

APPROVED 08/05/15

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
VILLAGE HALL - COMMITTEE ROOM
801 BURLINGTON AVENUE

JUNE 17, 2015, 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Matthies called the June 17, 2015 meeting of the Architectural Design Review Board to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked for a roll call:

PRESENT: Chairman Matthies, Members Mrs. Acks, Mr. Davenport, Ms. Englander, Mr. Larson, Mr. Riemer

ABSENT: Mr. Casey

STAFF: Village Planner Chrisse and Planning Intern Pietrzak

VISITORS: Mr. Scott Lazar, 808 Maple Avenue, Downers Grove

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

Chairman Matthies believed the board left the last meeting with many good ideas and he was looking to hear some additional thoughts.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 20, 2015

THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 20, 2015 MEETING WERE APPROVED ON MOTION BY MR. DAVENPORT, SECONDED BY MR. RIEMER. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Work Plan

i. Draft Work Plan – Priorities – Planner Kelley Chrisse summarized that she and Planner Ainsworth discussed some of the common ideas that came from the last meeting which resulted in three main activities: 1) identify; 2) inform; and 3) preserve. She asked each member to identify and write down five long-term priorities. Once completed, the board grouped them under each respective activity. Staff will compile all previous discussions and these priorities to draft a work plan, which will be presented for review at the next meeting.

Ms. Chrisse reviewed the various priorities under each of the three activities in more detail, noting that informing the public appears to be the top priority, followed by active preservation and finally identifying additional historical resources. Due to the ADRB lacking a budget, the chairman believed it was probably best to move forward with the website. (As an aside, the chairman asked staff about an upcoming meeting date when council would be discussing preservation and believed the board should be available for that date. Ms. Chrisse would follow up and email the members that August date.)

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ii. Website – Ms. Chrissy announced that the Village has an historic preservation webpage -- <http://www.downers.us/govt/historic-preservation/>. The information that was on the Community Development webpage was moved to the historic preservation page. She noted that it was only one page but the board could link to other pages and documents. She asked the board if they had ideas on what else they wanted to incorporate on this page. Members provided their input: include a summary of the landmarking process (with flowchart); include more graphics and maps (staff will create separate maps, honorary designations and any other designations that the ADRB feels important) and link to them; use the top of the web page as a highlight section (as described by Chrissy) and rotate the information. A suggestion was made to include sites that are linked to the founders of the village, perhaps conducting additional research and updating the survey form associated with the property.

Mr. Davenport commented that having to access the Historic Preservation page by going to the Government pages link is not intuitive and believed it would be better to have the page linked directly on the homepage. Ms. Chrissy explained the challenges of having a direct link to the Historic Preservation page on the village's homepage. However, given the recent events about Maple Avenue, the chairman believed it was important to have a direct link on the homepage and stated that if the village believed preservation was important then it needed to "market" it; Davenport concurred and stated there was enough space to provide the link on the homepage. As another suggestion, once the web page was fine-tuned, the village could post a top story or other advertising, for a period of time, to direct traffic to the historic preservation page. Ms. Chrissy summarized her meeting with village communications director, Doug Koslowski, regarding the free options available for publicizing historic preservation topics: the web site, the village's quarterly newsletter, the weekly Village Corner, e-News stories, and YouTube videos.

Ms. Chrissy explained that the historic web page already links to the ADRB webpage. The ADRB page, however, is a separate webpage that is modeled off of the other village boards and commissions for consistency purposes. She reminded members that the ADRB has the opportunity to use other web pages and direct residents back to the historic preservation page. One member recommended that the two web pages (ADRB and historic preservation) be tied together with a history summary behind the ADRB, wherein Ms. Chrissy pointed out where the historical information was located on the page. Another suggestion was to have a featured home on the web page.

Discussion then moved toward the ADRB featuring a historic home every quarter and using some of the homes from the Historical Society's walking tour, as a starting point. Another idea suggested was to come up with a historic home recognition program to attract residents and to place their homes on the web site, possibly using a board member's home to showcase first.

Ms. Chrissy proceeded to ask the board for their input on what other content they wanted on the historic preservation page. Suggestions included: posting questions on the site, such as how does one designate a historic landmark, adding bullet points as to why a resident should landmark their home, and how does a historic district get created, along with an explanation of the process and an explanation as to what happens after the designation (FAQs). Another suggestion was to interview someone who has gone through the landmarking process, possibly even having the board members ask at least one person they know who has a historic home.

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Regarding the web site, another suggestion was to include links to the county's records, the library, and the historic society in order to keep residents interested in preservation. Other ideas included having trolley tours, having the high school students create short videos on historic homes in the village (Davenport offered to follow-up on the video idea) and putting a link on the web page.

Staff then turned the discussion to partnering with other agencies within the village and inviting them to a meeting where the board may be talking about the various activities they want to complete and see if they can provide some resources for the activities. Engaging businesses, schools, and park areas were cited as examples.

Resident Scott Lazar, 808 Maple Avenue, added that the board should think about the "frequency" of its marketing and envision real estate sites from a marketing perspective. Rather than discussing topics or events quarterly, make them more frequent and announce any enhancements to the page. In general, he recommended using the search button and to ensure that all search terms are optimized as well as common misspellings. He also suggested adding a link to the State of Illinois' tax incentive program. For better clarity and visibility up-front, he recommended adding the flowchart/timeline for the nomination process.

Next steps were discussed by Ms. Chrissy who would present a draft work plan based on ADRB direction and priorities. Given that the village council has been discussing its long-range plan recently, she foresees that discussion continuing and suggested that members pay attention to those discussions if they want an opportunity to add to the topic before something gets set into policy. Staff was asked to notify the ADRB a head of time if something of interest was being discussed with regard to the village's meetings.

A board member then mentioned that the prior village council discussed the historic preservation ordinance and the common theme at that time appeared to be: 1) designation incentives, 2) not by force and 3) residents voluntarily opting out of a historic district. Mr. Davenport also added that landmarking a historical home was a tool for an owner who was concerned about the next buyer and what would be done to the home after it was sold. Davenport stated the tool ensures that the home is not going to be compromised or devalued and it helps in the decision-making process. He shared a couple of examples, including the Tivoli.

Per a question on whether the council was looking to revise the preservation ordinance, Ms. Chrissy indicated that this was not currently under discussion, but it may likely come up as part of the village's long-range plan.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Chrissy stated a Certificate of Appropriateness will be coming before the ADRB shortly where the board will be holding a public hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Scott Lazar, 808 Maple Avenue, commended the board for its discussions. However, he suggested the board focus on three areas: 1) the impact of these activities on the people in the houses being discussed; 2) creating incentives available to the residents to designate, i.e., recognize them, provide matching grants, if possible, provide upgrades to parkways, landscapes,

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etc; and 3) encourage designation of individual properties and not necessarily creating a district (encompassing a large area). Examples followed. Mr. Lazar's only concern about using outside partners was that he did not feel the Pierce Downer Heritage Alliance was helpful to the process on Maple Avenue and the group appeared to be working as a political action committee. Examples followed. He asked the board to consider the appropriateness of using organizations with an obvious political agenda as part of this board's outreach.

ADJOURNMENT

MR. DAVENPORT MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MS. ENGLANDER, SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:49 P.M. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 6-0.

/s/ Celeste K. Weilandt
Celeste K. Weilandt
(As transcribed by MP-3 audio)