

GIFFORD PARK ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
January 19, 2023

DATES TO NOTE

Tues., Jan. 31: Deadline for taking the online survey for the North Grove Redevelopment Area  
Thurs., Feb. 16 at 6:00 p.m.: Standing Committee meetings at Elgin History Museum [EHM]  
Thurs., Feb. 16 at 7:00 p.m.: GPA general membership meeting at EHM  
Friday, Feb. 24: Deadline for nominations for the 2023 Mayor's Awards for Preservation  
Friday, Feb. 24: Deadline for submission of events to be a part of May's Preservation Month

IN ATTENDANCE

Paul Bednar, Bill Briska, Barbara Evans, Tyler Grace, Janine Hnatusko, Trish LaFleur, John Marston, Matt Martin, Dan & Pat Miller, Scott & Pannie Poore, Mark & Glenna Preradovic, City Councilman John Steffen, Andrew Stein

INTRODUCTIONS

A warm welcome was given to new members Scott & Pannie Poore of 259 Villa St. (a major rehab project of the Millers in the 1970s) and Andrew Stein, who with his wife Sarah, three of his four children and five pets, now reside at 416 E. Chicago St. (once Paul & Sue Kuester's home).

R.O.P.E. OFFICER'S REPORT None given as he was not in attendance.

GUEST SPEAKER: John Marston, Chair of the Elgin Heritage Commission

John gave us a video overview of the recently completed revision of the design guidelines, now available in hardcopy at City Hall and online at [www.cityofelgin.org/DocumentCenter/View/59/Elgin-Historic-District-and-Landmark-Design-Guidelines](http://www.cityofelgin.org/DocumentCenter/View/59/Elgin-Historic-District-and-Landmark-Design-Guidelines). Reminding us that this is a living document, John noted that now included, for example, are guidelines for the now-historic mid-Century structures, for solar panels and even for chicken coops. Though now available only in English, the guidelines will be in Spanish by next year.

SECRETARY'S & TREASURER'S REPORTS

After Barbara noted that she'd removed the "d" she'd inadvertently added to Peggy Bernar's last name, the minutes of the October 20, 2022 were approved unanimously. (Illness resulted in the cancellation of November's meeting; December's was a holiday party.)

Due to the absence of our treasurer, no report was made. Pat Miller, however, reported that GPA had received its long-overdue payment of \$14,000 from advanced house tour ticket sales.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Elgin Historic District [EHD]

Paul Bednar, reporting for Chairperson Sarah Hunt, reviewed the four GPA 2022 events as well as the cost for each. He then praised Sarah for all she'd done to make them especially successful. All present who had attended them concurred. Paul also noted that at the 6:00 p.m. committee meetings this evening, it had been decided that for 2023, that event planning would be the responsibility of the Program Committee.

At our December 2nd Christmas/Holiday party, GPA Public Relations Chair Trish LaFleur was given the Chuck and Audrey Behrens Award for "long standing and exemplary service to GPA." As many of us have often said, "What would we do without her?"

## 2. Elgin Historic House Tour (Matt Martin)

Despite the torrential downpour all day Sunday, a total of 1,140 attended the 2022 tour in September. GPA's net for the event was \$14,842. Unfortunately, it proved more difficult to get docents this time, and more than usual were unable to work the day of the tour, some calling in sick, others just not showing up. What is to be done to keep this from becoming a trend will be a topic of discussion at the upcoming (though yet unscheduled) Steering Committee meeting.

Because the 2022 tour was primarily sited on the relatively unknown (to the general public) Rugby St., this year's tour will feature homes around the well-known Spring-Douglas corridor. And as always NENA welcomes and will promote this.

Matt also asked that this year GPA implement an idea that received strong support from the 2022 Steering Committee: to allot a portion of the house tour proceeds for a project in the neighborhood of the tour. He was directed to have the Steering Committee formulate a specific proposal to present at GPA's next general membership meeting.

## 3. Membership (Janine Hnatusko)

After the 50 welcome bags were distributed to new property owners in the EHD, Janine followed up with each household. As a result, GPA gained three new members.

## 4. Public Relations (Trish LaFleur)

Some updating has been done on the Calendar of Events on GPA's website, but more is planned. Also on line there now, thanks to Dan Miller, are the booklet pages for all sites that have been on the Elgin Historic House Tour.

Trish was given kudos for having created a well-designed website.

## OLD BUSINESS

### 1. Insurance Policies

After briefly reviewing why the Board of Directors and subsequently those present at the October general membership meeting had approved changing GPA's general liability policy to that offered by Elgin's KJH Insurance Co., Paul Bednar noted that he had asked Bill Briska—who is steeped in knowledge about insurance policies as a result of his role at the history museum—to review the two other policies we were considering and give us his opinion of them. This he did at tonight's meeting, with the caveat that the devil is in the details and that it is essential to read the fine print of any policy to know specifically what is covered.

Based on the detailed explanations that Bill gave us, Dan Miller, seconded by Tyler Grace, moved that we do not purchase a Directors & Officers policy. The motion passed unanimously. Subsequently, they made/seconded a motion to purchase the additional liability policy from KJH Insurance Co. that for \$457 covers volunteers at all GPA events. This, too, passed unanimously.

