

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE**  
**REPORT FOR THE VILLAGE COUNCIL WORKSHOP**  
**JANUARY 13, 2009 AGENDA**

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
2009 Community Grants Program	Resolution Ordinance ✓ Motion Discussion Only	Judy Buttny Director of Finance

**SYNOPSIS**

A motion is requested authorizing approval of the award of the following grants as recommended by the Community Grants Commission:

Name of Organization	Name of Event/Activity for 2009	2009 Requested	2009 Recommended
D.G.H.S. Mustang Band Boosters	Marching Mustang Music Bowl	\$5,000	\$5,000
D.G. Kiwanis Club	Annual Easter Egg Hunt	\$700	\$500
D.G. Concert Association	Concert Series: Artists Showcase West	\$14,000	\$11,000
D.G. Area American Assoc. of Women	Used Book Sale	\$3,275	\$3,000
New World Repertory Theatre	2009 Season: "Betrayal", "Phaedra" and the 2009 Holiday Show	\$10,000	\$6,800
The West Towns Chorus	2009 Concert Series	\$18,025	\$5,000
D.G. Downtown Management	Fine Arts Festival	\$3,500	\$3,000
D.G. Friends of the Library	Storybook Character Celebration	\$500	\$400
D.G. Rotary Club	Halloween Window Painting	\$3,450	\$1,819
Grove Players	2009 Production & Audience Development Campaign	\$8,625	\$8,300
D.G. Area Newcomers Club	Justin Roberts Children's Concert	\$1,500	\$1,400
West Suburban Humane Society	Barkapalooza Walkathon and Pet Expo	\$6,883	\$2,000
Midwest Ballet Theatre	Nutcracker Guest Artists and Costumes Project	\$9,000	\$8,400
D.G. Choral Society	2009 Concert Season & Outreach	\$18,000	\$15,000
Senior Suburban Orchestra	D.G. Programming for 2009	\$11,100	\$5,000
SEASPAR ( NEW)	SEASPAR presents... The Johnny Rogers Band	\$4,700	\$1,400
After Hours Film Society (NEW)	After Hours Film Society Student Short Film and Video Festival	\$2,700	\$1,500
The Downers Grove Arts Council (NEW)	2009 DG Arts Publicity	\$13,400	\$0
Downers Grove Heritage Preservation Corporation (NEW)	1846 Blodgett House on the Move	\$13,000	\$0
Squires of Downers Grove	Bob Nelson Jr. Golf Amateur Tournament	\$700	\$0
<b>TOTALS</b>		\$148,158	\$79,519

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

The Five Year Plan and Goals for 2008-2013 identified *Vibrant Major Commercial Corridors* and the supporting objective of *Attracting Non-Residents to Downers Grove*.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The FY09 General Fund budget included \$79,519 for Community Grants.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approval on the January 20, 2009 consent agenda.

**BACKGROUND**

On December 21, 2004, Village Council passed an ordinance whereby, the amount of funds for the Downers Grove Community Grants Program shall be established on an annual basis through the normal budgeting process and shall equal eight percent (8%) of the Downers Grove Hotel Tax generated in the fiscal year preceding the budget year or \$48,000, which ever is greater. The amount budgeted shall be exclusive of any donations.

The Community Grants Commission develops criteria for use as guidelines in the preparation and review of grant requests. Priority is typically given to projects that include the following criteria:

- Celebrate and contribute to the cultural arts in the community
- Contribute to the positive image of the Village
- Introduce new events or activities to Downers Grove
- Demonstrate sound management practices by their sponsors
- Indicate sources of funding in addition to the Village grant request
- Attract visitors to Downers Grove
- Provide activities open to the public
- Demonstrate the potential to become financially self-sustaining
- Take place in Downers Grove

Grant applications were due October 31<sup>st</sup> for organizations holding events between January 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009. On November 19<sup>th</sup> and November 20<sup>th</sup>, organizations that submitted a grant proposal prior to the October 31<sup>st</sup> grant deadline were invited to meet with the Grants Commission to discuss their application. On December 3, 2008 the Commission met and is recommending the dollar amounts as listed above.

