

**Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance – April 2012 Special Meeting
April 19, 2012
Lincoln Center**

Meeting Minutes -- Draft

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Call to Order: 7:00PM by Ken Lerner

Members Present:

Jane Amorosi
Wallace H. Brown
James Cavallo
Gordon Goodman, Treasurer
Greg José
Ken Lerner, Chair
Tim Meaney, Secretary
Chris Saricks, Chair Pro-Tem
John Schofield
Dave Schulz
Mark Thoman

Members Absent:

Sonja Tiegs-Ebel

Guests:

John Banaszak
Barbara Murphy

Quorum Satisfied: Yes

II. Review and Approval of February 23, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the PDHA's February 23, 2012 meeting were accepted with no corrections.

III. Treasurer's Report

Gordon Goodman reported that with the closure of the PDHA's sister organization, the Downers Grove Coalition for Managed Redevelopment, funds remaining in the DGCMR

bank account were allocated on a 50/50 basis between the PDHA and the Downers Grove Watch, each organization receiving \$146.74.

The PDHA's fund balance as of 4/17/12 was \$2,508.70. Expenditures for the period 1/1/12 through 4/17/12 amounted to \$250.00 -- \$150.00 for membership dues to the Illinois Environmental Council and \$100.00 for membership dues to Chicago Wilderness. With the exception of the Little Sprouts program, there are no outstanding commitments.

IV. PDHA Officer Election

At its earlier meeting to elect officers for the current year, the election of the PDHA Secretary was not formally completed. This omission was remedied tonight with the nomination and unanimous approval of Timothy Meaney as Secretary for the 2012 calendar year.

V. Lyman Woods and Invasive Plant Species

Mr. John Banaszak was present to report on his assessment of the invasive species situation in Lyman Woods. He said that thirteen invasive species have been identified in the Woods. The possible reasons for their presence are several – some can be tracked in on visitors' shoes; others by plant traders; and others by birds, with buckthorn and rosa multiflora a likely consequence of the latter source.

Burns performed every two years can be effective countermeasures, at least against garlic mustard and rosa multiflora. However, this year's weather pattern of winds and rain have made scheduling a burn difficult.

Gordon Goodman reported that he sent Mr. Banaszak's list of thirteen invasive species to the Park District, which is the governmental body currently responsible for maintaining Lyman Woods. He said that consultants for the Park District will review the situation in May. Mr. Goodman said the hoped-for objective of that meeting is to move the Park District to acknowledge that a problem exists. He said he would attempt to have Mr. Banaszak included in the meeting and offered to send Mr. Banaszak's report and invasive species list to Park District management to share with the Park District commissioners.

Mr. Goodman also expressed hope that the Forest Preserve would have a presence at that meeting, given that they have a department of natural areas management whose input would be helpful. He said that the Forest Preserve had not as yet been apprised of the Lyman Woods situation. There is a question of whether or not the Park District would welcome input from the Forest Preserve, since it is the Park District that has jurisdiction over Lyman Woods. He therefore suggested that PDHA proceed in stages, with initial actions to include a letter from PDHA containing the following:

- Mr. Banaszak's report and invasive species list, noting that it is an eye-witness account of the problem
- Encouragement to the Park District to investigate and assess the issue, and develop a plan of action
- A suggestion that there are Forest Preserve personnel with requisite expertise to offer informed opinion on the matter.
- A suggestion that the Park District involve Forest Preserve personnel in subsequent discussions
- A recommendation that the Park District directly involve Messrs. Goodman and Banaszak in a volunteer capacity. These two can then report back to the PDHA.

Subsequent discussion suggested that the letter be directed to Dan Cermak, Sandy Pfundheller, Director of Recreation, and the Park District's soon-to-be-appointed new executive director. The intent of all this is to initiate movement toward a solution by clearly acknowledging the Park District as the responsible party having jurisdiction over Lyman Woods.

Discussion also noted that a solution to the Lyman Woods situation may differ e.g., from that of Belmont Prairie, where regular burns have been conducted for several years. The differences are that 1) Belmont Prairie is an ecological environment different than that of Lyman Woods – one being a prairie where burns can be conducted relatively easily compared to a woodland situation, and 2) the two areas differ considerably in size – Belmont Prairie consists of only about ten acres while Lyman Woods comprises 180 acres.

An additional step mentioned was preparation of a possible newspaper article for the Downers Grove Reporter informing citizens of the invasive species threat.

John Schofield moved that Ken Lerner draft a letter from PDHA to the Park District covering the points outlined above. Gordon Goodman seconded the motion. President Lerner said that he would circulate a draft of his letter to the PDHA Board prior to sending it to the Park District.

