

Gifford Park Assoc. General Membership Meeting

Thursday, Oct. 21, 2021

DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday, Nov. 2, 6 pm at the Elgin History Museum [EHM]: Membership Committee

Wednesday, Nov. 3, 7 pm at EHM: GPA Grant Committee Meeting

Monday, Nov. 8, 7 pm at EHM: Tentative House Tour Steering Committee Wrap-up Meeting

Thursday, Nov. 18, 7 pm at EHM: GPA General Membership Meeting

Saturday, Nov. 27: Small Business Saturday in downtown Elgin (shop locally, please)

IN ATTENDANCE

Bill Briska, Barbara Evans, City Councilman Dustin Good, Tyler Grace, Janine Hnatusko, Sarah Hunt, Trish LaFleur, Matt Martin, Dan & Pat Miller

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

After a warm welcome back, GPA President Dan Miller thought that since we were all masked, it would be a good idea for us to introduce ourselves.

R.O.P.E. OFFICER: No report

CODE OFFICER: No report

SECRETARY'S & TREASURER'S REPORTS

The minutes of GPA's last general membership meeting of February 20, 2020, were unanimously approved.

So, too, was Pat Miller's treasurer's report that to date GPA has \$63,456.60 in its checking account and \$87,222.25 in four CDs for a total of \$150,678.85.

And kudos to Pat for her 2-page printout of all GPA's expenditures and income for 2020 and 2021 up to the present as well as for her attempt (albeit unsuccessful) to get GPA a reduction in its insurance for 2020 as we had no activities. Pat's printout is attached.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Historic District

No report though Dan noted that before COVID-19 reared its ugly head, Amanda Carlson, the newly appointed Historic District chairperson, had plans for a variety of interesting projects/activities.

2. Membership (Janine Hnatusko, jhnat12@yahoo.com)

COVID also brought Janine and her committee's plans to an abrupt halt. Janine, however, has sent informational letters about GPA to most of the owners of the 89 properties that were sold in the EHD over the past two years. Creating and distributing Welcome Baskets will be underway shortly. Sarah Hunt and Barbara Evans offered to help with them. And fingers are crossed that this coming April GPA will be able to have the potluck that was being planned for 2020. The more the merrier on this committee, so if you'd like to be a part of it, please contact Janine.

3. Elgin Historic House Tour (Matt Martin, matrmartin@gmail.com)

Chair Matt Martin will be giving a detailed report at the Steering Committee's wrap-up meeting, tentatively scheduled for Monday, Nov. 8, at 7 pm. Homeowners as well as house captains will be encouraged to give their input.

At tonight's meeting, he reviewed the resurrection of the 2020 plans in April of 2021 and noted how surprised the Steering Committee was that the homeowners were all eager to have a traditional house tour in September. Docents were also surveyed and enough were willing, so the tour was a "go," COVID-dependent, of course.

To reduce the number of booklets we might be stuck with if the tour had to be canceled at the last minute, graphic artist Trish LaFleur created a digital booklet as well as a hard-copy one. Those who opted for the digital one were given \$5 off the ticket price. The end result was that 41% of the tour goers opted for digital; 59% opted for the hard copy. Unfortunately, because of COVID concerns, one of the originally scheduled eight homes withdrew and a second had to be limited to the exterior.

The weather cooperated for once, and roughly 800 people enjoyed what Dan Miller declared were six "little mansions" complete with great landscaping. Among the 800+

was a woman who drove all the way from Arkansas just for the tour because she'd so enjoyed the 2002 one she'd attended. She said she was glad that she'd come.

OTHER REPORTS

1. GPA Grant Program

In the summer of 2019, Barbara Evans and Paul Kuester proposed that GPA establish a grant program for residents of the EHD. This was not a new we-should idea, but this time Pat Miller wrote a sample proposal for a program that would provide grant money for EHD exterior renovations. A committee was then formed. Headed by Tom Lee, eight GPA members met, if I remember correctly, four times to discuss/debate/refine Pat's criteria, the end result being parameters that we all agreed on. All that was left to do was to write the formal document. Then COVID-19 struck, and all shut down, including us.

To get so close to making a long-held dream of GPA become a reality and not carry through to the finish line would be a travesty. Thus a meeting has been set for Wednesday, Nov. 3rd, 7:00 pm at the Historical Society Museum to complete this project. If you have an interest in seeing GPA funds put to work in the restoration of neighborhood buildings, please attend the meeting. Tom Lee, however, is now involved with other projects and cannot resume chairmanship of the committee, and two other committee members have moved.

2. GPA Salvages (Dan Miller, dmiller155@aol.com)

In this past year and a half, GPA got the rights to salvage three Elgin properties that were being demolished on State St., Summit St. and Lower Wellington. After the money from silent auctions was split with owners/demo personnel, GPA made approximately \$700. However, these auctions are not to make money but rather to save valuable old materials from dumpsters. This is the reason that it is sad that fewer and fewer people are bidding on them.

