

# Gifford Park Association General Membership Meeting

November 21, 2019

**In attendance:** Peggy Bernar, Bill Briska, Susan Kuester, Tom & Moe Lee, Dan & Pat Miller, Joy Symonds, Warren Tejes, Barbara Evans, Paul Bednar

**Introduction of the Sunderlage House:** presented by Nancy Lyons, secretary of the Hoffman Estates Historic Sites Commission. She handed out some information regarding the Sunderlage House, how it came to be, and where it is located. She also gave an invitation to tour the home, Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Time to be determined. Home is located between Higgins and Golf Roads, address is 1775 Vista Lane, Hoffman Estates, IL.

The farmhouse, grounds and the Greve Cemetery are managed by the Hoffman Estates Historical Sites Commission. The style of the farmhouse is called “vernacular” it combines design elements chosen by the owner and adapted to the midwestern setting. It has a balloon frame. The foundation is constructed of fieldstone. The front door treatment with full transom light and sidelights is a common feature of Greek Revival style. Behind the farmhouse stands the brick smokehouse. It predates the farmhouse and was constructed in the Greek Revival style. It is the only smokehouse of its kind in northern Illinois and is listed on the National Registry.

**Introductions** by all in attendance

**Minutes from September 19<sup>th</sup>** meeting approved as submitted. There was no meeting in October

## **Treasurer’s Report:**

○ Currently:	Checking	\$58,068
	<u>4 CD’s</u>	<u>\$84,282</u>
	Total	\$ 142,351.10

*Expenses: (past two months):* House Tour, Fall Fest, Community Gardens, and 2018 House Tour after party catering. Fall Fest expenses were for the band, bouncy house and other supplies. Community Garden expenses to build the Pergola and additional beds will be reimbursed by the grant. Other additional expenses are for web maintenance and GPA storage unit.

*Income:* 2<sup>nd</sup> Installment of grant for the Community Garden, House Tour Sponsorships, money from Jewel for house tour ticket sales, and donations by the Leetz family for Fall Fest.

*Request* from Pat that committees submit a financial summary following an event. This way it is easily reported at the monthly meetings and can be tracked for expenses.

**Membership:** Currently 143 confirmed households.

Requesting a membership committee be formed. The committee would be reaching out to new neighbors, introducing them to GPA. Currently, new residents are sent an email if available or regular mail introducing them to Gifford Park, but this is usually once the sale of the home is posted in local paper. So there is a delay in greeting new homeowners. Membership committee is also responsible for the planning of the annual GPA potlucks. Moe is looking for creative and innovative ways to introduce Gifford Park Association to new residents. Also, if you know of a new resident feel free to let Moe know so that she can reach out. Consider joining this committee.

The GPA Annual Potluck will be in April, watch for the date and place.

**House tour (Mike Haskins 630-880-7276):** Eight houses have been confirmed. The area will be in the near northwest side. North of Lawrence Avenue and East of Wing Park Blvd. Plan to have pictures of all homes at the January meeting.

#### **Historic District Committee ( Paul@paulbednar.com)**

1. *Community Garden* – successful first year. Recent build of a Pergola and ten additional garden beds. Additional beds have all been spoken for. Thank you to Laura and her team.
2. *Fall Fest* – “we beat the rain”. Larger crowd than last year. Successful program for the neighborhood. Thank you to Joy Symonds and Donna Leetz for their donations.
3. *Holiday Party* – original plan to have several homes open for membership. Could only confirm one home. Watch for email communication once plans have been confirmed. Looking to have Holiday Party at Elgin Public House. This will be an adult only party. Gifford Park will secure the room rental and purchase appetizers, cash bar. Date is tentative for December 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM
4. *Holiday Decorating Contest* – much discussion related to reminding everyone about the decorating contest. The original information was sent out in a flyer. Plan to post information again via email and possibly through the U-46 communication. Will also contact DNA for advertising.

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, applications will be available for GPA residents to register their home in our Christmas decorating Contest. There will be 2 categories: Traditional (sans lights) or Modern (with lights.) All judging will be on the exterior of the home. First Prize will be \$100 cash, runner u will receive \$50 in Downtown Neighborhood Association Gift Certificates. Deadline to register will be 12/13. Winners announced 12/15

5. *Holiday decorations to Historic Signs*. – plan to put up the small live wreaths. We did sixteen signs last year and plan the same with exception of the westbound lane on Chicago Street at East Chicago Street. John Boline agreed to pick up wreaths from Home Depot. Paul Kuester will mount on the signs. Question if we will/should do a wreath again on the wall at routes 25 and 19.

**Slate of Officers for 2020** – The following slate of officers was voted into office for the 2020 calendar year.

President – Dan Miller  
Vice President – Peggy Bernar  
Treasurer- Pat Miller  
Secretary – Susan Kuester  
At Large 1 – Tom Lee  
At Large 2 – Barbara Evans

Other positions will be appointed by the new board. Thank you to Bill Briska for his many years of contributions to the GPA board in numerous positions.

**Interesting tid bits from the 2020 City of Elgin budget** – Dan shared many interesting tidbits he pulled from the proposed 2020 City budget

#### City of Elgin 2020 budget tidbits

No increase in property tax levy - taxes can still go up if assessed valuation goes up. There was a 9.4 % increase in assted valuations for 2018. 6% more will be charged for water and 2% more will be charged for sewer. Each resident can expect to pay on average \$32.40 more for water and sewer.

