Hometown TIMES

"Downers Grove Preserves the Balance Between Tradition and Progress"

Issue IV
2016

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A Wonderful Year for Historic Preservation

Mary Bailey loved the old Granville House in Bedford Falls, the fictional setting of the 1946 film, "It's a Wonderful Life." She saw charm and beauty in the architecture and dreamed of one day restoring that "drafty old barn" into a home to raise her family.

In Downers Grove, there are many who feel as passionate as Mary Bailey about preserving their historic home. In late 2015, the Village introduced a new Historic Preservation Ordinance which made it easier than ever to landmark a property. The success of the program can be measured by the nine properties that have been landmarked this year.

- Ehr House: Built 1924, 5320 Benton Ave.
- Melchor Gjerde House: Circa 1891, 1232 Gilbert Ave.
- Herring House: Built 1895, 701 Maple Ave.
- Alexander & Nancy Foster House: Circa 1883, 5226 Carpenter St.
- Main Street Train Station: Built 1911, 1000 Burlington Ave.
- Foote House: Built 1892, 1130 Franklin St.
- Krueger House: Circa 1896, 4502 Prince St.
- Captain J.J. Cole House: Built 1856, 710 Maple Ave.
- Venard House: Built 1914, 4540 Highland Ave.

Foote House: 1130 Franklin

Main Street Train Station

Preserving your property as a historic landmark is simple and there's no cost.

For more information, call the Village at 630.434.5515 or visit the Historic Preservation page on our website at **www.downers.us** for information on all 11 historic landmarks, maps, resources and FAQs.

Let us help you landmark your historic home today.

Village of DOWNERS GROVE FOUNDED IN 1832

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Hello, Downers Grove!

Mayor Martin T. Tully

In keeping with the historic preservation theme of our cover story, I wanted to share with you the opportunity I had to preside at a dedication ceremony. A segment of Forest Avenue was named "Honorary Foote Avenue" after one of the founding families of the Village of Downers Grove. This event was in keeping with our commitment to educate, elevate and celebrate historic people, places, and things in our community.

Emerson Foote, along with E.H. Prince and Fannie Linscott, formed E.H. Prince and Company, the real estate development firm that platted Downers Grove's first subdivision in 1887. The E.H. Prince Subdivision encompassed 225 acres just north of what is now Main Street and the railroad tracks. In her book, *Downers Grove Revisited*, local historian Montrew Dunham tells how advertisements for the new subdivision refer to Downers Grove as "the handsomest suburb of Chicago with no codfish aristocracy, criminals, toughs, or saloons."

As part of the festivities, we were paid a visit by Scott Foote, the grandson of Emerson and Corinne Foote, who built a nearby home that was recently landmarked in the Village. Being joined by Scott, his wife Ginger, and other descendants of the Foote family made for a very special occasion. A very special thanks to Cindy Zaeske for her indispensable passion and assistance in making this possible. You'll find the Honorary Foote Avenue sign at the corner of Franklin Street and Forest Avenue, once known as Foote Street.

I also want to thank the Friends of the Edwards House for organizing the wonderful historic home walking tour on November 14. Congratulations on a very successful event. It was a gorgeous day to visit and learn more about some of the very special, historic, and landmarked homes that we are fortunate to have as part of our cultural fabric here in Downers Grove. Many thanks as well, to the homeowners who opened up their very handsome residences to be admired and appreciated by the community.

It is truly gratifying to see the many ways in which our community embraces historic preservation. You may recall that in December of 2015 the Village Council adopted a new Historic Preservation Ordinance, making it easier than ever before for people to preserve their property as a historic landmark. As has been the case with so many positive changes, the new ordinance was the result of extensive community participation at both the Architectural Design Review Board (ADRB) / Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Historic Preservation meetings and Village Council meetings.

A simplified application process, elimination of application fees, and updated information on how to preserve historic properties have resulted in a marked increase in landmarked properties. Proving yet again that Downers Grove cares greatly about preserving the balance between tradition and progress.

Speaking of traditions, I had the distinct pleasure to once again participate in the Tree Lighting Ceremony at the Main Street Station. Special thanks to Downtown Management Corporation, Avery Coonley School, Marching Mustangs, Downers Grove Choral Society, the Mendez Family, and Santa himself for a wonderful start to the holiday season.

