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**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2017 MEETING**

Chairman Davenport called the September 20, 2017 meeting of the Architectural Design Review Board to order at 7:01 PM and requested a roll call:

**PRESENT:** Ms. Acks, Ms. Chalberg, Mr. Riemer, Ch. Davenport

**ABSENT:** Ms. Hollweck, Mr. Larson, Mr. Lerner

**STAFF:** Sr.Planner Rebecca Leitschuh

**VISITORS:** Charlotte & Byron Holtzen, 5226 Carpenter St.; Amy Gassen, 5320 Benton Ave.; Rich Kulovany, FOEH, 6825 Camden Rd.

**APPROVAL OF AUGUST 16, 2017 MINUTES**

**Ms. Chalberg moved, seconded by Ms. Acks, to accept the minutes of the August 16, 2017 meeting as presented.**

**All in favor. The Motion passed unanimously.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Historic Preservation Brochure #4- Downtown Tour**

Chairman Davenport commented that this was a good document and he was caught up in the reading.

Senior Planner said there are a total of four brochures including Architectural Styles, Sears Catalog Homes tour, Downtown Tour.

Ms. Leitschuh said that the language for the brochure was a collaborative effort with the Historical Society volunteers attempting to get the history down on paper. The acknowledgement page will contain more information on the Society's involvement, and explaining how this was a joint brochure. About 90% of the photographs are from the Historical Society's archives, which will be referenced in the brochure as well. Much of the language comes from Heritage Sites descriptive information. She said there was no defined scope of focus when this brochure was first envisioned. Once they began working with the Museum and volunteers, much more information was found on existing buildings, as well as predecessor buildings in the downtown area. It was suggested to focus on architectural references, but they learned a lot about existing buildings, such as Emmett's, which was greatly embellished over the years.

Chairman Davenport said the question that was raised regarding Emmett's building is what to call it, since its history is very mixed.

Ms. Leitschuh also noted that they have to determine what they want to call the  
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brochure, and whether it specifies architecture, Downers Grove tours, etc.

Ms. Chalberg said that they have a lot of information on architecture. She doesn't think it is just architecture without history. She described a trip she recently took in Wyoming and old museums there. The walking tour she took included numbered vacant lots with photographs of buildings that existed at one time, and the descriptive data was based on address, including multiple addresses and business names at that location.

Ch. Davenport said when he applies for permits for projects he wants to call the project by his client's name; however, in terms of Village records the permit is recorded by the address.

Ms. Chalberg said Emmett's is a great example of a location that has had numerous businesses and architectural designs over the years. That building would be recorded by the address with narrative explaining all the history and businesses over the years.

Ms. Leitschuh said she is content with using the addresses, and providing additional information in the brochure.

Ms. Chalberg said in the Wyoming tour most of the properties used the address, with detailed explanations where necessary.

Ch. Davenport said he thought they should use the address, and when there is a clear identifier it should be listed with the address.

Ms. Acks said she thought the clear identifier could be what the building was originally known as, and that the building may still be known for.

Ms. Leitschuh said this is why she is bringing this to the Board because there are so many ways the properties can be shown and described.

Ms. Chalberg said there might be varying opinions from people who were born and raised her and may disagree with the description. She thinks if they start to name everything according to a specific generation, it can become complicated.

Ch. Davenport suggested leaving it at Rebecca's discretion, and they can look at the locations that are questionable later for further identification. He thinks each one of the locations will need to have something at the site to correspond with the brochure and to make it work. They would have to be sure that the owner approves of the information that is provided, and they will have to find some funding to provide for the corresponding identification on the properties. The identifier on the site is extremely important for someone who may not have a copy of the brochure for the walking tour.

Ms. Chalberg said the walking tour she mentioned was probably a bit more elaborate, but she thinks they will need to have at least a correlating number so people in town can identify the location as part of a walking tour.

It was also noted that not every property owner may want to have some type of plaque or identifier on their building.

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Ms. Leitschuh then asked about the title. She is concerned that if they refer to it as a walking tour of important building in the downtown, there might be people upset because they have an important building that is not included.

Ch. Davenport agreed with that point because this is not going to be a static document. He noted that this Board was in complete agreement that education is a major goal of what they were doing. This is a most effective way to increase the interest in landmarking and historic interest. If people are upset that they were not included, then the goal at educating has been accomplished.

