

GPA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

March 17, 2022

7:00 p.m. at Elgin History Museum [EHM] & Zoom

DATES TO NOTE

- Wed., April 20, 7 p.m.: House Tour Steering Committee at EHM
- Thurs., April 21, 6 p.m.: Historic District, Membership & Publicity Committees at EHM
- Thurs., April 21, 7 p.m.: General GPA membership meeting at EHM
- Sat., April 23, 10 a.m.: Neighborhood Trash Pickup beginning at East Side Community Gardens
- Sat., May 7, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Elgin Open House at various locations
- Thurs., May 19, 7 p.m.: General GPA membership meeting at EHM with Q & A focus on GPA's new Architectural Restoration Grant Program
- Sat/Sun., Sept. 10-11: Elgin Historic House Tour

IN ATTENDANCE

Paul Bednar, Barbara Evans, Janine Hnatusko, Sarah Hunt, Laura Knoerr, Paul Kuester, Trish LaFleur, John Marston, Dan & Pat Miller, Mark & Glenna Preradovic

CALL TO ORDER by President Paul Bednar

R.O.P.E.: No report

SECRETARY's & TREASURER's REPORTS

The minutes of the Feb. 17 general membership meeting were unanimously approved. So, too, was Laura Knoerr's treasurer's report of \$146,303.36—\$58,950.14 of which is in checking and the rest in four CDs.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Elgin Historic District [EHD] (Sarah Hunt)

Dates have been set for the following events, and any who would like to be involved in planning one should contact Sarah.

- Neighborhood Trash Pick-Up: See Dates to Note
- Picnic Gathering: afternoon of July 7, place TBA
- Fall Festival: afternoon of Oct. 8, place TBA
- Holiday Party/Potluck: evening of Dec. 12, place TBA

2. Membership (Janine Hnatusko)

In preparation for an updated membership list, all GPA members received an email asking them to contact Janine if they did not want their contact information listed on the updated membership list.

April 7th is the target date to begin the distribution of welcome tote bags to those who have moved into the EHD since March of 2020 when Covic called an abrupt halt to GPA activities. Included in addition to information about the EHD and other historic districts/historic properties will be a \$10 gift certificate for downtown Elgin businesses, a refrigerator magnet with GPA's website and small, useful gifts such as sandpaper, carpenter's pencil and a Scrub Daddy sponge.

3. Elgin Historic House Tour (Matt Martin) No report

4. Publicity (Trish LaFleur)

Trish presented two mockups of the postcard informing all EHD property owners of the new Architectural Restoration Grant Program (provided that the program itself is approved under new business). All present preferred one. But there is a slight glitch in how much the postage will cost. If Trish does not get a letter from the IRS stating that GPA is exempt from paying federal taxes shortly, she will, with approval of all present at this meeting, spend the \$100 extra needed for first-class postage.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Proposal for GPA's Architectural Restoration Grant Program (Pat Miller)

Pat presented a detailed listing of the specifics of this program that is intended to encourage and incentivize EHD property owners to improve and enhance their buildings by replicating and replacing important architectural elements which have been lost. These specifics were developed by the original committee of Tom Lee, Paul Kuester, Bill Briska, Barbara Evans, Peggy Bernar, and Dan & Pat Miller. Pat also presented the grant application and the scoring guidelines they developed. The committee evaluating the applications will consist of Pat & Dan Millar, Paul Bednar, John LaFleur and Tyler Grace.

After a short discussion, Barbara Evans moved that the listing of specifics, the application and the scoring guidelines be approved as well as that the recommended \$20,000 be earmarked for the program. Seconded by Glenna Preradovic, the motion was unanimously approved.

Although a postcard will be sent out to all EHD property owners about this new program—including a link to GPA's website where it will be detailed—it was decided that the focus of our general membership meeting in April should be on it so that questions may be answered. (This meeting will be available via Zoom.)

NOTE: This grant does not fund painting or other maintenance items. However, under consideration is establishing another grant that will.

2. GPA Proposed Budget for 2022

The line item for grants mistakenly included all three of GPA grants instead of just the new Architectural Restoration Program. Added to the \$20,000 for it should be \$10,000 for Great Unveilings and \$500 for the Plaque Program. Thus the proposed amount for grants totals \$35,500. Also increased was the Historic District Committee's budget from \$2,800 to \$3,500.

Sarah Hunt moved that the total budget of \$54,200, reflecting the additions noted above, be approved. Seconded by Mark Preradovic, the motion was unanimously approved.

3. Elgin National Watch Historic District [ENWHD] (John Marston, Heritage Commission)

During the recent consideration of amendments to the Design Guideline Manual—part of Elgin's Historic Preservation Ordinance—two on the City Council opined that the rules involving historic properties are a financial burden to residents of the ENWHD. The end result of the discussion that ensued was the decision to undertake an in-depth review of the district to determine if this is so, and if it is, to consider removing the historic designation from the area.

Though John went into detail about why this would be a mistake, there were three of us who needed no convincing, for we worked hard in the late 1970s and early '80s to get National Register of Historic Places' designation for what is now known as the EHD. And how well we know that the night-and-day difference between pre-EHD and the EHD has dramatically improved the appearance of our area and increased our property values.

All present at our GPA meeting agreed that Paul Bednar should send a letter to the Council members to inform them that GPA urges them to not to remove the historic designation or otherwise change the boundaries of the ENWHD. After all, many grants are available to property owners. Furthermore, many of them in the ENWHD are absentee landlords, not low-income residents. And the belief that many of the low-income residents were left out of the process when the city designated the area a historic district is erroneous, for every household was sent a letter giving it a vote in the matter.

4. Review of GPA's Constitution and By-Laws (Barbara Evans)

Paul Bednar, Pat Miller and Barbara are reviewing both and hope to have recommendations for revisions to present at our next general membership meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Elgin Open House

GPA members will volunteer to staff one or two buildings that will be on this May 7th event.

2. As was noted in February's minutes, the City has 500 trees available for parkway plantings. The deadline for spring plantings is April 15, for fall ones, August 15. See www.cityofelgin.org/467/Tree-Planting for more information and the application.

The motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Evans, Secretary