The Community Grants Commission voted to recommend that the Village Council approve the distribution of \$79,519 in grant funds.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Summary of December 3, 2008 Community Grants Commission Meeting  
Spreadsheet of Grant funding history

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
COMMUNITY GRANTS COMMISSION  
DECEMBER 3, 2008 MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Geoff Neustadt called the Community Grants Commission meeting to order in the Village Hall Committee Room at 6:32 p.m.

Members in attendance: Geoff Neustadt, Dave Humphreys, Pat Winter, Kathy Nybo, Renata Allelujka, Dimis Wyman, Melissa Nuttall, Emma Buckley student member, Susan Brassfield.

Absent: None

**II. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

There were none.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF COMMUNITY GRANTS COMMISSION  
MEETING JULY 7, 2008**

Ms. Winter moved to approve the minutes of the July 7, 2008 meeting, seconded by Ms. Nybo. All in favor. The Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

The Community Grants Commission met on November 19 and November 20, 2008, in Village Hall, to hear 19 applicants' presentations of funding requests. At these meetings, an opportunity was available for questions from the Commission to clarify any information provided by the applicant. Commissioner Neustadt noted that the Village Council and Community Events Commission had reviewed the Commission Ordinance and Mission Statement during the summer, and modifications were approved by the Council based on those reviews. The changes as approved were reviewed, noting that the key words in the revision are "cultural, artistic and other community-oriented events." It is important that the Commission remember that its task is not to consider how much is requested, but how much is merited. It was suggested that the groups funded develop a way to survey participants/attendees of their events in an effort to determine its success and impact on the Village.

Commission members noted that some of the grant requests fall within a "gray" area, while others meet the criteria satisfactorily. Given the amount of grant money available, it will be impossible for everyone to receive what they requested. Commissioner Neustadt informed the Commission that a letter has been prepared for distribution to the applicants, inviting them to attend the December 3 public meeting to witness the Commission's deliberation and obtain a clear understanding of the Commission's reasons for recommending/rejecting funding requests. Attendance at the December 3 meeting was not mandatory.

At the December 3 meeting, Commissioner Neustadt welcomed Mellisa Nuttal, who was recently appointed to the Commission. The Commission members then introduced themselves. Commissioner Neustadt said that the meeting would be conducted similar to last year's meeting. The Commission went through the list of organizations and divided them into "Core," "Gray," and "Questionable" applications. He noted that as in the past, there are more requests than funds available. Each application was then prioritized.

Mr. Humphreys commented on the Ordinance under which the Commission operates, and read the pertinent definition of the Commission's duties. He noted that, in his opinion, the key words are "cultural," "artistic," "other," and "events." He understands that many artistic, cultural events and organizations can never be self-supporting, and need government and private grants to maintain their existence. It is not the mission of the Community Grants Commission to support athletic, recreational, or social service organizations and activities; however, if they present an artistic or cultural event, it can be supported even as a fund raising event. Mr. Humphreys pointed out that the promotion of tourism is not a primary goal of the Commission; however, it can be a consideration or tiebreaker if the event meets higher priorities, in his opinion. He said as funds have become tighter and more artistic/cultural groups have applied the Commission has reduced or eliminated funding for groups in the "gray" area, which has been supported by the Village Council. He said he believes that, given the unstable economic environment, the Commission should focus on the core purposes of the program and less on the gray areas.

Commissioner Neustadt then asked members to disclose any affiliations they may have in the organizations under consideration for grant recommendations. He said that the Village's Legal Department has assured him that it is appropriate for the Commission to vote as a group on the recommendations, as long as no one has a financial commitment to these organizations. The members disclosed having membership or past affiliations in the following organizations: AAUW, Downers Grove Rotary Club, Friends of the Library, DGS Mustang Band Boosters, and DG Choral Society. The Commission then discussed the individual applications to prioritize them into one of three categories: Core, Gray, and Not Recommended.