Ms. Chalberg said she understands that Staff is always faced with deadlines. If this were to be sent to the Downtown Management Board she is sure they would find or recommend additional sites that could be included. She asked whether this brochure has been designated for a certain size, and Ms. Leitschuh said it is already several pages beyond what was initially scoped for the project. They were trying to find buildings that looked like they would fit the research conducted. A big part of the preparation included meeting with the Staff at the Historical Society and have them help curate some of the properties to incorporate. She said she hoped to have this to the designer for final editing within a week. The brochure before the Board does not have current photographs of the building. They have had a photographer take updated photos. Reporting to the State for the grant is what is driving the deadline.

Ms. Chalberg said that from a title standpoint, there are certainly some buildings that would be wonderful to add to the brochure. It could be called Historic Downers Grove Walking Tour.

Ch. Davenport suggested The 2017 Downtown Downers Grove Historic Walking Tour, which fits with the present brochure.

Ms. Chalberg said that the Founders and Merchants Bank is undergoing another renovation. Ms. Leitschuh said that is important, since the building is already vastly different than what it was originally.

Ch. Davenport asked whether there was still time to get the Bank information into the brochure, and Ms. Leitschuh said she would have to remove something else from the brochure. Ch. Davenport asked if it would be Emmett's, and there was also discussion about the property formerly known as DG National Bank or the Paragon Purvis Theater. There was also another building known as the Weiher theater building, which was never actually a theater.

Ms. Acks said the Henry Carpenter house is a house, although it was a post office. Ms. Chalberg said if it is to be a historic tour they can remove a Tudor style building out of it.

Ms. Leitschuh suggested the Board look at the Table of Contents to get a better idea of how the brochure will be laid out. She said it would only be 24 pages in length. Ch. Davenport asked if any buildings have two pages devoted to them, and she replied the Tivoli Theater and the Main Street Train Station had two pages each. Ch. Davenport suggested condensing one of those down to one page so another item could be included. Mr. Larson said he thinks that would work. Ms. Leitschuh said she could also

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combine Bank Financial and the Main Street Cemetery into one page. She said she tried to include the First United Methodist Church in the brochure, but didn't want to have to choose one church over another.

Ms. Chalberg said that for right now, considering they may add more at a later time, they can consider it a work in progress. Ch. Davenport disagreed, saying there should be some identifier from the beginning that doesn't have to be too expensive. Future updates may not even be done in printed form, but could be done electronically.

Ms. Chalberg said that a lot is included in the brochure that other walking tours would not have. Ms. Leitschuh said her next step would be to determine the descriptions and whether they should be in sentence-structure or bulleted points. She plans to condense what they presently have, send it to the Board members for their comments and final changes, and then make final changes.

Ms. Acks asked whether there would be more information available on line as well as in the brochure. Ms. Leitschuh said it would be on line as well. Their intern Nora commented that they should have a walking tour app. Ms. Chalberg said that there would be a cemetery app launched by the end of the year. She said she thought they might be able to use that platform for other things as well.

Ch. Davenport asked that the Board members contact Rebecca with any additional comments or corrections that should be made before it goes in for final publication.

### **Revising the ADRB Ad Hoc Report and Recommendations to Council**

Ms. Leitschuh said the map that was in the Board's packet showed demolitions for twelve months ending in August of 2017. In the past year 63 single-family homes were demolished, averaging 5.25 homes per month.

Ch. Davenport said his first question was whether this is a typical year, and Ms. Leitschuh said it is fairly typical for the past two years. The Chairman said the Village is losing a lot, although some of those demolished should have been. He said this is a trend that is going on and will continue as long as the property values make it profitable.

Ch. Davenport then looked at the information provided by Ken Lerner, which will be shared with the Board. In summary, his suggestion referred to Commissioner Barnett's comments to the Council about what an incentive program might look like. It included research done about Plainfield, Urbana, Blue Island, Bloomington and what other communities have been doing and researched. Ch. Davenport said that there were some companies charging a lot for demolitions. The money collected right now goes into the General Fund. He asked the justification for charging a demolition fee to begin with, and how they arrive at that amount.

