

Gifford Park Association
General membership meeting minutes
October 19, 2023

Upcoming Events

Tuesday November 7 – Historic District Committee at 155 S Gifford 7:00 PM
November 11th Community engagement regarding the Grove Avenue development
Nov. 12th 1:00 pm Weed Wack Wednesday On a Sunday at the pocket park
(final cleanup of the season)

Those in attendance: Paul Bednar, Trish Lafleur, Tom Armstrong, Kerry Kelly, MaryEllen Schneider, Jerry Lopatko, Mark and Glenna Preradovic, Paul Durrenberger, Hans and Beth Klemmer, Tyler Grace, Joey Crist, Andrew Stein, Officer Payne.

RiverLife presentation

Tom Armstrong was at our meeting representing the RiverLife Elgin group, which was formed to advocate for best practices for any Fox River front development in Elgin with an immediate focus on the North Grove Redevelopment area surrounding the library. He started his presentation by saying they were inspired by RiverLife Pittsburgh which writes guidelines and design principles for river communities. Tom noted that the RiverLife group got its start as the Property Development Work Group which is a subcommittee of NENA. Sherman Hospital is another focus property of the Group as a vision for that property is lacking. Tom added that the city of Elgin has hired a design consultant (Lamar Jackson of Chicago) to develop a concept plan for the North Grove Redevelopment. He feels the city needs to know our vision for the property.

Kerry Kelly started her presentation by saying that she was concerned about the North Grove Redevelopment plan that concerns the 23 acres the city owns north of Gail Borden Public Library. RiverLife and public surveys indicate a desire for more more public space and much fewer or no single-family homes. The city has to know what the community wants. It takes the whole community to plan something so important to all of us. She said that there are three parcels of land that the planner has developed concept plans for. Parcel one is just north of Hemmens. These suggested plans have eliminated the Pioneer Memorial which jokingly she said perhaps they could relocate with the silo. Site 2 is between Kimball and Ann-- the planners included one version that keeps the silo. Kerry added that the city's goal is to get as many people to move to Elgin as possible so the site would be 100 percent residential. RiverLife feels that it should be mixed-use. The proposal calls for a huge building with a large courtyard in the center. The marathon gas station is to go. There would be 140 to 180 units on each of the lots in Parcel 2: one lot being designated for row homes, the other for a 4-6 story building. There are two years left in the TIF district so that has to be taken into consideration. Tom Roeser of Dundee owns the property and Alan Scimeca is the potential developer.

Site 3 is the northernmost portion of the proposed development with the current plan calling for 85 single family homes (recently reduced to 60-something homes). The RiverLife group wants more public space, including art and recreation, more mixed use (especially restaurants/cafes, a grocery store such as Shared Harvest) and nature areas. They feel that the East - West streets that currently dead end should extend west creating the same blocks as the others so it looks like the rest. They feel it is important that the city maintains the green space on the west side of the river. She added that Kimball is getting a new bridge, and the city promises that it will be a beautiful bridge. It should be a focal point. She is unsure of the City's intentions for existing homes and businesses in the Redevelopment area (although the Plans show these all as single family homes).

Tom added that it is possible to add sustainable residential to downtown. Festival Park is not used much except for dog walking. People don't like large open spaces.

Andrew Stein added that large buildings will cut sunlight and a view of the river to the homes in back of them

The river life Elgin Group is advocating for:

1. More time to consider the alternatives--hard pause on Parcel 3 (north of library) start with Parcel 2 (NE corner of Grove/Kimball). Wait until dam removal decision has been made and when Climate Action Plan is complete.
2. More public space--access to the river to be celebrated, art & rec spaces, native plants restored
3. More amenities (boat launches, restaurants, bike & walking trails, work-out areas, etc).
4. Save the silo
5. They are in favor of removing the dam which would provide a clean flowing river and possibly add land.

Contact RiverLife Elgin at RiverLifeElgin@gmail.com. Also on Instagram.

Approval of the minutes of the September meeting

Pat Miller suggested Corrections for the minutes before they would be approved.

In the September 21 minutes Regarding the Channing Park plantings it says the Millers and Paul Bednar met with Parks and Rec. Greg Hulke to express the concern that rather than a hillside of native plants...

The minutes should have read that, Paul Bednar, The Millers and Tyler Grace recently met with Greg Hulke to discuss native planting concerns at the vacant lot between 175 and 189 S. Gifford. (The Grand View site.)

Also in the Historic District report by Pat Miller it states the recipient of GPA'S architectural 50/50 grant program is at work on the restoration of the porch at 162 S. Gifford St. It should have been 150 S Gifford St.

In the September 21st minutes it states if a property for sale in a historic district is not disclosed, she calls the county...

It should read she calls the Realtor.