Commissioner Neustadt said it was his preference to go through the requests of the Core Groups, and then look at the monetary figures. He described the equation he used, which was to not award more than \$10,000 to any one group. Mr. Humphreys said that he looked at what was awarded last year as his starting point. Commissioner Neustadt noted that two of the organizations are requesting \$18,000, which is \$3,000 above the actual spending ability of the Village Manager. Anything above \$15,000 would be separate and above a regular grant award. He doesn't think anything above \$15,000 is appropriate to grant. Mr. Humphreys agreed that with the current economic environment it is unrealistic to consider anything above \$15,000. Commissioner Neustadt added that they still have to remember that the Hotel Sales Tax may begin to dwindle, which could eventually lead to them setting a cap award amount.

**Grove Players**proposed award **\$8,300**

The applicant is entering its 73<sup>rd</sup> season of offering live theater productions in the Village. The request is for a grant to assist promoting the organization through advertising, improved programs and flyers, and with rental space for rehearsals and equipment. Changes in promotional materials have been made to present a more professional image, and they believe they have reaped the benefit of those changes. All of their productions bring theatergoers from surrounding areas into the downtown area. Their subscription base has increased 47% over last year, which they perceive as related to the new promotional materials. Their performances are held in Lincoln Center.

**Downers Grove Concert Association**proposed award **\$11,000**

The applicant presents five classical music concerts a year, usually at North High School. Their season runs from September to June, and they have held two concerts already, which were well received. They received a grant last year from the National Endowment for the Arts in the amount of \$10,000 for the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra, which elevated the budget figures. Advertising by WFMT is often free when artists are played on the air. The applicant purchases print ads from WFMT as well. Artists who perform usually stay in a local hotel if they are not from the Chicago area.

**Downers Grove Area Newcomers Club –  
Justin Roberts Childrens Concert**proposed award **\$1,400**

The applicant has been in Downers Grove for more than 40 years, and they exist for all women in the community and surrounding areas to come together socially and develop civic-minded and philanthropic activities. They plan to present the Justin Roberts Childrens' Concert at the Tivoli Theater on February 21, 2009 for the second year. Justin Roberts is a renowned childrens' musician with a large Midwest following. The concert was held in the winter last year with an attendance of 615 people. This year they hope to increase the attendance by increasing marketing to surrounding municipalities. A portion of the net proceeds will benefit the autism program of Little Friends from DuPage County. Rental fees have increased 50% over last year, with less corporate sponsorship available. They will encourage local businesses to provide coupons in the program booklet for attendees.

**The West Towns Chorus**proposed award **\$5,000**

The applicant request is for assistance to subsidize their three Christmas shows performed at the Tivoli Theatre. The show attracts people from out-of-town, and incorporates other local musical groups. Membership includes Village residents as well as people from surrounding communities. They would like to have a fourth show, depending upon availability of the venue. The show is videotaped and shown on the local cable network. Their program booklet contains advertising of local businesses and they are open to including coupons. The profit from the Christmas shows supports the program for the entire year, including rental costs, director's salaries, coaching, etc. Outside talent for the Christmas show is an additional expense. Their mission is to promote a cappella singing, particularly for men.



**Downers Grove Downtown Management Corp.**      proposed award      **\$3,000**

The applicant is seeking grant funds for the Fine Arts Festival held every year, for many years. They are receiving inquiries from potential exhibitors as much as a year in advance. The 2008 Fine Arts Festival was virtually rained out, with a small group of artists exhibiting their work. The applicant intends to maintain the Festival as a Fine Arts event, and not a craft event. The applicant prepares newsletters, advertises in major newspapers, and obtains funds for awards presentations from local businesses. Many of the artists who attend and exhibit are from outside the local area and they are encouraged to stay in local hotels at special rates. Hotel information will be included in information sent with the initial application forms. Attendees are encouraged to shop in the downtown stores and restaurants.

**Senior Suburban Orchestra**      proposed award      **\$5,000**

The applicant is seeking assistance with funding to promote their organization of senior musicians who perform at residential retirement facilities as well as at local schools. This is a volunteer organization with no tickets sales. Their costs are covered by grants and in-kind donations. This is the tenth year for the organization. Activities include performances at nursing and retirement homes, and the group has conducted sight-reading sessions at Fairview Village for high school music students. The applicant also provides intergenerational musical experiences between the Seniors and elementary school students. The major expense for the applicant is providing a salary for a paid professional conductor, and grant funding will assist in meeting this expense.