Two new code officers will be hired bringing the total to 9. There were 13 in 2005. With smaller areas the code officers can get to know the residents better and feel an ownership with his beat. A new code officer goes thru 6 months of training. There will be 4 on the west side and 5 on the east. Each officer will be given an area where he will be in charge of code violations and rental licensing. There will no longer be inspecotrs that do only rnetal licsnsing. There will be a 56% decrease in the area that each inspector is in charge of. There is currently a 443 case backlog,

There are 5100 rental licenses (in 2000 there were 1450)with a total of 11600 rental units in Elgin.

There are 6000- property maintenance cases per year. 400 rental license inspections. The revenue from rental license is on the average, \$239,000. The top five code violations are tall grass, junk storage, garbage containers, commercial vehicles and trailers, motor vehicles

A new GIS specialist will be hired. 6 high resolution cameras will be mounted on cars and driven throughout Elgin to collect data. They will collect visual effects. AI interprets the data at a subscription price of \$20,000 per year. It will identify and map everything on the streets - houses, fire hydrants, stop signs, trees etc. Fox Trot, iFest, Elgin Civil war experience, and Art and Soul on the Fox may be discontinued for 2020. There is a \$600,000 a year budget for special events. Barb Keselica who used to be in charge of Special events is now the Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation. They hired a new person to be in charge of city events. \$200,000 will be spent to paint Old Main, replace 5 furnaces and change lights to LED. The cupola is fiberglass but faded so it needs painting. Rich Hoke said the cupola will really be visible with new paint and lights.

In 2020 Waste management will pick up household hazardous waste and electronics for an additional cost of \$1.35 per household per month. It is not optional. Some of the things they will pick up are automotive products like oil, antifreeze, batteries, garden chemicals, sharps needles and lancettes, paint products like stain, stripper and wood preservative, household cleaners, batteries, electronics like computers, monitors televisions cell -phones, printers, mercury items like fluorescent lamps and bulbs thermostats. You will need to call or e-mail Waste management to tell them you have a pickup.

The city is scheduled to save \$600,000 by refinancing some bonds. The city currently has \$635 per person debt which is much lower than most cities.

Randall Road Corridor study \$100,000

Tree replacement \$300,000, There are 4 1/2 full time forestry people, two part time. There are 60,000 public trees in Elgin

\$50,000 for Arts grants

\$300,000 to buy properties

965,000 incentives for businesses

10 million per year for street improvements.

The parking lot across from St. Joes on Division is owned by the city and will be repaved in 2020

At the informal budget meeting a representative from Catholic Charities was present. He is interested in learning more about Elgin. He will have an office in the basement of the St. Joes office building on Geneva St. They have counselors in the grade schools, they do marriage counseling, help with job placement and are working to help with the census this year.

The marijuana that is sold in Elgin will have the maximum tax imposed on it. The new

Cannabis law takes effect on January 1.

\$50,000 will be spent on an engineering study of DuPage Ct.

Caesars now owns the Riverboat Casino. They have a rewards program including a loyalty card which encourages people to go to their casino instead of others. They are very aggressive in their marketing. They are pursuing a hotel in downtown.

For ten years Elgin has had a AAA credit rating.

The city has 75 parks and 46 playgrounds.

The city takes in 3.5 million in ambulance fees.

The city has taken in 11 million this year in income tax which is a record high.

\$700,000 was spent on new police vehicles

In 2020 they plan to bring down 15 million dollars in reserves. There currently is 54.7 million in reserves. The benchmark is to have 30 % of your budget in reserves. That would be 38 million.

2.5 million dollars will be spent to upgrade all of our street lights to LED. The city is receiving grants to help with the cost and there will be a substantial savings in the city's electric bill.

\$200,000 is budgeted in 2020 and 2021 to repair the planters downtown.

Police chief Anna Lalley has been making you tube videos explaining the 911 process. The name of her video Lalley in the Valley. Part 1 crime is down 17% in Elgin. There were 53,000, 911 calls for service last year. It is a high stress, high turnover job. 3 - 4 leave every year. Two new telecom officers will be hired.

City Manager Kozal has mentioned my name in both of the past two public City Council meetings. It is part a joke and partly serious. Last night he said, " I see Dan Miller is in attendance but he is far enough away that I can make this announcement. Riverboat money is down. We are spending almost all of it to resurface roads. We need to start thinking about eliminating the Historic Grant programs."

Dan's reaction: Our Historic Homes are a huge asset in Elgin that needs to be protected and encouraged. A good looking old home does so much to improve our image. We all need to start lobbying our staff and city council about the

importance of our grant programs. Half of the 50/50 grant program and the Downsizing program needs to be taken out of TIF. Them not being available to our entire HD is crazy. Last year, at our urging they switched some of the TIF grant money with alley improvement money at the last minute. 50/50 grant recipients this year did not have to be in the TIF area. They need to do the same this year. There are lots of places they could get the money.

**Other concerns –**

Pat proposed a task force for the GPA Grant Program begin. Important we put our money to work in the neighborhood. Looking for people interested in helping to develop guidelines, applications etc. Tom Lee agreed to host first meeting at his home, 359 Park, on December 5, 2019 starting at 7 PM.

GPA storage unit – the current unit is costing us about \$1600/year. In the past we were sharing the space with the Elgin Historical Museum and they no longer need the storage; therefore, the space is too big for what we are storing. Pat has done a lot of work researching many of the storage units in the area, and our wants make it very difficult to find. Some particulars: 10 x 10-foot space, should be a dry space, would prefer no steps, prefer drive-up. If anyone has some ideas, please contact Dan or Pat.

Respectfully submitted

Susan Kuester