

**Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance**  
**24 March 2011**  
**Lincoln Center Room 307**

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Approved July 28, 2011**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

*Call to Order:* 7:04 p.m. by Chair Ken Lerner

*Members Present:* Jane Amorosi, Wallace Brown, James Cavallo, Gordon Goodman, Veatrice Jehangir, Ken Lerner, Chris Saricks, John Schofield, David Schultz, and Mark Thoman

*Members Absent:* Sonja Tiegs Ebel, Ihor Hlohowskyj, and Charley Smart

*Quorum satisfied :* **Yes**

**2. Review and Approval of Minutes of 2/24/11 Meeting**

Secretary Pro-tem G. Goodman noted that, as a new departure, action items recorded in the minutes would be flagged by bold type. Mark Thoman moved and Wallace Brown seconded that the minutes of the meeting of 24 February 2011 be approved as submitted. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**3. Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer G. Goodman reported activity since the beginning of the fiscal year (1/1/11), which included eight donations (one extremely generous), one rail barrel reservation, two membership dues payments, a legal services fee, and a sponsored rain barrel repayment (to Family Shelter Service, who will decorate the barrel in a PDHA theme). Account balance (assets) as of 3/22/11 was \$3,034.52, of which \$1823.02 is cash (checking account) and \$1,211.50 is the Community Bank certificate of deposit value. J. Schofield recommended that the accounts ledger add a "commitments" category for liabilities (expenditures) not yet paid. **The treasurer agreed this would be a good idea, and promised to follow through in future reports.**

Chris Saricks moved and Wallace Brown seconded that the Treasurer's report be approved as presented, and the motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

**4. Current Activities**

**a. Highway cleanup**

The aforementioned spring cleanup date is April 23. Chair Lerner reminded the Board that he could collect the filled-out waiver forms this evening and that a single waiver would cover each participant for the entire year. G. Goodman has posted a list of the clean-up dates and a pdf of the waiver form on the PDHA website.

**b. Coalition for Managed Redevelopment to meet with Mayor-apparent Tully**

J. Schofield announced that, on March 30, the DG Coalition for Managed Redevelopment would hold a meeting at 7 p.m. in Room 307 of Lincoln Center at which the Coalition would discuss and sound out the attitudes of (sole) mayoral candidate Martin Tully regarding its vision for promoting and expanding use of the local historic preservation ordinance to designate more properties of historical and architectural significance in the village. The village has identified some 300 candidate properties. The present ordinance is, of course, all voluntary, and the current Village Council has not been marketing it, fearing it has the potential to restrict homeowner rights. The Coalition is seeking a new champion on the Council. With proper incentives, homeowners could

be shown how designation provides useful tax benefits to increase both the value of their property and the attractiveness of the neighborhoods they occupy (which could also qualify for designation as historic districts). Tax abatement is available for architecture-appropriate improvements (including additions to footprint) and assessments would be reduced

J. Amorosi suggested that a speakers' bureau could be organized to get the word out about the benefits of designation, and noted that the DG Historical Society can and should be taking a more active role and that the township assessor could also become involved. J. Cavallo indicated that the DG Environmental Commission is certainly interested in this issue, and is one of the few village (volunteer) commissions not subject to specific tasking by the Council. M. Thoman noted that Jeff O'Brian is the village point person for historic preservation, and that M. Tully, like several PDHA board members, is on the Historical Society Board (on which, according to a report from C. Smart to G. Goodman, "nothing's happening"). J. Schofield took an informal poll of members who expected to be able to attend the Coalition meeting with Tully, and three or four answered in the affirmative.

#### **c. Rain barrel sale**

G. Goodman reported that two rain barrel orders have been received by PDHA thus far. Flyers have been prepared for general distribution and marketing. Advance sales cut-off date is April 20 (to enable adequate supplies to be provided) and M. Thoman reminded the board that barrel distribution will take place from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on May 21 at two locations. PDHA volunteers for that effort will be recruited after sales close, probably around the date of the spring cleanup on Highland Avenue. Members were encouraged to take copies of the brochure for distribution/display at various locations around the community.