It was moved By Dan Miller and seconded By Andrew Stein to accept the amended minutes of September 21st. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurers Report

Checking account	\$84,883.31
4 CDS	\$84,970.50
Total	\$172,803.81

Dan mentioned that at the last meeting people suggested that we take some money out of checking and put it into CD'S for a better interest rate. He said it is a good idea but it's a long process and he didn't get a chance to do it.

Expenses since the last meeting

Housewalk	\$7,280.20
Purchase of GPA checks	\$34.98
Insurance -	\$504
Fallfest expenses since the last meeting -	\$185.84

ROPE REPORT

Officer Payne Reported that there was a recent drug overdose in the neighborhood that resulted in the death of the person. There have been a number of calls for service in our neighborhood. On October 3rd there was a weapons call on Prairie St. There was a report of a person brandishing a firearm. The person was charged and arrested. Other weapons were found in his house. There have been two instances of burglaries to autos in the neighborhood. Officer Payne reminded us all to lock our cars. There have been a lot of questions recently on the newly enacted statewide Safety Act. Officers can no longer arrest people for a minor infraction. Feel free to call or email Officer Payne for more information. He also reported that the Halloween extravaganza for kids at the police department was a success. He reminded us that there will be a large police presence at nightmare on Chicago Street.

Hans Klemmer added that there's been a huge problem with noise in his neighborhood. One night he called seven times before getting the music to be turned down. He has noticed a lot of speeding on Gifford and Prairie. Officer Payne said he will try to monitor the problem. Hans suggested that a temporary speed bump be placed on Prairie to slow people down. Officer Payne responded that we would have to petition for a speed bump. Officer Payne added that they put up a speed reading camera on Chicago St to get data. He said it didn't work as people slow down so there is no good data. He spent two hours monitoring Chicago Street and gave out two citations. Paul Durenberger Suggested that the noise problem be addressed as it is important to our quality of life. Feel free to call or text officer Payne at 224- 523-2944 during business hours.

Membership committee

It was reported that there is a backlog on the handing out of membership bags. Paul added that he has given out three. Dan added that he has recently been contacted by 2 new homeowners in the historic district. They both immediately joined the Gifford Park Association.

Program committee

It was reported that we are all set for fall fest on Sunday. Plans are under way for a holiday party in December. City code officials will address our meeting in November.

Public Relations committee

Trish reported that there are 18 new followers on Facebook. There are 459 contacts that we send to using constant contact. She is trying to get the list of Housewalk ticket buyers email addresses so that we can contact them about future Housewalks. She complimented Joey Crist on asking Housewalk participants for their contact info while she was a house chair.

Historic District Committee

Pat Miller reported that at the last Historic District committee meeting , additions to paint grant guidelines were discussed. One additional thing that's been added is that properties with code or ordinance violations are ineligible until they are corrected. Tyler moved and Trish seconded that we pass the amendment. It passed unanimously. Tyler discussed a new proposal for a chain link fence removal grant. It was handed out to those in attendance. To obtain the grant people must remove and dispose of their chain link fence and its posts. It is a \$1000 outright grant that does not require receipts. It was added that there aren't too many chain link fences left in the neighborhood. A motion was made by Dan to accept the new grant and seconded by Mark. The motion passed unanimously. See the attached guidelines.

Pat also informed the group that they now have an enclosed porch reopening grant. She reminded us that houses before the 20s were built with open porches. Over the years people have enclosed porches, sometimes leaving the original railings and posts and sometimes not. The committee is proposing a \$2000 grant to open up a porch and \$2000 to reconstruct it. An architect is usually needed to design an appropriate porch. A city 50/50 grant would probably be available. It was moved by Beth Klemmer to accept the new grant and seconded by Andrew Stein. The motion was passed unanimously. See attached guidelines.

Pat announced that the last Weed Whack Wednesday will be on Sunday November 12th. This will be the final cleanup. Some new perennials will be added. It gets dark so early it will start at 1 PM at the pocket park at Geneva and Chicago streets.

Pat reminded the group that we have a great flyer promoting the great unveiling program. If anyone wants one to encourage a neighbor to do an unveiling call Pat at 847-697-3370.

Pat informed the group that Christen Sundquist has drawn renderings of homes in the historic district to show what they would look like with an unveiling, porch opened up, missing elements replaced, etc. She has done four properties with more on the list.

The next Historic District Committee meeting will be Tuesday November 7 –at 155 S Gifford at 7:00 PM

Compensation for professional work

Paul brought up that we have been talking about compensation for professional work done by GPA members. Rebecca Hunter has been paid to research houses for plaques for us. Paul thinks we should consider paying for Housewalk booklet assembly. This is Trish's profession for which she charges others. Most of our work is done by volunteers but there should be exceptions. Andrew Stein added that he feels specialized skill sets should never go unrewarded. As a photographer doing the photos for the Housewalk he uses \$1200 of equipment. He does not have

an issue with compensating people for their work. Pat added that Kristen Sundquist is different as she is a city employee who gets paid by the city.