3. DNA's Neighborhood Outreach Committee (Barbara Evans, evanselgin@yahoo.com)

Three years ago Elgin's Downtown Neighborhood Association established a committee composed of a representative from each of the neighborhoods adjacent to the business district. Its purpose was to improve communication between DNA and neighborhood groups in order that all could work together to better our slice of the pie called Elgin.

In the fall before COVID, this committee held a summit that brought together the board members of these neighborhood groups to further promote working together. So successful was it that another one is tentatively scheduled for early March of 2022.

As GPA's representative, Barbara will meet with GPA's newly elected board to discuss what issues they'd like to discuss at that gathering. In his report about this year's house tour, however, Matt Martin has already mentioned one, and that is to invite old-house neighborhood groups to have fund-raisers during the week of the tour in order to make it even more of a city event and thus attract more people.

The Outreach Committee is asking everyone to encourage their friends to shop locally and participate in Small Business Saturday on Nov. 27.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Ben Behrens' Donation

In 1979, the late Chuck and Audrey Behrens gathered together a small group of neighbors and formed the GPA. And usually sitting under one of the tables at NHS coloring during GPA meetings was their young son Ben. Now an adult with a family of his own, Ben recently sent GPA a generous \$400 donation to be used as GPA sees fit. Added to the \$215 of memorials received after Chuck's death, we have funds to do something noteworthy to memorialize the Behrens. Just what that might be is something for us think about before our next general meeting, when we will discuss possibilities.

Dan Miller, suggested Interpretive signage in Gifford Park commemorating Chuck and Audrey and the history of their forming the GPA.

2. Nominations or Volunteers for the GPA Board Positions to be Voted on in November

- President
- Vice President
- At Large 1
- At large 2
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Although Robert's Rules of Order provides that if no one is willing to take an office, the person who last held it remains in it, those who have been on the Board more years than they care to count are issuing an appeal to newer members to volunteer for one of the elected offices.

To that end, Barbara Evans nominated Tyler Grace to serve as one of the two members at large, citing that the fact he'd volunteered to join the GPA Grant Committee suggested he was willing to roll up sleeves and work for GPA. So, too, does the fact that he accepted the nomination. Still to be filled is the second At-Large position.

Though Barbara has volunteered to serve as secretary in place of Sue Kuester, who moved, she did so with the caveat that it would be only if no one else was willing to. And she is urging someone to step forward to take this position because it's an excellent way to become involved in the workings of GPA. Furthermore, if anyone is hesitant because s/he's not sure s/he can make all the meetings, Barbara will substitute as secretary when needed.

Current treasurer Pat Miller is also urging someone to take over for her. For someone detail-oriented, she explained, the job is not a difficult one though it does require regular attendance at GPA meetings.

And current President Dan Miller again stressed that he'd be delighted to pass his role on to another.

Also open is the position of Vice-President.

Barbara subsequently suggested that we actively search for replacements for the elected offices. All agreed, so before the November meeting when we will elect the new Board, please think of GPA members who would be well-suited for these positions and call them to urge them to volunteer. Nominations will be taken from the floor in November.

The good news for those elected to the Board is that they do not have to find chairs for most of the appointed committees. Matt Martin and Janine Hnatusko are willing to continue chairing House Tour and Membership, respectively; Sarah Hunt is willing to take Historic District Committee as Amanda Carlson is stepping down; and Trish LaFleur has volunteered to chair Publicity, which is currently vacant. No one is currently serving as Program Chair, a standing committee.

3. Discussion about Changing to Quarterly General Membership Meetings

At GPA's August meeting of 2019, discussed was whether GPA should meet quarterly rather than monthly. None present were in favor of this. Tonight's discussion, however, focused on whether to change the number of general membership meetings only.

The elected GPA officers and chairs of its standing committees would continue to meet monthly as the GPA Board to conduct the business of the organization. Those not on the Board would be kept informed via timely minutes, which would give them the opportunity to attend the next Board meeting if they had questions or concerns.

The focus of the quarterly general membership meetings would be on programs of interest to many of our residents with the goal of creating a more cohesive neighborhood. If GPA goes to such a meeting format, needed will be an active Program Committee.

Please give the above serious thought as voting on the matter will be on the agenda for our November meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Given our discussion of how to involve more in GPA, Councilman Dustin Good informed us of the City's almost-complete plan to offer a trailer equipped with chairs, tables, a grill and other such necessities for any group wishing to have a block party.

2. Pat Miller stressed that it is important for Elgin City Council members to be aware of three things the City has funded that have had a dramatic positive impact on the Elgin Historic District. They are as follow:

- Deconversion Program (When GPA formed in 1979, this neighborhood was approximately 70% rental/converted properties.);
- The Restoration Grant Program;
- Preservation Ordinance and full-time staff to administer it.

Bill Briska added that programs such as the Deconversion Program and the Restoration Grant Program have not only improved individual properties but also created a cadre of local craftsmen.