G. Goodman noted that if the Alliance could issue its spring newsletter by April 20 and include rain barrel information (along with the order-form brochure and a picture of the Alliance's painter rail barrel from Family Shelter), the sale could be further promoted. However, this would necessitate having more material for the newsletter. Additional topics could include: highway cleanup dates, the United Methodist Church's "Biggest Carbon Loser" contest and its expandability, and the Lyman Woods/Belmont Prairie activities calendar for 2011. G. Goodman noted that he would need a five-day lead time for receipt of copy (but the first week in April was the actual cut-off), and **D. Schultz (on carbon footprint reduction) K. Lerner (on highway pickup dates and Arbor Day activities), and G. Goodman (on rain barrels and Lyman Woods activities) all committed to meet that schedule.**

There was a brief discussion on the broader issue of water retention on properties by means of depressions/swales or tanks. This is an element of the "Green Streets" national initiative that the village has not yet embraced, but there seemed no reason why the Alliance could not include information in its own literature and outreach materials about how homeowners who so desire can effect more efficient on-site retention.

#### **d. Questions posed to Village Council candidates**

G. Goodman reported that three candidates (Neustadt, Scalzetti, and Thoman) had formally responded to the question set developed with Board input by J. Schofield, and that their responses had been posted on the PDHA website (obtaining direct permission to do so having apparently been obviated in the wording of the solicitation letter to the candidates). Mayor-apparent Tully also received the question set.

J. Amorosi observed that candidates running for the various school district positions seemed exclusively to be promoting improvements to educational information technology in the schools

and saying nothing about programs to enhance knowledge and appreciation of the natural environment. This is indicative of a very unbalanced and potentially dangerous trend that could lead to (paraphrasing Richard Louv) the “last child left in the woods.” It would seem appropriate for PDHA to express its concern to school district candidates about this unilateral direction, especially given our support for Little Sprouts, which in Downers Grove is essentially the last school nature program left in the woods. D. Schultz and J. Schofield suggested that the Alliance should collect from the local media newsworthy items that cover natural amenity promotion, historic structure preservation, and conservation and energy demand reduction efforts in order to build a file for creating a dossier that could be used as the basis of an annual PDHA heritage vision award.

**e. Reducing Carbon Footprint contest**

D. Schultz reported that the FUMC would be kicking this contest off shortly. There are 48 potential action items on the qualifying list of household-based measures, each with its own point score. For a four-week period, twelve of these per week would be emphasized. J. Schofield asked if this activity was being publicized more broadly (i.e., outside the church), and suggested that a note be provided to the Downers Grove *Patch*, which is always soliciting good community-based material of this nature. The *Reporter* and *Suburban Trib* should also be contacted. **D. Schultz agreed to follow through on this.** He also stated that the contest winners would be tallied and announced at the end of the four-week period.

**f. Arbor Day**

K. Lerner revealed that he had been working with Brandy Beckley at the Park District, who is coordinating this year’s Arbor Day activities. She has suggested that the most useful contribution that PDHA could make to Arbor Day efforts this year would be printing and folding about 600 copies of a pdf that would be distributed with each seedling. **This should reach us sometime during the first week in April and the 600 copies returned to them by April 24.** There will be a tree-planting ceremony in one of the parks on Arbor Day itself, with school students as “witnesses.” **K. Lerner will provide G. Goodman information regarding the date, time and place of this activity.**

**5. New Business**

G. Goodman noted that the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, which has been a knowledgeable and reliable champion for natural areas (including Lyman Woods) over the years, will hold its annual meeting in Alton on May 3, if any Board member is interested/able to attend. He also promised to try to obtain more reliable delivery to Board members of e-mails and newsletters issued by the Chicago Wilderness Society and the Illinois Environmental Council.

**6. Adjournment**

There being no additional items introduced, the date for the next meeting was set for Thursday, 26 May in Lincoln Center room 307. The first clean-up date (April 23) and Arbor Day will intervene, and expected May agenda items will include the expected impact of the Council election results, success of the rain barrel sale, summer activities at Lyman Woods and Belmont Prairie, and results of the carbon loser contest. J. Schofield moved and J. Cavallo seconded meeting adjournment, the motion carried unanimously, and Chair Lerner officially adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Chris Saricks, Secretary*