in growing their own food and currently are living where they have no yard space. The gardens would be available to residents living south of Summit, west of Liberty, east of Dundee and north of Villa.

Patsy stated the master gardeners from Sherman Hospitals Community Garden are willing to help/monitor and guide the start up. Patsy explained there are rules and regulations for the Sherman gardens all must agree to follow. There is a cost to participate. She explained Sherman's Garden began 11 years ago with 44 beds. It was put in the prairie area to expose nature to all. After the first year they identified the need for more and larger beds. They started with hospital employees but now it is about one-half employees. They average seventy to one hundred twenty gardens. These are raised beds

and approximately 4 feet by 12 feet in size. Sign up for Sherman begins on February 2nd. The garden closes the first week of November. The fee to participate ranges from \$30 to \$50, which is used to help build the raised beds. Laura stated the goal for this first year would be 20 garden beds. City is willing to offer free water and cut the grass at the site.

Motion from Paul Bednar asking Gifford Park Association to agree to create a subcommittee of the Historic District Committee to oversee the Community Garden at Channing and Division, along with agreeing to sign the lease with the city as the umbrella group to oversee the garden and its development. Motion was approved.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT (Moe Lee 708-828-9706)

One hundred ninety-four confirmed members of the Gifford Park Association. Spread the word that there is no charge for membership in GPA and that one does not have to live in the Elgin Historic District to belong.

Moe also inquired about the annual potluck to be held on April 26th at Lords Park Pavilion. It was agreed that she should proceed in planning it.

ELGIN HISTORIC HOUSE TOUR (Mike Haskins 630-880-7276)

First meeting for planning 2019 tour was held on Monday January 14th. As a result of the Chicago Street reconstruction the area for this year's tour will be homes north of East Chicago Street and the west end of the Lords Park area. Dan will once again be doing site selection and is asking if anyone in the area is interested in having their home on the tour to let him know. Mike also stated there are some open committee positions for anyone interested in helping carry out the walk. Contact Mike for more information or attend the next meeting planned for February 18th at 7PM at Elgin History Museum, 360 Park Street.

Behrens Scholarship (Barbara Evans 847-742-2265)

Barbara passed out The Gifford Park Association 2019 Scholarship proposal. The first year of this scholarship we will dedicate to Chuck Behrens, one of the founders of GPA. There was much support from those in attendance to go forward and see what returns we get. It was agreed that if a student did not show a significant documentation of our goals/beliefs we would not award the scholarship. The scholarship would go to all area high schools.

Slate of Officers for 2019

Below is the slate of officers nominated by Paul Bednar and seconded by Moe Lee, and voted into office for the 2019 calendar year. It was noted that Bill Briska, Pat Miller and Dan Miller are all maintaining their positions as there was no one else who came forward as interested.

Dan Miller – President
Bill Briska – Vice President
Susan Kuester – Secretary
Pat Miller – Treasurer
At Large I – Tom Lee

At Large II – Barbara Evans

Other concerns

It was identified that recent house fire at 329 Park has left the family homeless. Symonds Funeral Home is collecting gift cards. The Elgin Academy has started a "Go Fund Me" page. Moe made a motion to have GPA make a donation of \$500 to the family. Some discussion followed and it passed unanimously. \$500 will be given to Symonds for the family.

Respectfully submitted
Susan Kuester