Best regards,

Mayor Martin T. Tully

At the Tree Lighting with students from Avery Coonley School

Fiscal Year 2017 Adopted Budget

On Tuesday, November 22, 2016, the Village Council adopted the FY17 Budget. The Budget was prepared during a time of extended financial uncertainty at the State level and reflects the challenges associated with maintaining service levels while expenses are increasing faster than revenues. Like all municipalities, Downers Grove faces ongoing uncertainty due to the State budget impasse, which threatens several Village revenues, including the state-shared income tax and motor fuel tax funding.

Key issues addressed in the Adopted FY17 Budget include:

- **Balanced General Fund with Recommended Fund Balance**. The General Fund is financially sound with revenues and expenses balanced at $46.9 million. The General Fund balance will continue to be maintained at the recommended level of 40% of annual expenses, an amount consistent with Standard & Poor's guidelines to maintain the Village's AAA bond rating.
- **No Increase in the Property Tax Levy for Operations.** For the sixth year in a row, the adopted budget does not increase the property tax levy for operations.
- **Property Tax Levy Increase for Required Contributions to Public Safety Pensions.** The adopted budget includes a $491,400 increase in the levy for police and fire pensions, a 9.0% increase in this portion of the levy. The Village's required funding level for pensions is set by state statute.
- **Transition to DU-COMM.** In 2016, the Village became a member of DuPage Public Safety Communications or DU-COMM. Beginning in May 2017, DU-COMM will provide emergency dispatching operations for the Village. The adopted budget reflects the transition to DU-COMM with a net cost for all dispatching services of about $1,585,000. This includes $1.9 million in expenses and $315,000 in reimbursement revenue from the DuPage Emergency Telephone Safety Board (ETSB). The budget reflects the elimination of 16 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions effective once DU-COMM begins providing services.
- **Continued Investment in Infrastructure.** The Village will continue to make major improvements in the Village's infrastructure, including $6.8 million in streets, $3.8 million in stormwater and $5.7 million for water. The improvements are designed to reduce the total life cycle cost of owning and operating the infrastructure systems.

Complete details on the FY17 Budget are available at **www.downers.us**.

Permeable Sidewalk Trial

In early November, five squares of permeable concrete sidewalk were installed at 4702 Florence. Permeable concrete is a special type of concrete that allows water to pass directly through, reducing runoff.

These sidewalk squares were donated to the Village by Spancrete, who also assisted with the installation. Village staff will monitor the performance and longevity of the material before recommending additional use of this product.

Winter Driving Tips

Winter conditions call for different driving tactics. **Ice and snow, take it slow:** Slower speed, slower acceleration, slower steering, and slower braking.

- Slow down for wet, snowy, or icy conditions; when visibility is poor; or when conditions are changing or unpredictable.
- **Increase the car length between vehicles in front of you and give yourself plenty of room to stop. S**topping on snow and ice requires extra time and distance. Even if you drive an SUV with four-wheel drive, you may not be able to stop any faster, or maintain control any better, once you lose traction. Four-wheel drive may get you going faster, but it won't help you stop any sooner. If you have anti-lock brakes, press the pedal down firmly and hold it. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, gently pump the pedal. Brake early, brake correctly, and never slam on the brakes.
- Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges, or shady spots. These are all candidates for developing black ice, a thin coating of clear ice that can form on the pavement surface and may be difficult to see.
- When driving in adverse road conditions, look farther ahead in traffic than you normally do. Actions by other vehicles will alert you to problems more quickly, and give you that split-second of extra time to react safely.
- Merge slowly into traffic, since sudden movements can cause your vehicle to slide.
- Avoid excessive actions while steering, braking or accelerating to lessen the chances of losing control of the vehicle.
- Don't take chances when pulling out in front of approaching vehicles. Remember, they may not be able to slow down and you may not be able to accelerate as quickly as on dry pavement.
- Remember to accelerate gradually.
- Avoid using cruise control in winter driving conditions. You need to be in control of when your vehicle accelerates based on road conditions - don't let the cruise control make a bad decision for you.