Ms. Leitschuh replied that in 2012 the Community Development Department did an analysis of the permit fees and compared them to fees in the general Chicago area to determine whether the Village was in line with other communities. For the most part they found that the Village met the industry norm. Ch. Davenport said as a result of that study, building permit fees were increased substantially. He said he thought the amount being charged for demolition is based on what others are charging. Part of his thought

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process was rather than looking at raising the fees, the Village should be getting a chunk of the fees that exist. They should be able to say what those dollars will be used for. In the demolition there is a cost to the community. He loves some of the incentive ideas that have been suggested, such as markers for the building tour, or publication of the brochures that are items that will need to be updated and ongoing. He thinks that the group should make a strong argument as to 1) why this group should be a line item in the budget with funds allocated for their activities, and 2) the Board should provide helpful suggestions as to how the Village might help fund those activities.

Ms. Chalberg commented that it might be helpful for the Board to agree on a list of ten things that they would be using the money for as the ADRB. She asked if the goal for the money is to increase the volume of landmarked properties, or to educate the public as to the value of historic architecture.

The goal should be established.

Ch. Davenport replied that those things are the goals of the Board. He said that the Village, in its creation of the ADRB and the Ad Hoc Committee decided there was a need for greater awareness in the Village. By causing a study of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, they rewrote the Ordinance with the goal of streamlining the process and simplifying the procedure. He sees one of the goals of the Village to increase awareness so that more things would be preserved. The Board has previously discussed the importance of education in achieving those goals. That is why the brochures are being produced, and why Friends of the Edwards House and other groups have invested time to increase awareness. It has to be an ongoing thing. In the past there were times when the ADRB didn't even meet, and he does not want to see that happen again because too much work has been achieved.

One way to perpetuate the goals is to determine what the Board can do with the funds. He thinks they need to put a proposal to the Council with a budget and how those funds will be spent over the year. He thinks demolition fees would fall within their purview to get their goals accomplished. He would love to see them expand their surveys, and study other areas in town that can be addressed by the incentive program suggested.

Ms. Chalberg asked what behavior they are referencing with incentives. Ch. Davenport replied it would be landmarking and creation of districts. That was the goal of rewriting the ordinance. They are against forcing people to do these things. They want instead to educate people by providing incentives to landmark their properties. Ms. Chalberg said that when she thinks of the word incentive it has a dollar-sign in front of it, and she doesn't think that is where they are headed. They haven't had to pay anyone to landmark their homes so far. Ch. Davenport responded that they are not sharing the definition of the word "incentive." There are other ways to incentivize people such as through recognition for participation, recognizing rehabbing of a building, publicizing a project, etc. It doesn't mean only handouts. He wants to see them doing things that have cost money and he wants to continue doing that.

Ms. Chalberg said that it appears to be more of a promotion program. She has no objection to using the word "incentive" as long as it's well defined. Ch. Davenport said he appreciates her perspective, and her reaction to the use of the word "incentive" as other people might have that same reaction. Ms.

Chalberg said the goals have to be set clearly, and groups organized to define the goals.

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Ms. Acks said that she has a list of exiting goals from 2015. They include: identify and preserve architecturally significant buildings, neighborhoods and sites throughout the Village; develop public outreach and education for historic preservation; become a CLG, maintain our certification; provide grants to local business owners to undertake historically significant rehabilitation on existing downtown buildings; other goals in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan to preserve and enhance distinguishing features of residential neighborhoods. They established these things in 2015 and have completed some of these goals. She reviewed the minutes from 2015 as well, as much of what they are talking about are in those minutes.

Ms. Chalberg said when she hears that list she sees a dedicated Staff person who has a full-time job. Ch. Davenport said that they would probably have to add another person. Ms. Chalberg said some of the things in that list are formalized, structured, staff-oriented program development.

Mr. Riemer said the goal was to make it easier to landmark, and reduce the cost and the restrictions. That's been accomplished. He thinks if they want to continue in that direction they would need more resources to take the next step.

Ms. Chalberg said she doesn't think they would have had the level of participation of landmarking without the Friends of Edwards House and other organizations that wanted promotion of landmarking. She asked how they can make this happen since they have to have a workable budget.

Ch. Davenport said that the question appears to be what is the focus of the group, and whether these are things the ADRB should be doing or not. They have seriously had these discussions before, and at one point they were really just a reactionary group. That has changed over the last few years. A decision was made that the Board needed to be more than just reactionary, and he sees that as the result of the Edwards House being torn down, and people seeing what happens when the Village is not proactive in certain areas. There is a limit as to how much outreach they can do, but it certainly is within their range to educate, offer incentives to accomplish goals, etc. There are costs associated with all of these goals, and funds to support them have to be presented. He would like to see a line item in the budget, and if a fee is waived the dollars will come out of that budget. If they don't have dollars associated with the things they hope to achieve, those things won't get done.

