

## 3.21 GPA Meeting Minutes

### Calendar of Events

Wed. April 10, 6:00 pm Pocket Park Cleanup

Thurs. April 18, 7:00 pm GPA monthly meeting at the Elgin History Museum

Sat. April 20, 9:30 am Neighborhood cleanup starting at St. Mary's church north parking lot (DuPage and Gifford)

May 1 – 31, Preservation Month activities.

Sat/Sun. Sept 7 and 8, Historic Elgin Housewalk.

### Gifford Park Association General Membership meeting

**March 21, 2024, 7PM**

**In attendance:** Barbara Evans, Tyler Grace, Trish LaFleur, Jerry Lopatka, Monia Lopez, Pat/Dan Miller, Glenna/Mark Preradovic, Mary Ellen Schneider, Arielle Somberg, Andrew Stein

**I. Approval of Minutes** – Meeting February 15, 2024

**II. ROPE Report-** None. Officer Payne was not in attendance.

**III. Code Enforcement Report-**

Monica Lopez will be moving on to an assignment in commercial properties throughout Elgin. A new code officer will begin next month (April 2024). Monica will bring the new code officer to the April meeting.

**IV. Treasurer's Report- Dan Miller**

Dan Miller reported the following expenditures since the last meeting; \$60 was spent on 6 Downtown Gift certificates for the Welcome Wagon.

Checking-	\$79,855.12
CD's (4) totaling	\$88,260.94

\$168,116.06

Total

### V. Committee Reports

#### A. Membership- Babara Evans

· Most recent property sold is 275 DuPage St. Thus far this year 7 houses have been sold.

· There are currently 153 members of the Gifford Park Association which are from 228 households.

On April 19-20, the American Association of University Women, Illinois, is holding its state convention at Elgin Community College. Because attendees' time will be limited, it is doubtful that many will tour our city. Nevertheless, I will be manning a table with the following materials available to all the attendees on the assumption that publicizing all Elgin has to offer, especially in historic architecture, just might entice some to consider moving here and joining our preservation movement. There will be 100-125 attendees at the convention.

· The Preservation Commission's postcards publicizing the website Historic Elgin, which has a QR code that will allow all to access from wherever they live.

· The tri-fold brochure for Downtown Elgin's traditional architecture as well as the brochure for its mid-century modern architecture.

· The Elgin Area Visitor Bureau's booklet about the Elgin area, which is the booklet found at tourist centers throughout the state.

· Possibly include programs of past House Walk and a flyer for the upcoming House Walk. Trish knows of a volunteer who may be able to help with this.

· GPA will possibly run a video/ slide show of homes in the area on a laptop at the information table. Mary Ellen will run the laptop.

**B. Program/Events- Janine was not in attendance.**

**C. Public Relations –**

Pat Miller mentioned that the Southwest Neighborhood Association, SWAN puts up signs announcing their meetings. It would be a good thing for the GPA to do as well. Signs would be displayed on private property only and for a short period.

**D. House Walk** – There are seven houses plus one public property (Fire Museum). We are still waiting to hear from the Baptist Church as to whether they will participate. Registration will most probably be at the Fire House as there is ample space to set up outside or inside should the weather be inclement.

### **E. Historic District- Pat Miller**

- City tree planting- We would like to get people to participate. The program is free. There are two plantings per year, April, and August. The program is 1<sup>st</sup> come first served. The deadline for spring planting is April 15. The Historic District committee will do some door-to-door soliciting of homes to promote this program.
- Volunteer vests with GPA logo - yellow, have been ordered and are on their way.
- Pocket Park- Geneva and Chicago Sts. - Wednesday, April 10 at 6:00 pm. Pocket Park cleanup. There is a lot of litter, especially food-related. The nearby church is a food pantry and many times the recipients sort through their food bag/box and discard unwanted items in the park.
- Reminder- May- November Weed Wack Wednesday- First Wednesday of the month. 6:30 PM (will send out a notice about tools needed) Cleanup will target leaves and litter.
- John Zimmerman will be painting (hired), the iron fence in the park.
- Saturday, April 20- 9:30. Neighborhood spring cleanup. Saint Mary's north parking lot (DuPage and Gifford) Neighborhood cleanup followed by lunch. Lunch will be in the Community Room at 11:30. Participants can enter a drawing for a 'Jane' Magnolia tree to launch the Historic District theme tree program.
- Promote grants- A flier should go out to promote grants, also door knocking.
- Signage for the Park and trash receptacle are being discussed.
- The Historic Committee is always looking for new members- First Tuesday at 6:30, Miller Home.

