

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance
<http://www.pdha.org>
Regular Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes
June 16, 2004

Attendance: Jane Amorosi, Laurel Bowen, James Cavallo, Aspasia Colias, Gordon Goodman, Matt LeCren, Kathleen Panek, Bill Runyon, Buzz Howell, Jerry Yoksoulian (Quorum present) **Absent:** Lee Forsythe, Dave Schulz, Mark Sklair **Guests:** Jean Follett, Alice Eastman and additional guests identified on the attached attendance list.

Meeting called to order by Chair Gordon Goodman at 7:10 p.m.

Approval of March 17, 2004 Meeting minutes: The minutes were approved as prepared.

Secretary's Report: Please invite a guest to our meetings. If able, participate in Village via meetings and letters to paper. Our next meeting is Wednesday, September 15, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. Lyman Woods Interpretative Center. See Gossip Line below.

Treasurer's Report: Beginning Checking Account Balance (as of 3/17/04) = \$3,435.56. Income of \$ 100 (two donations) Expenditures: \$ 720.23 Ending Balance = \$2,815.38 (as of 6/15/04) Planned expenditure \$200 (remaining gift to Downers Grove Park District) Additional assets 34 shares of AT&T Wireless Service common stock. The Treasurer's report was approved as presented.

Belmont Prairie: A. Eastman reported that extension of the trail in Belmont Prairie will control erosion. Summer class day camp to be held.

Lyman Woods: A. Eastman reported that the Butterfly garden is completed at Lyman Woods Interpretive Center thanks to Eagle Scout project and donation from PDHA. This is part of the outdoor classroom at Lyman Woods. A bench honoring Gordon Goodman, donated by his family, has been installed. "Gardening with Prairie Plants" book has been donated to interpretive center by PDHA.

Park District as managing partner for Lyman Woods, according to the tripartite agreement between the Village of Downers Grove, the DuPage Forest Preserve District and the Park District, is supervising the current streambank stabilization project. Grants for current work include: \$200,000 for 1st phase; \$156,000 319 Grant for clean water; \$200,000 IL Natural Resource grant has been applied for upland habitat restoration.

Speaker: Ms. Jean Follett, Chair of the Hinsdale Historic Preservation Commission and a nationally recognized historic preservation expert. Topic: Preservation Possibilities and Strategies.

Ms. Follett expressed her appreciation. "I love Downers Grove, I go out of my way to drive down Maple Avenue." She talked about the advantages of historic preservation, stimulated by sale of oldest home in Downers Grove, known as the Lyman House, built in 1839 at 806 Maple Avenue, was on the underground railroad.

Reducing teardowns has environmental payoffs in terms of tree preservation, stormwater runoff, and reducing the burden on landfills. Currently 24% of material going to landfills is construction debris. Currently, Hinsdale's ordinance does not allow lot splits. Highland Park has a good tree ordinance. Adjacent trees much be protected and are greatly impacted by teardowns.

Historic preservation is an economic vitality issue. Communities expect a property tax boost from teardown construction, but then find that increased use of city services (schools, water and sewer, traffic) more than makes up the difference. Hinsdale has had three school referenda in the last few years, despite (or because of) the wave of teardowns there. New police departments and a new fire house have had to be built.

Strategies for historic preservation: Political activism is needed – make preservation an issue in local elections. Preservation is all about zoning. It protects values of adjacent properties as well as being a local issue in community. Change can be controlled to protect pace of destruction, quality of new construction and character of the neighborhoods.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation publishes a number of guidebooks on local preservation.

Demolition permit review – in Hinsdale and many other communities, Demolition permit applications are reviewed for historic significance. The permit review process gives extra time for efforts to save significant structures.

Design review – For example Park Ridge has a design review board that reviews new construction plans. Every new house has to go through it. This has led to a visible increase in quality of design and construction.

Historic districts – Are simply another type of zoning. Good tool for historic areas and post war ranch homes. Glen Ellyn is considering a conservation overlay district right now. A locally designated district can be made as loose or restrictive as you want. A well run district can boost the appeal of a neighborhood and increase property values, highlight architectural significance and provide sales tool.

Conservation easements. Owners can voluntarily give an easement to a preservation group to create a permanent obligation to perpetually preserve the house. It is attached to the deed. The Landmarks Preservation Council will hold the easement and follow up with future owners. There is an initial cost for the paperwork but there can be a property tax benefit in subsequent years.