Safe Travel Around Snowplows

- **Don't crowd the plow**. Snowplows plow far and wide, sometimes VERY wide. The front plow extends several feet in front of the truck and may cross the centerline and shoulders during plowing operations.
- **Don't tailgate or stop too close behind snowplows.** Snowplows are usually spreading de-icing materials from the back of the truck and may need to stop or take evasive action to avoid stranded vehicles. If you find yourself behind a snowplow, stay behind it or use caution when passing. The road behind a snowplow will be safer to drive on.
- On multiple lane roads, watch for snowplows operating in either lane.
- Don't travel beside a plow for long periods. When plowing through a snowdrift or packed snow, the impact can move the truck sideways.
- Snowplows can throw up a cloud of snow that can reduce your visibility to zero in less time than you can react. Drive smart. Never drive into a snow cloud - it could conceal a snow plow.
- Snowplows travel much slower than the posted speed limits while removing snow and ice from the roads. When you spot a plow, allow plenty of time to slow down.
- A snowplow operator's field of vision is restricted. You may see them but they may not see you.
- Plows turn and exit the road frequently. Give them plenty of room.

More preparedness information can be found at **www.ready.illinois.gov.**

Village Receives Award for Financial Reporting Excellence

The Village has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

"The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management," according to a GFOA news release.

This award is issued following a review by an impartial panel of judges and recognizes the Village's "spirit of full disclosure" in the telling of its financial story. The professional manner in which the CAFR is organized and presented were cited as motivating factors which encourage potential users to read the document.

The CAFR provides a detailed, audited account of all financial activity for the funds and departments in the Village organization. It is published within six months from the close of each fiscal year.

Stormwater Costs Will Continue to be Funded by Fee

At their November 15, 2016, meeting, the Village Council directed staff to prepare an estimated tax levy that does not include funding for stormwater improvements from property taxes. This is consistent with the direction provided by the results of the Stormwater Utility Referendum, which appeared on the November 8, 2016, General Election ballot.

PROPOSITION RESULTS
(from DuPage County Election Commission)

Question #1: *Shall the Village of Downers Grove continue to fund all stormwater costs using a stormwater utility fee instead of property taxes?*

- Yes 16294 65.01%
- No 8768 34.99%

Question #2: *Shall the Village of Downers Grove fund all stormwater costs using property tax?*

- Yes 7535 30.29%
- No 17345 69.71%

Question #3: *Shall the Village of Downers Grove fund stormwater costs using a combination of stormwater utility fees and property taxes?*

- Yes 7376 29.72%
- No 17446 70.28%

Preserving Downers Grove History

The Melchor Gjerde home at 1232 Gilbert Avenue is a two-story Victorian house, likely constructed in 1891. The home was designated a local landmark due to its distinguishing architectural characteristics in a Folk Victorian style.

The Folk Victorian style of homes do not have towers, bay windows, or elaborate moldings. Instead, they are orderly and symmetrical. The important features of these homes are the brackets under the eaves; porches with spindlework or flat, jigsaw cut trim; the low-pitched, pyramid shaped roof; a front gable; and side wings. They were popular between 1870 and 1910. The Gjerde home displays many of these features including a symmetrical façade with a two-story front and gabled roof, a front porch with cornice brackets and turned spindle posts, and a transom window under the porch.

The Gjerde home is located on property that once belonged to Norman Gilbert, one of the early deacons of the Downers Grove First Baptist Church. According to a document from the Downers Grove Historical Society, the Gilbert estate "…had some of the finest and most eligibly located property in the village…(it) was the original picnic grounds in Downers Grove, and abounds in numerous springs of living water."

Rachel and Melchor Gjerde were Norwegian immigrants who purchased the Gilbert land in 1891 for $600. The home has had a handful of owners since its construction and has undergone numerous renovations. In 2003, the current owners consulted "Doctor Color" of San Francisco to select a new color palette for the exterior based on the stained glass squares above the front window. Students of art restoration from Poland added accents in gold leaf.

If you are interested in landmarking your home, please contact the Community Development Department at 630.434.5515.

Keep the Wreaths Red

Wreaths with red bulbs will be displayed at each of the Village's fire stations through January 1.

If a holiday related fire occurs during this time, one of the red lights in each station's wreath will be changed to white.