Paul added that what if we have a rehab project? If a member is a plumber or a carpenter, do we pay him? Andrew added that maybe not go by the market rate but what we can afford.

Trish added that she would feel awkward getting paid. She would feel bad about it. She suggested we recruit graphic designers to help her out. It was added that it is a very professional, and impressive booklet. If we ever lost Trish, we would have to pay professional designers to do the work.

Beth Klemmer added that she would be happy to help out.

Paul suggested that we think about it and discuss it again in November.

New Board

Paul reminded the group that we have to come up with a slate of officers for next year. We will vote on them at the November meeting. A slate that was suggested is:

Tyler Grace – President

Paul Bednar – Immediate past president

Andrew Stein - Vice president

Mary Ellen Schneider – Secretary

Dan Miller – Treasurer

Jerry Lopatko – At Large I

Glenna Preradovic – At Large II

Pat Miller - Historic District Chair

Janine Hnutsko – program chair

Paul Bednar and Trish Lafleur - co-chair of the Housewalk

At a previous meeting it was discussed to donate \$350 each to Channing School and O’Neill School. Dan moved and Andrew seconded to go ahead with that. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Dan and seconded by Andrew to adjourn the meeting at 9:15

Chain Link Fence Removal Incentive Program PROGRAM SUMMARY

The goal of the program is to provide financial assistance to encourage the removal of existing chain link fences in front and side yards within the Elgin Historic District. Grants of up to a maximum of \$1,000 per property are available to pay for the costs associated with the removal and disposal of chain link fences as well as the purchase and installation of replacement fences. Funds are provided upon removal of the chain link fence.

ELIGIBILITY

Property owners within the Elgin Historic District are eligible to apply. All projects shall meet the following criteria:

1. The chain link fence to be removed must be located in the front or side yard of the property or along a public street.
2. All waste resulting from the chain link fence removal must be properly disposed of.

3. All required permits for any replacement fence, including a Certificate of Appropriateness, must be obtained by an Applicant.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Financial assistance is provided on a first-come, first-served basis in accordance with the following procedures.

1. Applicant submits a completed Grant Application Form including the following:
 - a) Signature of the property owner, if not the same as the Applicant.
 - b) Description of proposed work.
 - c) Estimated removal/construction schedule.
 - d) Photographs of the chain link fence to be removed.
 - e) Site plan showing the location of the fence to be removed. If a new fence is proposed, a site plan drawn to scale is required.
 - f) Replacement fence details (material, height), if applicable.
 - g) Permits for replacement fence construction, if applicable.
2. The Gifford Park Association Grant Committee reviews and accepts completed applications on a first-come, first-served basis. Grants are made subject to funding availability. Written notification of acceptance will be provided to the Applicant.
3. Applicant should not start any work until the application has been formally accepted. The Gifford Park Association reserves the right to refuse reimbursements in whole or in part for work that is not completed within 6 months of grant approval. Requests for extensions will be considered only if made in writing and progress towards completion has been demonstrated.
4. Applicant submits the required documentation for reimbursement:
 - a) Copy of any required permits from the City of Elgin.
 - b) Receipts or other evidence of payment for eligible work.
 - c) Photographs of completed work.

Payment is made to the Applicant upon successful completion of the work and submission of all supporting documentation.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

The Gifford Park Association retains the right to amend the program guidelines and application procedures. The Gifford Park Association has the sole authority to determine the eligibility of proposed work and confirmation of completed work. Certain work may be required or precluded as a condition of funding. Participants will be responsible for obtaining necessary regulatory approvals, including, but not limited to, building permits and Certificates of Appropriateness. All work must comply with City of Elgin regulations.

Enclosed Porch Re-Opening Grant

The purpose of this grant is to encourage and incentivize the removal of excess, non-original structures used to enclose an originally open porch.

- This grant applies to properties within the Elgin Historic District that have a non-original enclosed porch or porches.
- If the enclosed porch structure is built upon (or in front of) **original** porch posts, railings, and/or footprint, satisfactory removal of the enclosing materials will qualify for an outright \$2,000 grant.
- If the enclosed porch structure is built upon (or in front of) inappropriate or **non-original** posts, railings, and/or footprint, satisfactory removal of the enclosing materials will qualify for an outright grant of \$2,000 plus an additional \$2,000 from a Gifford Park Association 50/50 matching architectural grant toward reconstruction of a historically and architecturally appropriate porch.
- Grant application/s must be submitted before work has begun. Approval of application/s may require a site visit and/or meeting to determine eligibility.
- This grant may be combined with other Gifford Park Association and City of Elgin Grants.
- The Grant Committee shall determine the eligibility of projects for grants. Any exceptions to these guidelines shall require GPA board approval.