

Protect Your Heritage

PDHA Annual
Meeting Thursday
October 15 - 7 PM
Lincoln Center
Room 503
935 Maple Avenue

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on the world
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www.PDHA.org

2015 Annual Meeting

Promoting Preservation: Successful Strategies in Geneva, IL

Our 2015 Annual Meeting features Michael A. Lambert, Preservation Planner for the City of Geneva, IL, telling us how Geneva has successfully promoted historic preservation.



Michael Lambert

Geneva has a rich cultural heritage and an extensive historic legacy. The City's historic resources include hundreds of historic sites and buildings identified through surveys conducted over the past quarter century. Among its resources are formally designated historic properties both on the local Geneva Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places. Geneva has focused on the significance of its historic resources as the unifying theme for commercial viability and renewal of its downtown area.

In addition to being Geneva's Preservation Planner, Michael is Founding Principal of ARRIS Architects + Planners, Plainfield. He has served on the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council and was on the Plainfield Village Board from 1991 to 1996. Michael was also Founding Chair for Historic Preservation Commissions of both Will County and the Village of Plainfield.

Come hear Michael's presentation at 7:00 PM on Thursday, October 15, in Room 503, Lincoln Center, 935 Maple Avenue, Downers Grove. Refreshments will be served.

A Beautiful Day at Belmont Prairie

It was a perfect, late summer morning for our PDHA wildflower walks. On August 22, Lance Herring led two groups of hikers through beautiful Belmont Prairie, a local gem located southwest of Belmont Road and Ogden Avenue in Downers Grove.

Hikers heard about the more recent history of Belmont Prairie, accidentally discovered when a local resident was taking a photography class at the Morton Arboretum in the 1970s. Tasked with photographing flowers, Al Dupree took photographs of flowers in a local field. Botanists at the Arboretum were intrigued about where these rare flowers were located, and thus began the efforts to save Belmont Prairie. It is now owned by the Downers Grove Park District and is a dedicated Illinois Nature Preserve.

Formed after glaciers retreated from the Chicago area, some 15000 years ago, and after the region underwent an extensive hotter and drier period, the prairie contains many species of grasses and forbs, some of them rare. Hikers witnessed bees disappearing in the clasping flower petals of gentians to collect pollen and nectar. The purple flowers of Blazing Star were in full bloom, against a tall backdrop of Big Bluestem and Indian Grass.



Striped Gentian
(*Gentiana villosa*)

After the hikes, we enjoyed refreshments and discussion at the nearby home of Joellen Siddens. PDHA wishes to thank both Lance and Joellen for making this event a success! - By Irene Hogstrom

**Protect
Your
Heritage**

PDHA Directors

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance is a 20-year old, Illinois not-for-profit corporation with Internal Revenue Service charitable group status. PDHA's Board of Directors manages its activities.

The following people are PDHA Officers:

- Chair Ken Lerner,
- Chair Pro-Tem Chris Saricks,
- Secretary Jim Cavallo,
- Treasurer Gordon Goodman,
- & PDHA Directors:

- Mark Bragen,
- Wally Brown,
- Sue Carroll,
- Marge Earl,
- Irene Hogstrom,
- John Schofield,
- & Mark Thoman.

Newsletter
Editing by
G. Goodman

*Pierce Downer's
Heritage Alliance
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Historic Preservation Ordinance & Program Move Forward

The Architectural Design Review Board (ADRB) and its *ad hoc* Subcommittee have reviewed the existing Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Preservation Program and are developing their recommendations for changes. Members of Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance contributed to the process, based on their first-hand experience with various "clunky" features of the current Ordinance and Preservation Program.

Key changes to the Ordinance that are being considered include simplifying the application for historic landmark status as well as simplifying review and approval requirements for proposed modifications of a landmark structure. The ADRB/*ad hoc* Subcommittee agreed in principle at a meeting in September to propose that Historic Districts may be non-contiguous groups of properties and should require 100% owner consent. As an example, in order to take advantage of potential property tax benefits of landmarking, the owners of a number of Sears Homes or other Kit Homes that are distributed throughout one or more neighborhoods would be able to apply for creation of such a non-contiguous historic district made up of only their homes.

PDHA's input has centered on the paperwork process. We are pleased to see recommendations for a simpler, easy to read application. We also support proposals for cooperation with local groups like PDHA, the Historical Society, and Friends of the Edwards House as resources to provide assistance in completing landmark nominations. Improved public understanding and awareness can help dispel misconceptions residents may have now concerning the preservation of Downers Grove's history and heritage. PDHA intends to continue partnering with the Village and other residents to keep building surveys and databases up to date and to collaborate on future outreach efforts.

The Village Council expects to receive the ADRB/*ad hoc* Subcommittee Report in October and then to establish policy guidelines for staff to follow in bringing exact wording and provisions into focus over the next few months. The PDHA Board of Directors plans to stay involved as the Village moves forward. – *By Mark Thoman*

**Petition for Major
Certificate of
Appropriateness**

The Drew Family Home, pictured on the right, became our first locally landmarked structure in 2008. The ADRB recently considered and unanimously approved a Major Certificate of Appropriateness for its renovation with a two-story addition to the rear elevation with a detached garage, as illustrated in the lower image.

