

## GIFFORD PARK ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

November 16, 2023

### DATE TO NOTE

Fri., Dec. 8, 6 p.m.: Catered GPA holiday gathering, Lords Park Pavilion, in lieu of a general membership meeting

### IN ATTENDANCE

Paul Bednar, Bill Decker, Barbara Evans, Jenny Freson/Steve Seeley, Tyler/Cheyenne/August Grace, Trish LaFleur, Jerry Lopatka, Monica/Ysabell Lopez, Dan/Pat Miller, EPD Officer Payne, Glenna/Mark Preradovic, Andrew Stein

### CALL TO ORDER

After calling the meeting to order, Paul asked all to go around the table to introduce themselves to new the new EHD residents of 18 N. Porter: Jenny Freson and Steve Seeley.

### GUEST SPEAKER (Elgin Code Compliant Officer Monica Lopez)

Of surprise and concern to us all is that Monica is the code officer for *most*, not all, of the Elgin Historic District [EHD] as well as for *part* of the National Watch Factory HD. **Attached** is the map that delineates all nine code officers' boundaries. You'll see that none of the historic districts have a single code officer. Aware that the City is considering hiring another code officer (budget permitting), we will advocate that a single officer be assigned to each district. But for the time being, the code officers for the EHD and their EHD boundaries follow.

•**Monica Lopez** (5) [lopez\\_m1@cityofelgin.org](mailto:lopez_m1@cityofelgin.org) 847-931-6074 and cell 847-977-8744

from Villa to Park St.; from Park to the west side of Hill St.;

E. Chicago St.'s north side from Hill to Channing St., then the west side of Channing to Villa St.

•**Dave Kosi** (3) [koski\\_d@cityofelgin.org](mailto:koski_d@cityofelgin.org) 847-931-5944

from Villa St. on the east side of Channing up to E. Chicago St.;

from the south side of E. Chicago to Liberty St.

•**Martha Santos** (8) [santos\\_m@cityofelgin.org](mailto:santos_m@cityofelgin.org) 847-931-5946

from the east side of Hill St. down to E. Chicago; from the north side of the several blocks of E. Chicago to Liberty, all bounded on the north by Park St.

The Q & A session that Monica conducted made all glad that she has most of the EHD, for not only did she explain the status of properties of concern to us; she also urged us to call her when we had concerns about a property. While those not living within her boundaries should first call the code compliance officer for their area, Monica said that if they also notified her, she'd try to get information about the property for our general membership meetings. And she said she would try to make as many of them as possible.

Monica urged those within her EHD boundaries to call her with concerns about properties, for her entire area of responsibility is great and being alerted to specific properties would be most helpful. When she sees a code violation, she gives the owner 30 days to comply with the code and, if reasonable and needed, will give extensions. In response to a question about what happens when a property owner ignores a citation, Monica sighed and observed that only about 15% pay the first fine levied. In fact, she said, there are some who have accumulated fines of up to \$4,000. Currently the only recourse available to the City is to put a lien on the property.

Now informed that three code compliance officers are charged with oversight of the EHD, GPA will invite the other two to our general membership meetings.

### R.O.P.E. REPORT (EPD Officer Payne)

Most alarming was the report that a guy had obviously staked out a house on the 300 block of Division St. and when the occupants were leaving, accosted them with a gun that had been assembled to look like a rifle. Though he took their car, it was recovered shortly thereafter, and the suspect arrested. Thus Payne's admonition to all to be aware of their surroundings when leaving homes and, if possible, to install a camera to aid police in apprehending criminals.

The two burglaries in the area were on streets just north of the EHD. On Poplar Court, a car was broken into; on the 300 block of Hill St., at around 4:55 p.m., over \$1,000 worth of items

were stolen when a back window of a home was broken to gain entry.

As a member of Elgin Coop Ministry [ECM] Soup Kettles, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (357 Division St.) has long offered nourishment to those in need every Friday from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. as has United Methodist Church (256 E. Chicago St.) on Monday nights. Because Elgin's only PAD facility is on the far west side, this winter, United Methodist is also offering overnight shelter every night, except for when there are not enough volunteers to staff it. Overnights will have to leave in the morning but can go to Vineyard Church (220 Division St.) for breakfast.

But as Pat Miller observed, housing people in churches is a zoning violation, and that this has been approved without any public input is of great concern.