Hinsdale developed its preservation ordinance five years ago. They had support from the Mayor. The development process had three stages: (1) A survey to inventory structures and locate historically significant ones. In Hinsdale people said, “there’s nothing left,” but in fact the survey revealed 300 houses and buildings with historic value. (2) Public education, including publicizing the survey results and holding neighborhood meetings. (3) A task force representing many points of view was appointed to develop an ordinance over 12 months. Some members were initially skeptical about preservation but came around in the end.

The Village of Hinsdale enacted the ordinance and formed a historic preservation commission. The village led the way by landmarking three of its own buildings. Since then another 15 owners have voluntarily landmarked their own houses. This has a tax advantage. Landmarking provides protection, tax freeze and binding design review for additions. Landmarking doesn’t prevent you from adding on to the house if you need more space and amenities.

The most recent town meeting in Hinsdale indicated the public is still supportive. The main issues now are tree conservation and stormwater runoff.

Audience discussion included suggestions to require disclosure of demolition by buyer; demolition permit only be issued after plans for new construction are submitted and approved. Focus on imminent danger areas, i.e., Maple Avenue, Prince Pond, Sears Homes. Prioritize battles in order of preference – tree preservation, lot splits, etc.

G. Goodman then led a general discussion of options for how to preserve the Lyman house. G. Goodman proposed a joint “task force” of the Pierce Downer Heritage Alliance, Downers Grove Watch, and the Downers Grove Historical Society, and anyone interested in working on this issue. A sign-up sheet was circulated for task force volunteers. There is some support for historic preservation on the Village Council, the community needs to show its interest to help that support grow. PDHA and DGW will discuss starting a petition drive. DGW will have a booth at the upcoming Heritage Fest.

Meeting adjourned 9:50 p.m.

Mark Your Calendar:

Village Council: Meets every Tuesday at Village Hall: 6:30 p.m.

Park District: meets first (Lincoln Center) and third (Village Hall) Thursday: 7 p.m.

Websites of Interest: www.pdha.org www.greenfund.com
www.environmentaldefense.org www.ilenviro.org
www.earthshare.org www.PRESERVEtheDCFPD@aol.com
www.downersgrovewatch.org www.preservationoffourforests.org

Community Dialogue: Village of Downers Grove is sponsoring a public forum on residential redevelopment at Downers Grove South High School on **Saturday, September 18, 2004** (8 a.m.-12 p.m.). Please try to attend! Limit: 200 – randomly selected. Reserve a spot by calling 434-2255.

With Sympathy: Heartfelt condolences to Kathleen Panek with the recent death of her stepfather, Dennis

Next Meeting Wednesday, September 15, 2004- 7:00 p.m. in Lyman Woods Interpretive Center

Community Dialogue: September 18, 2004 – 8 a.m. to noon at DG South Cafeteria

PDHA Highland Ave Clean-up: 10/16 (8:30 a.m. – or whenever you can make it)

Natural Areas Lyman Work Days: 10/9, 10/30, 11/13 (9- 11:30 a.m.)

Natural Areas Belmont Prairie Work Days: 9/18, 10/2 (9 – 11:30 a.m.)

Respectfully Submitted: Laurel Q. Bowen

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ATTENDANCE

NAME	ADDRESS	TOWN	PHONE	EMAIL
ASPASIA COLIAS	1106 MISTWOOD LN	DOWNERS GROVE	968.2502	
BILL WALDACK	1409 WILLARD PL	DOWNERS GROVE	969.9192	WWALDACK@COMCAST.NET
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PETE HULTMAN	5300 WALNUT	DOWNERS GROVE	852.3979	
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RITA MARTIN	4942 MONTGOMERY	DOWNERS GROVE	969.2939	
NORAH BLACKALLER	5501 MAIN ST	DOWNERS GROVE	963.4263	NW.BLACKALLER@ATT.NET
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BRENT & KAREN HYLAND	445 MONTROSE	ELMHURST 60126	312.315.3565	BRENT.HYLAND@YAHOO.COM
KATHLEEN PANEK	1874 BALDWIN WAY	BURR RIDGE	660.8936	
ELAINE & BOB PAGELS	4717 MAIN ST	DOWNERS GROVE	541.5896	ELAINEPAGELS@AOL.COM
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