

Gifford Park General Membership Meeting

June 16, 2022

DATES TO NOTE

Mon., July 4, 4-5 p.m.: Elgin Symphony Brass Quintet at Gifford Park, 355 DuPage St.

Wed., July 5, 7 p.m.: Historic House Tour meeting at Elgin History Museum [EHM]

Thurs., July 21, 7 p.m.: GPA General Membership meeting at EHM

Sat., July 23 (details TBA): Elgin Historic District picnic at Gifford Park

IN ATTENDANCE

Paul Bednar, Barbara Evans, Tyler Grace, Greg Hagen, Janine Hnatusko, Laura Knoerr, John Marston, Dan & Pat Miller, Mark & Glenna Preradovic, Ramon Payne, and Scott Topel

CALL TO ORDER: GPA President Paul Bednar

R.O.P.E. REPORT (EPD Officer Ramon Payne, 334-523-2944)

Though a traffic stop at Hill and North streets resulted in also finding/recovering fire arms, it's been quiet in the EHD. A question about why there had yet to be a report on shots fired in early May, Payne noted that it could perhaps be because no shells or bullet holes were found, which then moves it to the merely "suspicious incident" category. And, he added, it could also be because the shots were really just a car backfiring, which was the case recently on Villa St. He will look into the matter.

To try to reduce the disturbing boom of fireworks as the Fourth approaches, the EPD is delivering flyers door to door to inform Elginites that our city has a zero-tolerance policy for fireworks and that a fine of \$100 will be levied against those who violate it. Also present are large road signs saying the same. Because the EPD has to catch violators in the act, call 911 ASAP when fireworks are going off in your area.

Planning is underway for August 2nd's EPD National Neighborhood Night Out in the area Officer Payne is responsible for. Barbara Evans agreed to attend the upcoming meeting as a GPA representative. (For those unfamiliar with NNO, it's "an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live.") More information about the event will be in next month's minutes.

Officer Payne distributed the 5 x 8 postcard from the Elgin Cooperative Ministry which has detailed information about Elgin's five food pantries as well as the seven Elgin churches that are providing food and meals to those in need. Additionally, the EPD is

partnering with Willow Creek Church to have a mobile food truck on June 24 at 3 p.m. at the Hopkins Ford Dealership in Elgin.

SECRETARY's & TREASURER's REPORTS

The minutes of the April and May meetings were unanimously approved as was Laura Knoerr's report on our finances. Currently GPA has \$87,439.89 in four CDs, and the rest in checking, for a total of \$152,259.56. The major expenditures for this past month included our \$5,000 donation to the Firefighters Memorial Plaza, \$1,865 for insurance, and \$198 for our post office box.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Elgin Historic District (Sarah Hunt)

Reporting for Sarah, Paul Bednar noted that Sarah is meeting with the City on June 17 to discuss the work that needs to be done at Gifford Park ASAP.

She is also looking into the cost of having a food truck at GPA's July 23rd picnic. And she is in need of members to step up to help plan the events for the picnic. Please contact her at 847-464-5864 if you're willing to assist.

2. Membership (Janine Hnutasko)

The welcome bags for those new to the EHD are ready for distribution! The updated mailing list of GPA members is also ready. Janine will send an email to all noting that if they want an electronic copy, they will need to request one from her.

Dan Miller reported that the CEO of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra has purchased a home in the Historic District and joined GPA immediately. It showed so well on the internet that he purchased the home without ever actually visiting it. A home on Division St. that has not been maintained recently was purchased by a young couple interested in the house and they too joined GPA right away.

3. Historic House Tour (Matt Martin)

Reporting for Matt, Paul Bednar noted that we have six houses and a possible seventh, all in the EHD south of E. Chicago St. As the committee is a bit behind, he encouraged those willing to help in key positions attend the July 5th meeting at the EHM.

4. Publicity (Trish LaFleur)

No report as Trish is in Maine on a much-needed vacation!

OLD BUSINESS

1. GPA Grant Programs

Pat Miller reminded us that because restoring architectural details and removing substitute siding are major projects, it is not surprising that grant applications are not flooding GPA's post office box. One person did apply for GPA's new Architectural Restoration grant, but his project (window repair) isn't funded by it. The person who applied for a Great Unveiling grant is eligible, but as he is doing only half of his house, the grant committee will meet soon to discuss if he will receive the full \$5,000.

2. Traffic Circle at Division and Gifford streets & Lords Park Pool Closure

Paul Bednar reported that he'd received little response to the letter he'd sent on behalf of the GPA Board to the City Manager and all Council members on these matters. (See last month's minutes for details.) One councilman said he'd look into them; another emailed that he didn't think Lords Park pool would be closed for good.

In regard to the pool specifically, Officer Payne announced that he was on the Parks & Rec committee that was developing a 5-year plan and noted that any arguing that east-siders could go to The Centre's pool was lame and that if we wanted Lords Park pool to be kept (with needed repairs made), he'd make sure that this message was heard. (Further discussion brought out the fact that the reason Lords Park pool is shallower than the one at Wing Park is that it was designed for lap swimming.)

Laura Knoerr noted that a councilman had told her that the fact GPA had not been consulted about the traffic circle had "touched a nerve." Officer Payne then noted that Chief Lalley had been asked to follow up with our concerns, which included the need for a four-way stop if the traffic circle was removed. He will report back on this at our next meeting.

3. Memorial donations to GPA

We're still in need of good ideas for Mike and Fran Alft's donation of \$15,000 to GPA, given "to help resource continued support of the appreciation and preservation of Elgin's important history." If you have an idea, please contact GPA President Paul Bednar at 708-426-8012. And note that the funds do not have to be spent within the EHD.

The \$615 we received as memorials for GPA co-founders Chuck and Audrey Behrens is also still in the bank, though Dan Miller has been investigating the possibility of using it for signage about GPA in Gifford Park.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Fourth of July Parade

GPA will join the Heritage Commission and other preservation associations under one banner in the parade. As always, GPA will pass out postcards about the upcoming Elgin

Historic House Tour. What we need are people to volunteer to this. Please call Paul Bednar if you're willing.

2. National Neighborhood Night Out, Aug. 2

Although there is no fee to be involved in the NNO for Officer Payne's R.O.P.E. area, he noted that if GPA wished to add such things as a food truck or balloon bounce to the event, it would come out of our treasury. Although Dan Miller spoke enthusiastically about last year's event and declared it well worth our while to participate in, as we will have just sponsored an area picnic in Gifford Park, we decided to simply have an information table at the event. However, we all liked the idea of having pencils with GPA's name on them to distribute, so Dan Miller is looking into particulars about them.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Elgin Symphony Orchestra's Brass Quintet Concert on July 4th

We're delighted that this concert of American and patriotic music will be held in EHD's Gifford Park (behind the old Elgin High School) from 4-5 p.m. It's free and people are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets as well as food and drinks.

GPA will have an information table here.

2. Parks and Recreation's Plans for the Future

Though the plans for Lords Park swimming pool were discussed under old business, Officer Payne, who is on the Parks & Recreation's advisory committee, asked us to give him other suggestions. Loud and clear was the one to not put in more decorative flower beds because the City can't maintain the ones it already has. Laura Knoerr requested bathroom facilities for the parks.

Though the open house for what Parks and Rec is considering was held last night, if you were unable to attend and give feedback, you can do the online survey at <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6903965/Elgin-Parks-Public-Input-Survey>

The motion to adjourn was passed unanimously, after which we stayed to chat.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Evans, Secretary