**South High School Mustang Band Boosters**      proposed award      **\$5,000**

The applicant requests assistance in meeting the costs of the Marching Mustang Music Bowl, a marching band competition with twenty bands competing last year. Groups attending and participating in the Music Bowl come from across the State and bring additional business to local restaurants. This year there were middle school participants performing. The event attracts high caliber judges and is recognized as an important competition. Funds from the grant would help defray the cost of the program booklet, which is high quality and contains biographical information on the participants. Proceeds from the Music Bowl have been used to purchase instruments for the school bands. The applicant is unsure that they can depend upon program ads and sponsorship to pay all of the expenses generated by the event.

**SEASPAR**      proposed award      **\$1,400**

The applicant has been in existence for thirty-two years and provides recreational programs for disabled individuals. An increase in the number of autistic individuals has increased the need for programming, additional staffing and resources. The applicant is seeking assistance in underwriting the costs of some of the programs, specifically a fund raising concert with Johnny Rogers as the guest performer. Mr. Rogers is in great demand and his performances have been well received. The concert is scheduled for April 29, 2009 at the Tivoli Theatre. A dinner option is planned as well. The applicant is seeking funding to support its cultural arts programs and its fund raising concert. Advertising brochures and fliers will be distributed to the surrounding communities'

schools, libraries, sheltered workshops, etc. They will look into what funding opportunities may be available in other communities they serve as well.

**After Hours Film Fest** proposed award **\$1,500**

The applicant's group meets twice monthly at the Tivoli Theater to present foreign and art films to an audience averaging 450 people per showing. They are seeking funding for a Student Film Festival to encourage interest among student filmmakers, and they receive between 80 and 90 submissions. The Festival is judged and the winning films shown at the Tivoli Theater. Funds have been raised using merchandise contributed by local businesses to be auctioned for prize money. Contributors have decreased over the past year. They intend to advertise to 150 area schools and film publications.

**D. G. Friends of the Library** proposed award **\$400**

The applicant seeks funding to assist in sponsoring a children's party in lieu of the Annual Storybook Character Parade. The party would be held in the spring to coincide with Children's Book Week and National Library Week. They intend to have a themed children's party at the Library to encourage reading and to draw people to the Library. They have had participants attend from outside the Downers Grove community.

**Downers Grove Rotary Club** proposed award **\$1,819**

The applicant is seeking funds to help sponsor the annual Halloween Window Painting event. They have approximately 800 children participating in the event that began in 1966. They also provide an opportunity for families to contribute food items that are given to FISH. The applicant advertises both its event as well as the Pancake Breakfast held on the same day. Grant funds will go toward the purchase of supplies, printing, and window cleaning after the event.

**AAUW** proposed award **\$3,000**

The applicant seeks assistance with storage costs, book transport and table rental for its 51<sup>st</sup> Used Book Sale. Income from dealer night has decreased due to the economy and use of hand-held computers by purchasers to determine book value. The applicant is trying to target the local community. They have a not-for-profit source to take the remaining books after the annual book sale. Storage costs have increased slightly each year. The applicant is seeking ways to attract more people to the sales. They advertise in local papers, and do a mailing to previous clients.

**New World Repertory Theater** proposed award **\$6,800**

The applicant requests assistance for marketing and publicity for their new year-long marketing campaign. They present three shows per year, as well as classes and summer camp for children. They have Internet and radio marketing, with limited print advertising. They have discussed a coupon exchange with local restaurants, and intend to have pre-show welcoming receptions for new residents, and residents of the new downtown condos. The applicant's objective is to provide audiences with a recreation, cultural and artistic resource to inspire community participation. The applicant is



negotiating for some type of signage/banners at the performance venue to increase public awareness.

Three grants submitted were viewed as not meeting the criteria of the Community Grants program. A total of \$79,519 was distributed among the remaining grant requests.