This review of proposed changes to a locally landmarked structure provides important experience as background to the ADRB's recommendations for updates to the Historic Preservation Ordinance.



Image 1 - East (Front) Elevation

August, 2015



Image 2 - Proposed East (Front) Elevation

Chicago Region Trees Initiative “Best Community Advocate” Award

In July, Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance received an award from the Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI) for “Best Community Advocate.” CRTI was established in 2013 as a collaboration of Chicago-region partners to develop and implement a strategy that builds a healthier and more diverse urban forest by 2040. Its activities include gathering data on forest composition, planting and tree stewardship, and promoting education and training on the value and benefits of trees. PDHA was recognized for our sponsorship of environmental education activities and our advocacy and service on behalf of the Downers Grove urban forest. For three years, PDHA has worked with the Downers Grove Village Forester to identify and screen locations for planting trees in village parkways.

CRTI is a consortium of local and national organizations. Key members include the Morton Arboretum, Openlands, Chicago Wilderness, the Nature Conservancy, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Forest Preserves of Cook County, Illinois Landscape Contractors Association, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service. Information about CRTI may be found at www.chicagorti.org.



The awards ceremony was held Tuesday, July 14 at the Morton Arboretum. Chairman Ken Lerner with Directors Irene Hogstrom and Mark Thoman received the certificate on behalf of PDHA from Michael Collins, Riverside Village Forester.

Many thanks to the volunteers and contributors who make it possible for us to be the local Lorax and “speak for the trees” (with apologies to Dr. Seuss). Thanks as well to the Village of Downers Grove and Downers Grove Park District staff who have worked with us on tree-related programs. – *By Ken Lerner*

Meetings with Village Elected Officials

During the summer, PDHA met with newly elected and re-elected members of the Village Council including Commissioners Gina Vattimo and Bill Waldack, and Mayor Tully with Commissioner David Olsen also in attendance. Topics included current efforts to overhaul our historic preservation activities, as well as Gina's recycling initiative for the downtown area. We also discussed our continuing interest in the Downers Grove urban forest, tree preservation and the protection of open spaces, especially our community's natural areas. We applauded our community's growing environmental awareness. Mayor Tully urged us to expand our outreach so other community members may be encouraged to bring PDHA's message to the Council.

These meetings have already led to one new initiative as Commissioner Waldack recently proposed having the village public works department look into a tree-purchase program whereby Downers Grove residents would have a chance to purchase nursery trees at bargain prices by using the village's purchasing power. Naperville has operated a similar program for years to the benefit of its residents. – *By Ken Lerner*

*Please Join Us on
Our 2016
Highland Ave.
Adopt-A-Highway
CLEAN-UP DAYS*

*April 16
June 11
August 20
October 1*

*Saturdays
8:30-10:30 AM*

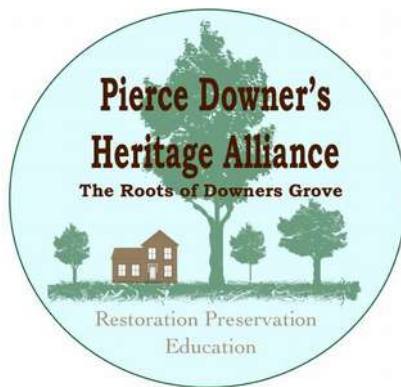
*Check our
website for
updates
and to sign up
to participate!*

*Have you
renewed your
membership in
the Heritage
Alliance?*

*See the back page
of this newsletter
for more info and
how YOU can make
a difference!*

*Check us out at
www.PDHA.org*

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance
P.O. Box 422
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515



Pierce Downer
1782-1863

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance Fall 2015 Newsletter

You are invited to join us at our 2015 Annual Meeting
Thursday, October 15, 7:00 pm
Room 503, Lincoln Center, 935 Maple Avenue, Downers Grove.
Check our website www.PDHA.org for more details
or send questions to Info@PDHA.org.

Your membership in the Alliance helps in our efforts to petition local government officials to preserve our heritage resources. Your participation in our programs demonstrates to our community the strength of our alliance to protect Downers Grove's natural and cultural heritage.

Please join Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance or renew your membership now as we work for protection of the natural and cultural heritage of Downers Grove.

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance
P .O. Box 422, Downers Grove, IL 60515

Yes, I want to begin/renew my membership in Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance.

Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____ Telephone: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Email Address: _____

Contribution: \$ _____ (Employer matching contribution ____?)

____ I/We can also volunteer some time.

Membership in Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance is FREE.
Please consider making a TAX-DEDUCTIBLE, VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION
of \$10 or more to help us defray expenses.

We can now accept donations via Paypal. Please visit our website for details.
Your email address will allow us to keep you informed of future events.