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**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 15, 2021, 7:00 P.M.**

Chairwoman Gassen called the December 15, 2021 of the Historic Preservation and Design Review Board to order at 7:01 p.m. and requested a roll call:

**1. ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Chairwoman Gassen, Mr. Styczynski, Mr. Lerner, Mr. Reimer

**ABSENT:** Ms. Chalberg, Mr. Renner

**STAFF:** Jason Zawila, Planning Manager and Flora Ramirez, Senior Planner

**VISITORS:** Petitioners Nancy and Gordon Goodman, 5834 Middaugh Avenue, Downers Grove, Jean Follett, Irene Hogstrom, Mark Bragen, Dieter Gruen, Tim Chen, Robert Sworsky

**2. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

**Motion by Mr. Reimer, second by Mr. Lerner to approve the minutes of the September 29, 2021 meeting. Roll call:**

**AYE: Reimer, Lerner, Gassen**

**NAY: None**

**ABSTAIN: Mr. Styczynski**

**Motion passed.**

**3. PUBLIC HEARING**

**FILE 21-ADR-0003:** A petition seeking a Historic Landmark Designation for the property located at 5834 Middaugh Avenue, Downers Grove, IL (PIN 09-18-212-022). Petitioner and Owner, Nancy and Gordon Goodman.

Chairwoman Gassen swore in those individuals who would be speaking on the petition.

Jason Zawila, Planning Manager, reviewed the petitioner's request for historic landmark designation. A current site plan for the Mid-Century Modern Ranch home was placed on the overhead for review. The home was originally constructed in 1955 (it was later clarified that the construction date should be 1954) and has an addition dating from 2008. The home meets criteria from the village's ordinance, specifically, that the home is over 50 years old and possesses distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, which is the Mid-century Modern Ranch style home. Staff recommended this board make a recommendation to the Village Council regarding the petitioner's request.

Petitioner, Dr. Gordon Goodman, 5834 Middaugh Avenue, reviewed his slide presentation and spoke about discovering much information about the architecture of his home, the history behind the neighborhood, and his email correspondence with Mr. Anthony Rubano, the State of Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Mr. Goodman reviewed the original characteristics of his home, including the Prairie-style vertical brick on the front façade, the large front picture-

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window, the original fireplace with similar brickwork, and the fact that the home was purchased from prior owners, Doris and John Mochel, of Mochel Hardware Store. In 2008, he and his wife added a rear addition (western facade) to the home in order to preserve the original street appearance of the home. He summarized for board members 1) how the home qualified for local landmark designation, 2) staff's analysis of the application, and 3) how former owner, Doris Mochel was responsible for making changes from the drawings to construction. Mr. Goodman noted he did cover the home's 10-inch wood clapboard siding with 10-inch aluminum siding and the paint color may have changed. Other documentation in support of the landmark designation was also shared. Photos of other homes in the neighborhood were reviewed by Mr. Goodman.

Chairwoman Gassen invited discussion from the board members. None followed. She then invited public comment.

Ms. Jean Follett, 629 W. Elm Street, Wheaton, former chairwoman of the Hinsdale Preservation Commission and board member of Landmarks Illinois shared she has worked in preservation for over 40 years. She believed a better job was needed to preserve the Mid-Century Modern structures since they were rapidly disappearing in many suburban areas. She stated the structure was well-documented, had a local builder and almost every home in the area had a local builder, which was very unusual for the time period. She, as well as Landmarks Illinois, supported the landmark nomination.

Mr. Robert Sworsky, 4922 Cornelle Avenue, Downers Grove, due to his job, had seen many of the homes in the village and explained the Mid-Century Modern that was presented was appropriate for the street, its placement on the lot was appropriate, and it was very organic, along with the neighborhood. He appreciated the diversity of housing saying the home portrayed a sense of place.

Ms. Irene Hogstrom, 1232 Gilbert Ave., Co-chair of Friends of the Edwards House, expressed support for the landmarking of the Middaugh ranch home. She appreciated the diverse housing stock in the village and believed the application was a very good example of post-war housing.

Mr. Tim Chen, 1308 59<sup>th</sup> Street, spoke how he previously got to know many of the original owners when he moved into the neighborhood 23 years ago. He stated the character of the neighborhood is determined by the people living in the area and it would be a shame to lose the home to a larger home, citing a large home north of the site. The area was desirable for young families due to three nearby schools.