Commissioner Neustadt thanked the Commission for their work in reviewing the grant requests. He asked for a formal Motion recommending the distribution of grant funds as discussed by the Commission.

**Ms. Nybo moved to recommend that the Village Council approve the distribution of grant funds as recommended by the Commission. Ms. Winter seconded the Motion.**

**Unanimous voice vote. The Motion carried.**

## **5. OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Humphreys suggested that a meeting be scheduled after the first of the year to review the materials given to applicants and discuss grant criteria.

Commissioner Neustadt reminded the Commission that the amounts discussed are merely a recommendation to the Village Council and are dependent upon Council approval. He noted to the Commission members that they will be invited to participate in TCD III, which will take place in 2009. He said there may also be another Boards and Commissions training meeting. They will be notified as to the time and location. Sue Brassfield will contact members to set a date for a meeting after the first of the year.

## **ADJOURN**

Mr. Humphreys moved, seconded by Ms. Nuttall to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Neustadt adjourned the meeting at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tonie Harrington

**2009 COMMUNITY GRANTS  
PROGRAM**

<b>Name of Organization</b>	<b>Name of Event/Activity for 2009</b>	<b>2007 Council Approved</b>	<b>2008 Council Approved</b>	<b>2009 Request</b>	<b>2009 Recommended</b>
Grove Players	2009 Production & Audience Development Campaign	\$6,000	\$7,920	\$8,625	<b>\$8,300</b>
Downers Grove Concert Association	Concert Series: Artists Showcase West	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$14,000	<b>\$11,000</b>
Downers Grove Area Newcomers Club	Justin Roberts Children's Concert		\$1,500	\$1,500	<b>\$1,400</b>
The West Towns Chorus	2009 Concert Series	\$3,811	\$6,230	\$18,025	<b>\$5,000</b>
The Downers Grove Arts Council (NEW)	2009 DG Arts Publicity			\$13,400	<b>\$0</b>
West Suburban Humane Society	Barkapalooza Walkathon and Pet Expo	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$6,883	<b>\$2,000</b>
D.G. Kiwanis Club	Annual Easter Egg Hunt	\$600	\$700	\$700	<b>\$500</b>
D.G. Choral Society	2009 Concert Season & Outreach	\$12,000	\$15,000	\$18,000	<b>\$15,000</b>
Squires of Downers Grove	Bob Nelson Jr. Golf Amateur Tournament	\$400	Didn't apply	\$700	<b>\$0</b>
Midwest Ballet Theatre	Nutcracker Guest Artists and Costumes Project	\$4,400	\$7,000	\$9,000	<b>\$8,400</b>
Downers Grove Downtown Management	Fine Arts Festival	\$3,000	Didn't apply	\$3,500	<b>\$3,000</b>
Senior Suburban Orchestra	Downers Grove Programming for 2009	\$3,140	\$5,000	\$5,500	<b>\$5,000</b>
D.G.H.S. Mustang Band Boosters	Marching Mustang Music Bowl	\$5,000	\$6,500	\$5,000	<b>\$5,000</b>
SEASPAR (NEW)	SEASPAR presents ...The Johnny Rogers Band			\$4,700	<b>\$1,400</b>
After Hours Film Society (NEW)	After Hours Film Society Student Short Film and Video Festival			\$2,700	<b>\$1,500</b>
D.G. Friends of the Library	Storybook Character Celebration	\$500	\$500	\$500	<b>\$400</b>
D.G. Rotary Club	Halloween Window Painting	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$3,450	<b>\$1,819</b>
D.G. Area American Assoc. of Women	Used Book Sale	\$2,000	\$3,350	\$3,275	<b>\$3,000</b>
New World Repertory Theater	2009 Season: "Betrayal", "Phaedra" and the 2009 Holiday Show	\$5,500	\$6,000	\$10,000	<b>\$6,800</b>
Downers Grove Heritage Preservation Corporation (NEW)	1846 Blodgett House on the Move			\$13,000	<b>\$0</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$62,351</b>	<b>\$75,700</b>	<b>\$142,458</b>	<b>\$79,519</b>