### **VI. New Business**

#### **A. Neighborhood Outreach Committee for the DNA** (Barbara Evans, GPA Representative)

- The Watch District has had its first board meeting. The first Thursday of the month was established as its meeting day. Also discussed was shortening the name of the district. Most important, however, was the news that the board members are working with the state Preservation Board to ensure that their area does not lose its local designation as a historic district.
- The city of Elgin has approved occupancy for High Haven in Butera Plaza. A cannabis business, it will be open 7 days a week and have a strong security presence during its hours. Interestingly, the manager of it is a graduate of Larkin High School.
- The city of Elgin has begun discussing the removal/replacement of the Kimball and Chicago Street bridges, an \$18 million project for which 80% of the funding will come from the federal government and 20% from the city. The city's portion, however, will be offset by grants.
- The first to be removed will be the Kimball St. bridge, whose structure will be replaced regardless of whether the dam is removed. Whether the Chicago St. bridge will be replaced or simply restored is yet to be decided. So, too, is whether the bridges will be replaced/restored in a phased way or closed completely while the work is being done. The bridges will be designed to meet 2050 standards. Other things remain to be determined, and there is time, for work is not expected to begin for two to three years. The city of Elgin plans to hold public meetings about this project this summer.
- The funding the city of Elgin receives through the Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) ends next April unless the state gives it the 10–11-year extension it is asking for. Thus, the push is on to go through the hoops necessary to get it, for it makes money available to improve declining property values. Benefiting from it, for example, was the Tower Building. And without it, there's no way the North Grove Redevelopment project will happen.

#### **B. Channing Elementary Stakeholder Adviser Group – Tyler Grace**

Sarah Hunt (U46) reached out to the GPA. Channing School is currently one of the Comprehensive schools with the new state designations. Megan, school social worker at Channing and the School Leadership Team is putting together a list of people from the community to invite to participate in the Stakeholder Advisory Group. They would like to include someone from the GPA to represent the Neighborhood Association. At this time, the commitment would be to attend two meetings, the first in April and one meeting in June. Mary Ellen Schneider volunteered to be the GPA representative.

#### **C. Historic District Theme Tree Program- Pat Miller**

The Committee is launching an Historic District Theme tree program. The chosen theme tree species is 'Jane' magnolia, an ornamental understory tree with deep pink blossoms. This program hopes to promote the planting on private property of this

tree throughout the neighborhood. As the trees mature over the years and bloom at the same time, they will create interest and beauty in the district. The program could be promoted with tree giveaways at events. A second way to promote this would be with a group purchase of trees with a specific nursery. Another way would be for the GPA to contribute a funds match to lower the cost of the tree for residents. The trees are not inexpensive. The price for the trees ranges from \$59 for a small tree to \$400 for a 5–6-foot tree. More to come on this initiative.

**D. Neighborhood Leaflet Drop** - Door hanger style. Volunteers Needed

**E. Letter in Support of Recognizing Elgin Design Guideline Manual for National Alliance of Preservation Award-Tyler Grace**

This letter was drafted two years ago at the request of Christen. At the time she wanted to submit the new design guidelines for an award, however, that submission was delayed until now. Christen would like to have this letter in her possession by week's end for submission. Approved.

*National Alliance of Preservation Commission members,*

*The Gifford Park Association, GPA, has worked closely with the Elgin Heritage Commission on numerous projects over our 40+ year history. We are well aware of the important role they continue to play in preserving our architectural treasures in Elgin. One important project that the Heritage Commission has recently completed is the amended Elgin Design Guideline Manual. The Spanish translation of the document is in the works to better serve our Latino residents.*

*The GPA welcomes this amended manual and believes it is worthy of a National Alliance of Preservation Commissions Best Practices - Protection award.*

*The amendment included three key features:*

*First, the amendment would make it easier for residents to install solar panels on the roofs of their historic homes (these changes were endorsed by the Sustainability Commission's Solar Work Group and follow the National Alliance of Preservation Commission's recommendations for solar installation).*

*Second, the amendment provides guidance for working with mid-century modern buildings, of which Elgin has many.*

*And third, the amendment features a cover-to-cover redesign with more illustrations and photographs to make it more user-friendly and easier to understand including clickable links to each section as well as links to helpful articles.*

*The City of Elgin is a treasure trove of vintage architecture. The Heritage Commission is a major player in preserving our collection of great houses, and as such, deserves to be recognized with this award for the fine work they do.*

**Adjournment-** Meeting ends at 8:03 PM. Attendees remained to chat.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Ellen Schneider, Secretary