Both Bill and Pat expressed how unfortunate it is that since the city tax revenue from the riverboat casino has fallen, the above programs have been cut back and now rely, in part, on TIF money. TIF districts, however, are not congruent with historic district boundaries.

Bill explained that in older neighborhoods, there is a gradual disinvestment often taking place. As resident equity in the home increases and their financial status improves, rather than reinvesting in an older home, people trade up and move elsewhere, taking their accumulated capital with them. Programs such as deconversion and historic rehab grants do much to encourage capital to remain in the older neighborhoods and new capital from private sources to be invested in older homes.

He also suggested that it was time to update how these grants are awarded. Rather than evaluating applications on a single-property basis, perhaps each should be looked at with a more strategic eye. Consider, for instance, awarding higher points when the applicant completes their rehab with that of neighboring properties, perhaps sharing

grant proceeds thus encouraging a greater investment of private capital in multiple properties. Another scoring boost could be to award higher scores to key locations, such as corners, high traffic and other high visibility locations, or being adjacent to other already appealing properties, all of which would thus uplift a wider swath of a streetscape. The idea is to use grants to draw in more private investments in the larger area.

3. For those who have forgotten (or never knew), parts of the movie Fargo were filmed in the EHD. See <https://www.flickr.com/photos/31300792@N08/albums/72157712081700257> to see the photos Dan Miller took of this. (Parts of the movie were also filmed in downtown Dundee.)

The meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Evans, Secretary Pro Tem

Below is the document that Pat Miller presented to the membership regarding our income and expenditures.

2020 EXPENDITURES

BOARD: Resonate Web Marketing, gpaelgin.org

maintenance.....\$360

BOARD: Site Ground Website hosting, gpaaelgin.org, 3

years.....

\$142

BOARD: GoDaddy domain name

gpaelgin.org.....\$ 21.17

BOARD: Buschbach Insurance,

1 year.....\$1,695

BOARD: PO BOX 928 rental, 1 year....

.....\$130

BOARD: RCT Storage, 1
year.....
\$1,428

BOARD: Constant Contact, 1
year.....
178.44

BOARD: Kane County Real Estate tax, pocket park, Chicago at
Geneva.....
.....24.94

BOARD: 501C Annual Report State of
Illinois..... \$10

BOARD: print 2000 walking tour
brochures.....
\$2,111.78

BOARD: donation to Side Street Studios covid art supplies for
kids..... \$500

BOARD: print agendas..... \$5.80

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMM: 2019 Christmas party
deposit..... \$100

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMM: pool rental
deposit..... \$260

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMM: pocket park
maintenance.....\$129.57

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMM: 16 Christmas
wreaths.....\$130.20

PUBLICITY COMM: Elgin Chamber Membership, 1
year..... \$355

PUBLICITY COMM: Elgin Pride Event

booth..... \$60

PUBLICITY COMM: google domain, 1 year (elginhistoricdistrict.org

historicdistrictfoelgin).....\$24

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: site

selection.....\$47.50

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: plaque research/Rebecca Hunter, 3

homes.....

\$150

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21L: domain and hosting

historichelginhousetour.com.....\$155.40

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: Squarespace website hosting and domain, 1

year.....

\$216

2021 EXPENDITURES

BOARD: Resonate web Marketing, gpaelgin.org

maintenance.....\$360

BOARD: GoDaddy, gpaelgin.org domain, 1

year.....\$21.17

BOARD: Buschbach Insurance, 1 year..

.....\$1,738

BOARD: PO Box 928 rental”166

BOARD: RCT Storage, 1

year.....\$1,428

BOARD: Kane County REAL Estate tax, pocket

park.....

\$25.54

BOARD: 501C Annual Report, State of Illinois.....\$10

BOARD: Grindstone Productions, record/edit gpa 40 year power point, YouTube.....\$100

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMM: clean up day refreshments.....\$37.46

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMM: Pocket Park maintenance.....\$412.22

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMM: landscape sign at Channing Neighborhood Garden.....\$125

SALVAGE: 334 S. State, 1/2 proceeds to Laird.....\$210

SALVAGE: Summit St, 1/2 proceeds to Lango Demo.....\$262

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: Street closure event permit.....\$25

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: Survey Monkey.....\$260.40

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: card stock paper.....

.....\$21.58

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: update banners, cable

ties.....

\$92.12

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: name

badges.....

\$18.67

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: DNA gift certif, homeowner

gifts.....\$150

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: 7 framed pictures,

homeowners ..gifts.....

.....\$675.99

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: after party food.....

.....\$635.75

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: After Party and docent

beverages.....

\$182.05

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: 2 pot-a-

potties.....

\$727

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: 250 facemasks, 1000 pr.

Booties.....

\$313.30

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: print 5000 postcards, 2821 postcard postage, 750 booklets,

500 check-off

cards.....

\$3,208.85

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: facebook

ads.....

\$155

HOUSE TOUR 2020/21: displays and

supplies.....

\$68.83