The Downers Grove Fire Department asks that residents do their part to practice fire safety during the holiday months with the following tips:

Around the Home

- Make sure you have a working smoke and carbon monoxide alarm on each level of the home, especially outside the sleeping areas.
- Electrical cords should not be run under rugs or past doorways.
- Use power strips in place of extension cords.
- Never leave candles unattended. If you are having a party, candles should only be lit in the attended rooms.
- Fireplaces should be cleaned annually, if used on a regular basis. Do not burn any foreign objects in fireplaces. A fireplace screen should always be in use.

Trees and Lights

- Do not allow trees to block any exit paths in the home.
- Live trees should be kept at least three feet from any heat source.
- Check the water level daily on live trees. All live trees and boughs should be disposed of immediately after the holiday, before they dry out.
- No more than three strings of lights should be connected together for use on trees.
- Make sure outdoor decorations and lights are approved for outdoor use.

Beware of Scams

The Downers Grove Police Department would like our residents to be aware of several scams that continue to target our citizens.

Loved One in Trouble Scam The victim in this scam is frequently a senior citizen. The caller will impersonate a loved one of the victim, or a person in a position of authority such as police, medical professional or an attorney. The caller claims the victim's loved one is in desperate need of money to get out of jail or some other type of trouble. The scammer will convince their victim that they need money quickly, and the victim complies in order to help their loved one.

Lottery/Sweepstakes Prize Scam The victim receives an e-mail or a phone call claiming that they've won a sweepstakes or lottery prize. In order to claim this prize, they must pay the taxes or a handling fee by wiring a sum of money. The "catch" is always that the victim needs to send money to claim their prize.

IRS Scam The victim receives a phone call from someone identifying themselves as an IRS agent. They claim that the victim owes back taxes, and there has been an arrest warrant issued. The victim is provided with specific instructions on how to pay the tax bill (i.e. phone cards, gift cards, cash, etc.).

Tips to Remember

- **NEVER** send money to anyone on the telephone claiming there is an urgent emergency. ALWAYS check it out first by calling the police department at any time, 24 hours a day, who will determine if the call is a scam.
- Limit your exposure to these scams by being cautious about who has your personal information. Any time you register for sweepstakes, including prizes such as cars, vacation, or cash, your information can be sold to scam artists who will contact you claiming that you have won.
- Remember, you should not have to pay any fees or taxes to claim a prize – EVER.
- **Always feel free to contact the police department if you have any questions about a phone call or e-mail that you receive instructing you to wire money.**

Preparing Your Child to Be Home Alone

Many parents struggle with whether they should allow their child to stay home alone. The following guidelines can provide assistance that will keep children safe when they are home alone.

Develop a safety plan. Go over the rules with your child, so they know what to do in a variety of situations. Can they use the microwave? Can they have a friend over? Have a list of phone numbers of people your child can call if you cannot be reached and put the list near the phone. Is there a neighbor that your child can call or go to for help? Is there a retired person that you trust that will be home when you're at work? Remember, your child will NEVER be in trouble for calling 9-1-1; and you won't be in trouble either so 9-1-1 is always part of your child's safety plan!

Understand how burglars operate. Unfortunately, even though DG is a safe community, we do have residential burglaries; knowing how a typical burglar operates will help you prepare your child to be home alone safely. Burglars usually break into homes when no one is there, during the day when everyone is at work and school. The burglar will come to the door and knock or ring the bell to make sure no one is home. If no one comes to the door, the burglar will walk around your house and look in the windows to be sure there is no one there. Then, they force entry or, if the door is open, they walk right in!

Lock the house. If your child comes home to an empty house after school, the house must be locked. If a burglar broke into the house while you've been away, there will be obvious clues such as damage to the front or back entrance door or a window is broken. If your child sees this type damage, they should not go into the house because the burglar could still be there. While burglars are not usually violent criminals, if your child interrupts a burglary in progress it puts them in real danger. Teach your child to go to the safe neighbor's house to call 9-1-1 **first** and then you.

Your child should have a house key. If your child is old enough to be home alone, they are old enough to have a house key. Do not put a name or address on the house key. Don't leave a spare house key in the mailbox, hidden under a doormat, or in a fake rock. Burglars know all the hiding places. If they find the key and use it to open the door, your child will not have any clue that your house has been broken into when they come home – they'll walk right into trouble. Instead, have a back-up key at a trusted neighbor's house.