Ms. Chalberg said she agrees totally, but they have a chicken-and-the-egg situation. It's hard to say, "give us the money" because the Council is going to want them to be very specific. Ch. Davenport said they can be specific because they've already created things that have cost money in terms of the brochures, research, etc.

Ms. Acks said that it appears they are saying they want demolition fees to go to the ADRB. As to how it will be spent it could include updated brochures, perhaps best research work done for scholarship money to high school students, or award programs for best rehabilitation projects, etc. She asked if they should prepare a list of things that could be considered for the use of the funds.

Ms. Leitschuh suggested that prior to the next meeting the Board members think of it as

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"what is the problem they are trying to solve?" With all boards there is a parameter established with certain responsibilities, expectations and rules under which they can operate. Within those rules, what is the problem that the Board members think they are trying to fix? Landmarks at this point in time are considered to be successful, as they have had 17 applicants. Is there a need to financially incentivize that? She thinks they have to identify the problem.

Ch. Davenport said he wants to see them continue to be able to do what they are doing. Ms. Acks asked if that is the Board's responsibility or the responsibility of other historic organizations within the community. She wants to know where the line is drawn.

Ms. Chalberg said she feels as though they want to act like an independent contributor that has been chartered to get these goals accomplished. If they are asked to promote a program, she sees them having to go back to Staff for that. They all know what they would like to see done. Some organizations have staff people dedicated to preservation, education, etc., and they are budgeted for those things with job descriptions. Right now the Board has a great deal of enthusiasm and energy occurring, but they are a government Commission. She wants to know if it is their job to do the work or to direct it.

Mr. Riemer suggested that before the next meeting they obtain information from Staff as to the costs involved in completing some of the goals. They would report to the Council what has been done and what the Council wants them to do moving forward. They can then inform the Council what they would need financially to complete some of the projects such as the brochures, etc.

Ch. Davenport said he liked that idea, as did Ms. Acks and Ms. Chalberg.

Ms. Chalberg asked what happens if Council likes everything that's been done, and will they have more direction for the Board.

Ch. Davenport said he would like to see a situation created by which if the Board were to stop what they are now doing, that the Council would have a thoughtful purposeful discussion about it, rather than having the Board just disappear.

Ms. Chalberg asked if they could open this up for discussion because there are people present who have been instrumental in getting the last 14 landmarks approved. Ch. Davenport suggested they continue the conversation to the next meeting, as there are three members absent from this discussion.

Mr. Riemer asked that Staff provide the Board with costs for the items completed to this point.

Ch. Davenport asked that the notes Ms. Acks read earlier be distributed to the Board members before the next meeting. Ms. Acks said it was from notes from the June 17, 2015 agenda.

Ms. Chalberg said it would be great at some point to have an historic timeline that identifies the changes that were made, what triggered them, and where they are headed at this time.

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## **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Leitschuh said two landmark petitions will come to the Board in October. She said there are three different levels of COA's (Certificates of Appropriateness). The first is so minor it does not require a COA. The second is "minor" which the Community Development Director may approve. She said the Ordinance says you can substitute like-for-like under this category, such as windows, siding, etc. Based on inquiries made of Staff, she anticipates receiving some of these requests for minor amendments. Nothing has come in as yet.

Ch. Davenport said they have had some conversation about what is happening at the Drew House. He thinks it is appropriate to review these changes if they are minor, without affecting the historic value of the structure.

Ms. Leitschuh said that Staff has been purposely conservative. The COA coming in October reflects what was originally there, but the type of change is not defined as a "minor COA" therefore Staff forwarded it to the Board to review.

Ms. Acks said that even if they receive minor requests, it would be good for Staff to make a report on them so it is recorded. It is part of the process.

Ms. Chalberg said she spoke to someone in Geneva who said they have COA's coming through all the time.

Ms. Leitschuh said there would be an October meeting with three requests coming in. The hope is that December will be an open month. Landmark applicants tend to be fairly flexible.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

1. Charlotte Holtzen of 5226 Carpenter Street said she was in Lexington last month where they have an awesome historic area. These are done by the name of the building, with the address as well. She would go with the address and the name of the building. The name could be for the first person there, or the most prominent person there. She then asked why the Board doesn't ask for volunteers in the community who would be willing to come and do some of the work involved. She does a lot of genealogy with many States in the east working with volunteers. She said that at a panel discussion last week they discussed the economic affect historic districts have for a community. The Lexington area has seen a huge economic boost from the historic districts. She then questioned what the definition of "thematic district" was, and how homes would be landmarked.