### 2. Traffic Circle at Division & Gifford Streets

Dan Miller reported that when City staff polled immediate neighbors about whether they favored removing the circle, there was no consensus. Dan then suggested that all EHD residents should be surveyed and offered to do this via an email. All agreed this was a good idea, and Dan was directed to proceed.

### 3. Missing/Damaged EHD Street Signs & Other Signs

Although the City agreed to install the replacement street signs GPA ordered in September, it has yet to do so, in spite of the fact that they've had the new signs for awhile. Asked if it was because of a shortage of workers, Councilman John Steffens said "primarily." Dan will call the City to plead that the new signs go up sooner rather than later.

Also yet to be replaced are the missing EHD entryway sign at Donaldson Park and the sign for Gifford Park, even though Paul Bednar pointed out the need to do so to the City staff who toured the area with him in August prior to the house tour.

### 4. Great Unveiling Grants

As they'd been directed to do at GPA's last general membership meeting, Dan & Pat met with six homeowners they thought would be likely candidates to remove their substitute siding, especially as GPA was offering grants to help offset the cost of doing so. Several of them are now considering it.

## NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Election of GPA Officers for 2023

The motion to accept the following slate—made by Dan Miller and seconded by Mark Preradovic— passed unanimously.

President: Paul Bednar

Vice-President: Tyler Grace

Secretary: Barbara Evans

Treasurer: Dan Miller

First Member At-Large (2-year term): Andrew Stein

The Second Member At-Large, Glenna Preradovic, was elected to her two year term in 2022. Dan Miller will also remain on the Executive Board in the unelected position of Immediate Past President.

### 2. Appointment of Standing Committee Chairs for 2023

The newly elected GPA officers unanimously made the following appointments:

Elgin Historic District: Pat Miller

Elgin Historic House Tour: Matt Martin

Programs/Events: Janine Hnatusko

Public Relations: Trish LaFleur

Janine will also stay on as Membership Chair until a replacement can be found; Trish LaFleur offered to help her with record keeping until then. Because both of these women already have more than enough to do, they're urging someone to volunteer to fill this important position sooner rather than later. Please call Paul Bednar if you're willing.

### 3. GPA BUDGET FOR 2023

After discussing and making some changes to the tentative budget that Dan Miller had prepared, Tyler Grace, seconded by Matt Martin, moved that GPA's Board of Directors and the general membership accept the budget for 2023. It passed unanimously and is attached to these minutes.

## MISCELLANEOUS

1. Dan Miller moved that we donate \$500 to the Elgin Symphony Orchestra. After it was seconded by Tyler Grace, discussion ensued. Though it would admittedly be far afield from GPA's focus on historic preservation, it was noted that we annually donate to the R.O.P.E. officers' outdoor excursion for youth and pre-Covid have donated to youth softball. Furthermore, ESO has donated to GPA via the complementary tickets they gave Janine for our 50 welcome bags. Thus it was not surprising that the motion passed unanimously, especially as the requested donation came with the possibility of a small ensemble of the ESO playing for gratis at a GPA event or discounted tickets to GPA members.

2. Pat Miller noted the inconsistency of the enforcement of the City ordinance for work trailers as witnessed, for example, on Franklin St. near Liberty St. She also thought that clarification of the ordinance is needed. Councilman John Steffen said he'd pursue this matter and inform Pat of what he'd learned.

3. Barbara Evans called attention to the well-publicized January 24th workshop for the North Grove Redevelopment Project. She also urged those who have not yet done the 5-question survey about what citizens would like to see in this area do so ASAP at [www.eventbrite.com/.../northgrove-redevelopment...](http://www.eventbrite.com/.../northgrove-redevelopment...) because the survey will be closed at the end of this month.

RiverLife Elgin suggests some "Core Principles" for riverfront development that people may want to address in this survey:

- Feature the riverfront as the front door.
- Showcase the river's history.
- Activate the riverfront.
- Limit obstacles and connect to the river.
- Engage with the water.
- Connect seamlessly along the riverfront and into neighborhoods.
- Repair and enhance the environment.
- Employ high-quality architectural materials and sustainable engineering practices.

Also suggested are the following that are specific to Elgin:

- Include community commercial enterprises such as Shared Harvest Food Coop and incubate other small food, beverage and retail options.
- Consider dam removal to improve Fox River water quality.
- Save the Silo (historic tie to Elgin's early commerce).
- Create community spaces for gatherings of different sizes and purposes.
- Support river access in a variety of forms for diverse users.
- Create useful connections with downtown Elgin, bike trails, Metra, etc.
- Ensure the infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, building uses/setbacks, etc) supports community and neighborhood ease of access, sustainability, etc.
- Include native plantings wherever possible.
- Design the new Kimball St bridge to create a beautiful vista and provide ease of access to the riverfront from all directions.

Although this meeting ran longer than most, after the motion to adjourn was made, seconded and unanimously approved, it seemed that those of us in attendance stayed to chat longer than usual.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Evans, Secretary