

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance
28 July 2011
Lincoln Center Room 202

Draft of Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Call to Order: 7:10 p.m. by Chair Ken Lerner

Members Present: Jane Amorosi, Wallace Brown, James Cavallo, Gordon Goodman (arrived late), Ken Lerner, Chris Saricks, John Schofield, and Mark Thoman

Members Absent: Sonja Tiegs Ebel, Ihor Hlohowskyj, Veatrice Jehangir, David Schultz, and Charley Smart

Guest: Teri Kulat, local attorney with environmental law and design interest, especially with respect to proposed District 99 Downers Grove HS North parking and athletic field enhancements (note: Ms. Kulat joined the Alliance as a member)

Quorum satisfied : **Yes**

2. Review and Approval of Minutes of 3/24/11 Meeting

John Schofield moved and Wallace Brown seconded that the minutes of the meeting of 24 March 2011 be approved as submitted. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

3. Treasurer's Report (presented by Chair K.Lerner)

Activity since the beginning of the fiscal year (1/1/11), has included 16 donations, 13 rail barrel sales (@ \$80, \$20 net to PDHA), two membership dues payments, a legal services fee, one sponsored rain barrel repayment (to Family Shelter Service, who decorated the barrel in a PDHA theme), printing and postage charges for the spring newsletter, and payment to retail vendors @ \$60 (11 x Kin-ko Ace, 2 x Wannamakers) for 13 rail barrels. Account balance (assets) as of 6/25/11 was \$3,174.95, of which \$1958.83 is cash (checking account) and \$1,216.12 is the Community Bank certificate of deposit value (matures 3/30/12). Approved future expenditures (commitments) total \$1,000, for Little Sprouts cost share grant and honoraria. In summary, the PDHA financial position is very sound.

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

Prior to commencing the active agenda, John Schofield led a brief discussion describing to our visitor (T. Kulat) the roles played by the major environmental-advocacy NGOs based in Downers Grove. While there is some overlap, the missions of each organization clearly define the respective principal focus of each, nor does there appear to be any notable conflict among them at this time.

4. Current Activities

a. Highway cleanup

The next highway cleanup date is August 20. Chair Lerner reminded the Board that a single waiver filed with the village covers 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. Rain barrel distribution

Although the rain barrel sale and distribution program in the village went well this year (about 300 total sales—surprising in light of last year’s overwhelming response, which was expected to have saturated the market), there has been some negative public response to the perceived durability of this year’s barrel design: more capacity, but also apparently more flimsy. **Mark Thoman will write a letter to the village addressing this concern about the quality of this year’s barrels, but also emphasizing that PDHA is interested in seeing momentum sustained in this direction through, if nothing else, publicity about the barrels’ availability.** It may be that, if the market is now indeed saturated, the barrel sales could “take a year off,” then resume in earnest in 2013.

c. “Biggest Carbon Loser” contest results, DG UMC

Dave Schultz was not present to provide a wrap-up report on this contest.

d. Joint meeting with DGCMR and “Mayor Apparent” Tully

John Schofield gave a very positive impression of this meeting, held just prior to the spring election. In his perception, Martin Tully (now Mayor Tully) is in favor of promoting a stronger, more pro-active historic preservation ordinance, but he will have many obstacles to overcome with the current Village Council, of whom a majority currently favor unbridled individual property rights, and will not likely budge from a strictly voluntary (advisory) preservation position for owners of historic properties. Schofield advises that when the other major issues now confronting the Council are approaching some measure of resolution (i.e., in the mid to late fall), the historic preservation ordinance should be revisited with them.

e. Website update

K. Lerner and J. Schofield reported that the PDHA web site currently experiences about 1,000 hits per month. Although usage statistics that we are now getting are pretty reliable, they do not include origin IPN (i.e., who is linking to us). There appears to be consensus in the group that if we want more organizational visibility, we need more and possibly more attention-getting content. More pictures were suggested as one possibility (shots of Lyman Woods, Little Sprouts, DG historic properties), and also more articles about local preservation/conservation efforts. We are aware that at least one nationally ranging organization (based at Bucknell University) is interested in partnering with us for Internet content.

5. Ongoing Activities

M. Thoman reported on the progress of floodplain and stream bank stabilization in the St Joseph’s Creek channel; a lot has been accomplished but more remains to be done, especially with respect to acquisition of vacant, regularly flooded properties and structures that have impeded normal stream flow. Mark suggested that this could be a topic for consideration by the Environmental Concerns Commission. He also announced that the rain garden support grant targeted for the 39th St. fire station has not yet materialized.

J. Schofield observed that the present village administration has shown strong leadership in the area of sound environmental practice when planning and installing new and reconfigured public works, and that perhaps PDHA should recognize this with an achievement award recognizing the environmental scope of Village planning and programming. It is expected that this will be discussed more concretely at the next PDHA Board meeting.

M. Thoman is not optimistic that much substantive content from TCD3 (at least with respect to environmental stewardship and historic preservation) will go forward. Because the Village must

have a land use plan of record, the fallback will be the 1965 Comprehensive Plan, which of course falls well short of current needs and priorities and no longer has legal weight.

There appears to be agreement on the Board that, for the time being, the Council can continue to “work under the table” to hash out the final plan particulars, but that we will still want to speak on behalf of TCD3 at Council and Planning Commission meetings at which the topic will be raised (the next such Council meeting is scheduled August 16).

6. New Business

Jane Amorosi observed that there is very little publicity being made available to the public with respect to the particulars of the stormwater utility plan and proposal—especially with respect to cost. There is no information about the specific problem areas for flooding, nor about the scale and cost of the recommended infrastructure. John Schofield stated that the library kept copies of all relevant documentation on files, and that Jane could request her own photocopy there at no charge.

Teri Kulat noted that the parking and athletic field enhancement at Downers North High would be sacrificing six existing structures (homes), and that District 99 has apparently prepared no inventory of the total number of trees to be taken down. It seems imperative that preservation of the local tree canopy demands replacement of sacrificed trees on very nearly a one-to-one basis.

To move toward achieving that objective, the Board drafted a resolution to be presented to District 99, the Park District, and Village Council recognizing the primacy of retaining tree cover in conjunction with the High School development. The resolution was introduced jointly by several members and drafted by Secretary C. Saricks, and reads as follows:

Pierce Downer Heritage Alliance is resolved that the number of trees sacrificed in the redevelopment of the District 99 North High campus should be minimized, and an equivalent number of replacement trees be provided to restore a comparable tree canopy in the North High neighborhood.

The resolution passed unanimously.

7. Next Meeting and Adjournment

There being no additional items introduced, the date for the next meeting was set as 7 p.m., Thursday, 15 September in Lincoln Center. Chair Lerner declared the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Saricks, Secretary