

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

FEBRUARY 17, 2016, 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Pro tem Davenport called the February 17, 2016 meeting of the Architectural Design Review Board to order at 7:10 p.m. and asked for a roll call:

PRESENT: Chairman Pro tem Davenport; Mr. Casey, Mrs. Englander, Mr. Riemer

ABSENT: Chairman Matthies, Mrs. Acks, Mr. Larson

STAFF: Senior Planner Rebecca Leitschuh

VISITORS: John Wilbraham, 5313 Benton Ave., Downers Grove; Paul Bertram, 5304 Benton Ave., Downers Grove; Jim and Joan McDermott, 5316 Benton Ave., Downers Grove; Elizabeth Berger, 5305 Washington, Downers Grove; Rich Kulovany for Friends of the Edwards House, 6825 Camden, Downers Grove; Mark Bragen, 1232 Gilbert Ave., Downers Grove; Ken Lerner for Pierce Downer Heritage Alliance, 4933 Whiffen Pl., Downers Grove

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 20, 2016 MINUTES

Staff noted that an address correction needed to be made.

MOTION BY MRS. ENGLANDER, SECONDED BY MR. RIEMER TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 20, 2016 MINUTES, AS AMENDED. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

Ms. Leitschuh announced this application was the first landmark designation application since the ordinance was revised. She stated that two sets of slides were before the commissioners for their review and discussion (one prepared by Staff, and one by the applicant).

A. 16-ADR-0001: A petition seeking a Historic Landmark Designation for the property commonly known as 5320 Benton Avenue, Downers Grove, IL (PIN 09-08-408-034). The property is located on the west side of Benton Avenue, approximately 75 feet north of Summit Street. David and Amy Gassen, Petitioner and Owner. Case file documents, public notices, maps and photographs for this case were reviewed by Ms. Leitschuh. Turning to a slide depicting the four-square home, Ms. Leitschuh called attention to the fact that the board was only to consider the façade they could see from the street right-of-way. Features of the four-square were referenced in greater detail (including deep eaves, central attic dormer, front porch – although only partial, grouped windows, horizontal banding, etc.), as were the two specific Standards for Approval for consideration: Section 12.302.A (whether the structure is

over 50 years of age) and whether the structure meets one or more of the seven (7) criteria for landmark designation. In this case, staff stated it met criteria #3 (representative of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style). Staff recommended approval of the landmark designation.

Applicants, David and Amy Gassen, were present. Ms. Gassen thanked staff for their assistance in the landmark application process and briefly walked through her own background on historic preservation and its importance not only to her own neighborhood but to the Village of Downers Grove.

Mr. David Gassen discussed the reasoning behind the purchase of their Four-Square home and the historic research they did on their 1924 home. A bit of historic village demographics during this time period, were referenced, as were the familiar architectural structures constructed around the village. Ms. Gassen described the historical characteristics of the American Four-square, which, as turns out, was a post-Victorian style that was an architectural reaction against the ornate Victorian style. The Four-Square was boasted for its simplicity, maximization of square footage on small lots, and its versatility to apply various styles to its shape, i.e., Craftsman style, Colonial Revival style, etc. Various examples of Four-Square homes within the village followed, noting the Gassen's home followed the Prairie style.

After viewing a photo of her home Ms. Gassen pointed out how the above architectural characteristics of the American Four-Square applied to her own home. She shared that some of the home's original features still existed in the home and she and her husband were in the process of renovating those features. Photos of the home's interior followed. In discussing the addition again, Mr. Gassen explained the addition was added with the intention of keeping the original structure intact while setting the addition back from the corners of the home and paying respect to the original aesthetics of the home. Original doors, windows, and hardware were either reused within the home or saved and stored in the garage for future use. Facades of the home were also featured.

Lastly, Ms. Gassen explained that the reason she and her husband were seeking landmark designation was not only because they liked the Four-Square style but also to continue to maintain the history and character that continues to exist in their neighborhood and throughout the village. Landmarking was also a "nice way to honor an old home that has lasted for so long" and seeing so many Four-Squares was a testament to the effectiveness of their solid construction and efficient design. She hoped others would follow.

Commissioner Casey stated he was surprised when he drove down Benton Avenue to see the amount of teardowns occurring and their massive size as compared to the owner's home. He believed many could learn from what the owners went through; Mr. Davenport concurred.

For the record, Planner Leitschuh interjected and stated that landmarking a home did not restrict an owner from altering the interior of his or her home.

Chairman Pro tem Davenport proceeded to invite the public to speak.

Joan McDermott, 5316 Benton Ave., a next-door neighbor, stated she was proud to be living next-door to a potentially landmarked home. She and her husband also previously renovated old homes and understood the restoration work that went into such homes.

Hearing no further comment, the public hearing was closed by the chairman pro tem.

MR. CASEY MADE A MOTION THAT THE ADRB APPROVE THE LANDMARK DESIGNATION BASED ON THE TWO CRITERIA THAT IT MEETS, BASED ON THE APPLICATION.

MR. REIMER SECONDED THE MOTION. ROLL CALL:

AYE: MR. CASEY, MR. REIMER, MS. ENGLANDER, MR. DAVENPORT

NAY: NONE

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 4-0

OLD BUSINESS

A. Update on Implementation Strategies. Ms. Leitschuh described a draft, interactive web-site that was being worked on by I.T. staff which incorporates various historical survey maps and parcels of the village. The information will eventually be a web tool accessible by the public once the draft web site is reviewed. Much information will be available when looking at an individual parcel. Examples followed. Leitschuh also provided additional updates which included new FAQs on the website, information about the COA application, and historic district paperwork. Mailings of available resources were also mailed to those significant properties identified in the board's recent survey. On March 14th, the Home Town Times will include an article about the Drew House and, at the board's upcoming April meeting there will be another landmark designation discussion.

As a last comment, Ms. Leitschuh announced that the application deadline for the Certified Local Government grant is February 29, 2016 and staff will be focusing on public outreach with four types of brochures/pamphlets pertaining to: 1) recognition of Sears Catalog homes; 2) a downtown walking tour; 3) general architectural styles in Downers Grove; and 4) a general brochure. Ms. Leitschuh said this new information will be made available to the public via the village's web site, newspapers articles, etc.

Chairman Pro tem Davenport commended the mayor, council, the Ad hoc Committee and staff for accomplishing so much in such a short amount of time. He thanked everyone for their support. Board members concurred.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Ken Lerner, 4933 Whiffen Place, thanked Stan Popovich for reaching out to the Pierce Downers Heritage Alliance for their support regarding the grant application. The Alliance did send a letter supporting the grant application for the brochures and looked forward to assisting staff with anything they needed. He asked when the website features would be available since he wanted to highlight it on the Alliance's website so that the public could link to it.

APPROVED 4/20/16

Mr. Rich Kulovany, 6825 Camden, on behalf of the Friends of the Edwards House (“FEH”), also thanked Mr. Popovich for reaching out to the FEH, who will also be sending a letter in support of the grant. He thanked the board for its hard work.

ADJOURNMENT

MR. RIEMER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MR. CASEY SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:00 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 4-0.

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