Hanover Landings, the newly build 40-unit apartment building at 711 E. Chicago St., is a Permanent Supportive Housing development serving those with disabilities. (See <https://www.upholdings.net/hanover>.) Though tenants have yet to move in, it is already at full capacity. Disappointing is the fact that tenants were selected on a first-come-first-serve basis and do not have to be Elgin residents. Because background checks are not done, the EPD has met with area churches to proactively address potential problems that might arise.

### **SECRETARY'S & TREASURER'S REPORTS**

1. Andrew Stein asked that the minutes be amended to read that the photographs he takes for GPA involve the use of \$12,000-worth of professional equipment, not \$1,200. The motion to accept the amended minutes passed unanimously.

2. Dan Miller noted that GPA now has a total of \$172,046, \$84,063 of which is in a checking account and the rest in four CDs. Expenditures for this past month included \$674.82 for Fall Fest and donations to Channing Elementary and Ron O'Neal Elementary, each of which received \$350. The motion to accept the treasurer's report passed unanimously.

Dan explained that in the past, when GPA has had so much money in its coffers, we have purchased a problem property to rehab. That, however, is not feasible in today's economic climate. Thus while GPA now has six grant programs to get money working "out on the streets," he asked us to think of additional ways to do this. Please email him at [dmiller155@aol.com](mailto:dmiller155@aol.com) with any ideas.

### **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **1. Program/Events**

Reporting for Chair Janine Hnatusko, Tyler Grace encouraged all to attend GPA's holiday gathering (in lieu of a membership meeting) at the Lords Park Pavilion beginning at 6 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 8th. The event will be catered, but as for by whom, Janine is open to suggestions. "No tacos," pleaded Barbara.

#### **2. Membership**

Currently GPA members number 226 and comprise 145 households. That there is no fee to belong is made clear when the red welcome bags are delivered to new EHD residents.

#### **3. Elgin Historic House Tour (Paul Bednar & Trish LaFleur)**

The new co-chairs of the tour will meet shortly to schedule a kick-off for the 2024 tour, hopefully before the end of December.

#### **4. Historic District (Pat Miller, [dmiller155@aol.com](mailto:dmiller155@aol.com))**

Pat passed out a handout detailing the following six grant programs GPA now offers EHD residents: the 50/50 Architectural Restoration Grant; the Great Unveiling Grant; the Porch Reopening Grant; the Paint Grant; the Chain Link Fence Removal Grant; and the House Plaque Grant. New EHD residents will find the handout in their welcome bag. Others may contact Pat for information/applications. Currently Pat is helping the owner of 409 North St. with the application for a 50/50 Architectural Restoration Grant.

Also on the handout are the three grant programs offered by the City: the Multi-family Deconversion Grant; 50/50 Architectural Restoration Grant; 75/25 Architectural Restoration Grant.

With the final Weed Whack Wednesday pocket park cleanup done, Pat thanked all who helped with the labor in 2023. Still needed is signage and other amenities, but as there will be no Historic District Committee meeting in December, those are 2024 goals.

EHD signs will again be decked out with evergreen wreaths. (The suggestion to consider artificial ones was met with resounding "no's" from those aware of how bedraggled and dirty they become.) Tyler and Cheyenne volunteered to obtain the wreaths; they, Paul and Barbara have volunteered to install them.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Unanimously voted to be the **officers of GPA in 2024** are the following.

President: Tyler Grace

Vice President: Andrew Stein

Treasurer: Dan Miller

Secretary: Mary Ellen Schneider

At-large Member #1: Glenna Preradovic

At-large Member #2: Jerry Lopatka

Past President: Paul Bednar

2. The officers appointed the following as **Standing Committee Chairs for 2024**.

House Tour: Paul Bednar & Trish LaFleur

Historic District: Pat Miller

Programs/Events: Janine Hnatusko

PR/Social Media: Trish LaFleur

Membership: Barbara Evans

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. President-elect Tyler Grace will institute a new approach to GPA general membership meetings on a trial basis for the first quarter of the year. The first half hour will be devoted to general information. This will be followed by a short break so that those who don't want to stay for such business as the budget or any of GPA's other business for which decisions must be made by the Board may leave, if they wish. As it is Tyler's admirable goal of ending the meeting at 8:30 p.m., he will call it to order promptly at 7:00 p.m.

2. The City Council unanimously approved requiring a transfer stamp for properties within historic districts that establish that a buyer is aware that the property is in one and that there are rules that must be followed. Because there is no requirement for when buyers must sign to acknowledge this, they still could be startled at closing. To avoid this, Paul has asked the City to send the document to all area realtors and lawyers. He is also urging that it be in MLS listings.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Evans, RETIRING Secretary