Ms. Leitschuh said an example of thematic could be the Sears' Homes.

Ms. Holtzen asked if homes under a thematic district fall under the same restrictions/regulations as other landmarked homes. These are questions that arise and they want to know how they should be answered.

Ms. Leitschuh explained that every homeowner in a thematic district must agree. To be

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in a contiguous landmarked district you have to have at least 51% of the homeowners agree. The protections are the same.

Ch. Davenport said if they had a group of several properties landmarked that wanted to be a "district" he would think they would move it from individual landmarking to a thematic district. That would essentially still be making individual landmarks, and every property would be a landmarked member of the thematic district.

Ms. Leitschuh said the main concern is that there is a defining element in creating a thematic district.

Ch. Davenport said that establishing a thematic district needs to be strong.

2. Amy Gassen of 5320 Benton Avenue thanked Staff and everyone who has worked to put the brochures together. She agreed that using the name with the address would be useful as well. Ms. Gassen commented on the demolition map saying it seemed that there were not as many in the E.H. Prince area as there were in Lester. She suggested that more surveys would be great to fund because they need to be working on education and awareness among homeowners. She made a list including surveys, plaques, thematic districts, rehab credit for exterior work, building permit fee waivers, and award programs. She thinks they should be partnering with other preservation organizations to determine other fundraising efforts.

Ms. Gassen said with regard to COA's that the Ad Hoc Subcommittee felt if work being done did not require a building permit a COA was not necessary. There is one coming in October of her in-laws' home where they are removing something that was not original. The important thing is to specify that something not original to the home should not need special approval to be removed from the home. As for thematic districts, she said this would allow homes not eligible for landmarking to be protected. There might be homes that fit in both the 4-square district or the Sears home district. One place she is aware of with thematic districts is Elgin and their bungalow district. It was an extensive project of education awareness. They have about 2,000 bungalows in Elgin.

Ms. Leitschuh said in a geographic contiguous district you can have significant, contributing and non-contributing structures. Ms. Gassen then read the definition of a thematic district as specified in the Ordinance. She said once a thematic district has been established, others could join.

3. Rich Kulovany of 6825 Camden Road said Friends of Edwards House is conducting their "Landmarking Your Historic Property" event on September 26 and there are about six seats left. He said that several members canvassed about 240 homes and selected the remaining 41 that were significant. In addition, they added a Sears House to the canvas. One unique thing was having the eye of Staff in looking to determine whether there was too much change to a home to qualify as a historic building. They wonder whether the bar will get lower as to the number of properties that can be landmarked. He thinks funds for surveys would be beneficial.

Mr. Kulovany said he has Ken Lerner's memo, Commissioner Barnett's recommendation in 2015, and he noted that Mayor Tully said he supports impact fees.

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As to the amount of the fees, he doesn't know what the number would be and would ask Staff to find that out. He noted that the question many homeowners ask is "why should I landmark my home," or "what's in it for me?" Local incentives could be beneficial to homeowners. He also said he liked the sound of "building permit waiver fees." Mr. Kulovany mentioned that they went to Plainfield last year, and they have a good grant program. He suggested reaching out to that program.

Ms. Leitschuh mentioned the people at the Historical Society who put in so much time discussing the history of the area, what to include, scanning of photographs, etc. She expressed her gratitude to them for the hours of work they dedicated to the program, and noted that there will be a page crediting them for the work they've volunteered to the program. She also noted that Friends of the Edwards House have sent Staff photographs of properties for consideration based on their surveys. It is important to preserve the value and integrity of those properties that have already been landmarked.

Ms. Acks said that if a landmarked land is sold, how do they know about the COA's etc. Ms. Leitschuh said they learn that from performing a standard title search at the County. The sellers often also list their property as a landmarked property. Also, the landmarked properties appear on the official zoning map. She referenced the cost of the plaques at \$250, and the concern is that if an owner moves they would take the plaque with them. There is nothing they can do about that. It's important that realtors are also educated as to landmarked properties.

There being no further discussion, Ch. Davenport called for a motion to adjourn.

**Mr. Riemer moved, seconded by Ms. Acks to adjourn the meeting. The Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Chairman Davenport adjourned the meeting at 9:12 PM.

/s/ Tonie Harrington