Discuss what your child should do if someone comes to the door and make this part of your child's "home alone" plan. Who can they open the door for – grandma, neighbor?? Be sure they always peek to see who is at the door before opening it. Make sure your child knows they should have lots of noise coming from the house so a burglar will know someone is home. If someone they don't know is on your property, be sure they know it's OK to call the police. Please make sure they don't waste time trying to call you – they should call 9-1-1.

Be sure your child is not afraid to call 9-1-1 – Officers are always near your home. Your child should try to stay calm so they can tell the dispatcher what's wrong. They should stay on the phone until the dispatcher tells them to hang up. They will never be in trouble for calling 9-1-1.

For more information on preparing your child to be home alone, visit **www.downers.us** and search "Safety and Crime Prevention."

REMINDERS AND OTHER NEWS

Holiday Garbage Collection
Monday, December 26, 2016, and Monday, January 2, 2017, are holidays for Republic Services. Collection will be one day later than normal during both of those weeks.

Holiday Closings
Most Village offices will be closed on December 23 and 26, 2016, and on January 2, 2017.

Coat Drive
Through January 13, 2017, the Village will be collecting gently used coats and winter accessories for all ages. Drop boxes are located in the lobbies of Village Hall, 801 Burlington Avenue, the Police Station, 825 Burlington Avenue, and Public Works, 5101 Walnut Avenue.

Curbside Christmas Tree Collectioin
Free collection of live Christmas trees, only, will be offered by Republic Services from **January 3-13, 2017**. Trees must be free of tinsel, ornaments and hooks and should not be placed in bags.

Holiday Light Recycling
Recycle unwanted or broken holiday lights instead of throwing them away. Residents may drop off lights at Public Works, 5101 Walnut Avenue or Village Hall, 801 Burlington Avenue, during business hours through **February 10, 2017**.

Make a Date on the Village Calendar
The Village is accepting event information from DuPage County non-profit organizations to be posted on the Events Calendar on the Village website.

Questions and event information may be forwarded to **events@downers.us.**

Do You Really Know What to Do in Case of Fire?

The Downers Grove Fire Department has responded to several calls during the past year where the actions of the family made a difference in their survival.

First, make sure all smoke alarms are working. Be sure they are installed on every level of your home and in each sleeping area.

Remember these key actions should you have a fire:

- Get LOW under the smoke
- Close as many doors as possible on the way out.
- Have emergency contact and insurance information accessible or in another location as a back-up.
- Never go back in the structure for anything. Firefighters will assist with looking for your belongings.
- Wait for the fire department in the front of the house. Their first concern will be that everyone made it out safely. Have a family meeting place.

www.downers.us
801 Burlington Avenue
Downers Grove, IL 60515

COUNCIL MEETINGS 1st, 2nd & 3rd Tues.-7:00 p.m.

Mayor	Martin T. Tully
Village Council Commissioners	Robert T. Barnett
	Greg Hosé
	William "Bill" White
	William Waldack
	Margaret "Marge" Earl
	Nicole Walus
Village Manager	David Fieldman

mayorcouncil@downers.us

Village Hall	630.434.5500
Fire, Medical or Police Emergency	9-1-1
Community Response Center	630.434-CALL (2255)

Village Hall Hours
Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Published by the Village of Downers Grove

Pluggie's Pals Fire Hydrant Program for Kids!

If this winter is anything like predicted, our fire hydrants are going to be buried by snow!

Firefighters need immediate access to the hydrants to be able to get plenty of water on a fire quickly. It takes firefighters extra minutes to shovel the hydrants out of the snow and chip ice away from the ports. During this time the fire continues to grow at a very significant rate.

Your child can help the firefighters by taking care of the hydrant near your home. Scout troops can handle an entire block or the hydrant in front of their school.

Sign up for the Pluggie's Pals Program on the Village website, **www.downers.us**; search for "Pluggie's Pals."

Questions may be directed to the Downers Grove Fire Department's Administrative Secretary, Gina Barr at **gbarr@downers.us.**