Additional discussion relating to Lyman Woods included an idea to apprise Good Samaritan Hospital of the invasive species situation on the hospital's ground, since this potentially comprises a continuing threat to Lyman Woods. Mr. Banaszak offered to prepare an assessment of the hospital's land. PDHA will then pursue discussions with the hospital in tandem with sending the letter to the Park District.

Sincere thanks were extended to Mr. Banaszak by all present members of the PDHA Board for his outstanding work in assessing the Lyman Woods situation.

VI. Highway Cleanup

This is scheduled for Saturday, April 21st starting at 8:30 AM. The meeting place is the 33rd Street entrance to Lyman Woods. County Highway personnel will provide equipment, including bags, gloves, safety vests and roads signs.

VII. Arbor Day Tree Planting

On April 27th, the Park District will plant two trees in Patriots Park as part of this year's Arbor Day ceremonies. All local citizens are invited to this event, which will also be attended by Whittier Elementary School's first grade class. A motion was made by Chris Saricks that PDHA provide \$120.00 to cover the cost of one of the trees. The motion was seconded by Mark Thoman and passed unanimously by the Board.

VIII. Little Sprouts Program Expansion

PDHA earlier proposed a brainstorming session with the Park District to develop ways to expand the Little Sprouts program beyond its current target group. In response, the Park District has invited PDHA to participate in a discussion for this purpose. The current program reaches 400-500 students each year. Possibilities for expanding the program include adapting current instructional materials to reach additional audiences, such as:

- *Upper elementary grades* – where the subject would be appropriate to the curriculum
- *High school and college students* – to prepare them to be guides or mentors for the existing Little Sprouts program
- *“Scout Sprouts”* – as a means of helping Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts meet preliminary requirements for the Environmental Science merit badge
- *Parents* of existing and past participants
- *“Senior Sprouts”* – e.g., a Lincoln Center field trip for seniors

In addition, PDHA could also reach out to other relevant local organizations (e.g., the Organic Gardeners' Club) to enlist additional funding sources.

The PDHA/Park District discussion is intended to be an open-ended, exploratory conversation. John Schofield, Greg Hose, Chris Saricks and Jim Cavallo all volunteered to meet with Shannon Forsythe of the Park District in May.

IX. Electrical Aggregation

The Village of Downers Grove's Plan of Governance for the new electrical aggregation initiative was distributed in advance of tonight's meeting to the PDHA Board. Specific items of interest to PDHA are:

- A statement in the Plan of Governance that the Village will request bids for varying mixes of renewable energy resources
- An option in the Plan to request suppliers to furnish information on how energy users can conserve energy and engage in energy-efficient practices. As it now stands, the Plan focuses on energy usage rather than energy conservation.

At an appropriate future time, PDHA proposes to lobby in favor of the above two items. The particulars of PDHA's emerging position are:

- The Village should stipulate that the supplier develop, implement and maintain informational programs on energy usage and conservation, without the expenditure of Village monies
- The Environmental Concerns Commission should have an ongoing role in the aggregation program as a formal source of citizen oversight and input, and to review bids and the structure of the aggregation program
- PDHA supports the Village's intention to seek bids independently and to insist that the bidding levels do not exceed the Commonwealth Edison price for comparative service.

Ken Lerner will draft these points as a position statement for PDHA Board review.

X. Spring PDHA Newsletter

Topics proposed for the newsletter are:

- A story (with photos) of the Arbor Day tree planting in Patriots Park
- The Lyman Woods invasive species situation
- PDHA's position on electrical aggregation
- A brief update on the Park District's assumption of responsibility for Blodgett House
- Information on volunteer opportunities at Lyman Woods

Gordon Goodman said that his availability to prepare the spring newsletter in the next few weeks is very limited, with the result that the publication date was set for June. An advantage of the later date is that all material for the above topics should be available by that time.

XI. New Business

Ken Lerner announced that another Historic House Tour will be held on Sunday, April 22nd at 1:00 PM at 1143 Maple Avenue. This home has historic interest and is currently for sale. The realtor is sponsoring the open house as part of the sales process.

John Schofield proposed a meeting with the new executive director of the Park District, who it is believed will be installed on June 1st. He suggested that Mr. Banaszak be a part of the delegation, to underscore PDHA's environmental commitment.

Tim Meaney suggested that we begin this process with a letter of welcome to the new director in which we state our interest in meeting with him.

A proposal was also made to draft a letter of thanks to Dan Cermak in recognition of his years of service to the Park District. It was noted that Mr. Cermak was instrumental in obtaining financing to acquire the Lyman Woods area. Similarly, it was recommended that Jerry Yaksoulian also be cited for his early role in helping to acquire Lyman Woods. President Lerner said he will draft a thank you letter to Mr. Cermak.

The next PDHA Board Meeting is scheduled for June 20th, 2012.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy L. Meaney
Secretary