Mr. Dieter Gruen, 59<sup>th</sup> Street, a resident, strongly supported the landmark status for the Goodmans' home. He explained how the (original) homes of the area have been part of people's lives for many years, and they were a reminder of very happy days.

Ms. Nancy Goodman, applicant, 5834 Middaugh, stated that in order to achieve sustainability, people have to reuse a modest home that is livable instead of wasting resources by replacing it. A smaller home leaves room for nature that helps mitigate carbon in the air, which is leading to global warming.

Chairwoman Gassen invited the petitioner to return to respond to board member questions.

Comments/questions centered around the significant research that was done and a survey dated October 10, 1953 which did not match the house, wherein Mr. Goodman explained that was the change referred to earlier from when the survey was actually done to when the house was changed and sold to the Goodman's in 1965. Chairwoman Gassen extended her

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appreciation to the Goodman's for bringing their proposal forward and for speaking to State preservationists. She asked if the emails from such persons could be preserved by the village or the museum. She further asked where the "prairie-style elements" came from, wherein it was explained that Mr. Rubano brought it to the Goodmans' attention. In closing, Mr. Goodman extended appreciation to the board, neighbors, staff and his wife regarding the proposal.

Chairwoman Gassen closed public comment and opened up the matter to member deliberation.

Chairwoman Gassen further inquired of staff how many other landmarks the village landmarked under Criteria No. 1 [under 12.302.B.], which staff indicated were six structures that used that criteria, as part of their application. Further clarification followed from staff on how previous cases were recommended to the Village Council. It was stated that with previous cases a recommendation was made based on the specific criteria that the board felt was met with each case. It was further clarified by staff, that when the ordinance was updated in 2014, there was a process put in place, for applicants to amend applications if other criteria [under 12.302.B] were met in the future.

Chairwoman Gassen shared how she reviewed applications, personally; and, in looking at Criteria Nos. 1 and 3 [under 12.302.B.], she disagreed with Criteria No. 1 [under 12.302.B.] and preferred to remove it. Mr. Reimer agreed that Criteria No. 1 [under 12.302.B.] did not apply. Mr. Lerner stated that it appears that a majority of applications that come in apply Criteria No. 3 [under 12.302.B.]. Staff clarified that at least 22 applications have used that criteria in addition to others for their respective cases. Other board members pointed out this board wanted to make the preservation process as simple as possible too.

Dialog then followed on the motion's wording. Member comments followed that the "prairie-style" elements should probably not be categorized and not appropriate for the home's style. Another member voiced that Criteria No. 2 [under 12.302.B.] could have been used (and met) by Mr. Goodman because he qualified with his assistance in preserving Lyman Woods, the preservation of the 1846 Blodgett House, and as well as founding the Pierce Downer Heritage Alliance organization. He further serving on the Illinois Environmental Council for DuPage County, the Downers Grove Environmental Concerns Commission and on boards for the Citizens for Advocacy Center in Elmhurst, along with a number of other organizations. Board members also appreciated the Polaroid photograph of the home. Chairwoman Gassen, on behalf of the Historical Society/Museum suggested that Mr. Goodman submit his documentation for the Honorary Historic Home program so that the home's information could be stored in the museum.

Chairwoman Gassen entertained a motion.

**Mr. Reimer made a motion that based on 12.302.A and 12.302.B.3 the HPDRB recommends that the Village Council provide landmark status to the property located at 5834 Middaugh Avenue. Second by Mr. Lerner. Roll call:**

**AYE: Reimer, Lerner, Styczynski, Gassen**

**NAY: None**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**4. OLD BUSINESS - None**

**5. NEW BUSINESS - None**

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## 6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Irene Hogstrom, 1232 Gilbert, announced that Friends of the Edwards House has its 2022 calendar available for sale for \$15.00 at Anderson Book Shop, Maple Home Market and the Downers Grove Downtown Management Corporation. Chairman Gassen's home is depicted for the month of March. Mr. Zawila also announced that Flora Ramirez was recently married and is now Flora Leon and she also has been promoted to Senior Planner and starting in 2022 will serve as the staff liaison for this board. No applications were scheduled for January.

## 7. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Gassen thanked the public for attending the meeting. She extended a Happy Holidays to everyone. She called for a motion to adjourn.

**Mr. Styczynski moved, seconded by Mr. Reimer to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.**

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