Commission Members Present: Chair: Jeff Rogers, Members: Lynn Bedalov, Andrew Cook, Kathryn Engel-Accettura (ex-officio), Scott Jacaway, Diane Johnson, and Sue Walaszek
Members Absent: Theresa Carlquist and Lisa Stach
Staff Liaison: Andrew J. Matejcak, Director of Counseling and Social Services
Visitors: Mr. Tim Meaney, Resident

II. Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 6:26pm. A quorum was obtained.

III. Approval of Minutes: September’s meeting minutes were unanimously approved as corrected.

IV. Public Comment:
Mr. Meaney called attention to the Village website links not correctly pointing to the minutes from the previous Human Service Commission meeting(s). Staff expressed appreciation for bringing to light this issue and made notes to correct it. Mr. Meaney commenting on the issues of homelessness noted that the very notion of community indicates the inclusion of all. He went on to say that the issue of homelessness is timeless and universal and noted the homelessness issues was present back when he worked in a library 40 years ago. In his youth, homelessness was also dealt with compassionately by his mother who made sandwiches and prepared coffee for those requesting assistance. Mr. Meaney noted how this town is changing into a more urban setting. He noted that people are looking for other people to be with and the issue of homelessness was not going to go away. He added that (a community) should not legislate who should not be in the community. That it was antithetical to the definition of community.

V. Discussion:
The commission continued to refine the previously addressed issues related to both homelessness and appropriate behaviors in the community in preparation for a report to council.

Commissioner Bedalov addressed the Citizen Corp Council project and it was decided that the commission would have representatives present at the December meeting for providing information on how the Village might establish its own chapter.

VI. New Business: No new business

VII. Adjournment: The meeting closed at 7:50pm
Submitted by: Andrew J. Matejcak, Staff Liaison
II. Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 6:18pm. A quorum was obtained.

III. Approval of Minutes: July’s meeting minutes were unanimously approved. (The HSC did not meet in August)

IV. Public Comment: No public comments were made.

V. Discussion:
Director Matejcak thanked the commission members for their flexibility with rescheduling the meeting to the second Wednesday of the month. With the appointment of two new commissioners on the evening of September 2, 2008, staff had postponed the September 3, 2008 meeting until September 10, 2008 to allow for the new commissioners to receive their information materials prior to their first meeting and to allow for the attendance of commissioner member(s) who were not able to meet on the September 3rd meeting. Welcoming the two newly appointed members, the commission members acquainted themselves through introductions and sharing their backgrounds.

Staff and the commission discussed the work of the commission, to date, on issues related to behaviors in the community. Commissioner Stach addressed the role of the commission in terms of making recommendations to the community as an outcome of this endeavor. Staff also discussed the fine line of balancing the role of the Human Service Commission to address matters of social concern and recognizing the autonomy of other entities in the community that have their own governing boards and their own rules of conduct within their organizations and facilities. Chairperson Rogers raised the question if HSC should be a resource for the community to voice concerns if they cannot get resolution from the staff of the specific entities after they’ve been voiced. Staff and commission members discussed the point and noted that residents should voice their concerns to the specific boards or commissions that govern that entity. They also suggested that the HSC could play a role in helping to underscore this message to the community and direct them to more actively discuss their concerns in a forum that can directly address them. This also addressed the concern of managing the expectations of the public who would otherwise assume the HSC could provide resolution to a matter that was outside the scope and authority of its role.

Director Matejcak discussed with the commission the process by which staff will consolidate key elements of the commission’s proceedings on the matter, formalize them for a vote and forward the information to Council. Toward that end, he requested members to contribute other aspects of the matter that they would like to include in the review. The members noted the issue of zoning and Commissioner Jacaway suggested the aspect of the Methadone Clinic and the Tivoli Hotel be also reviewed. The commission and staff discussed their role in providing services to the community. Specifically, in the case of the Tivoli Hotel, it’s role in provide housing to people that might otherwise be homeless. Additionally, the commission members added the importance of helping to direct people with special
needs to appropriate resources in the community. Commissioner Kathryn Engel-Accettura and Commissioner Jacaway reviewed the Park District’s referral to the DGPD for public safety and law enforcement.

Members also discussed the lack of information from other communities to see if behavioral problems are any more or any less prevalent in Downers Grove as compared to other communities. Commissioners Engel-Accettura and Carlquist discussed the challenges in obtaining such data since each community is different and hard to compare with one another.

Commissioner Bedalov also noted that some of the inappropriate behaviors, while not criminal, do have an affect on business and wondered if the Downtown Management and Chamber of Commerce perceived there to be a problem and if so, how to quantify it. As the commission discussed, anecdotal feedback either way, they also asked Commissioner Cook, as a youth member in school, about the perception of his peers and if they had concerns or felt uncomfortable at the library or downtown. Commissioner Cook noted that he could not be sure but didn’t think there was a problem for his peers going there alone or in couples but indicated that some people might not be as comfortable. Commissioner Walaszek added that the role of education to help the community know what the police do and what the various entities do to address problems was important.

VI. **New Business:**
Commissioner Bedalov introduced several programs of the DuPage Citizens Corp including Operation Helping Hand (OHH). She explained these volunteer programs are active in other communities throughout the County. OHH utilizes a database to generate a call list for residents with special needs in times of a disaster. Having spoken with some of the volunteers of the program, Commissioner Bedalov noted they would be open to presenting the program to the HSC in future meetings. Staff and the commission discussed the potential for such a program in Downers Grove. Historically, the Downers Grove Citizen Corp Council had not taken off largely because of limited Village staffing for resident training and ongoing training for recertification of the program. Commissioner Bedalov noted that in some of the other communities they are coordinated by volunteer efforts. The commission discussed the usefulness of such programs with the proximity to Chicago and having a railroad run through town. Several community partners were identified that might provide support and networking in developing a local chapter. Commissioner Engel-Accettura noted the importance of people learning how to send text messages, that even when cell phone call services may be down, people can still communicate through text messaging on their cell phones in emergency situations. Commissioner Carlquist also noted that volunteer organizations that came out to assist during the recent flooding in Iowa. Staff report that unlike the OHH program for area wide disasters, the Village’s Operations Center (911 Dispatch) does keep a record of special needs residents to facilitate public safety responses on an individual call out basis. Individuals can register to have their information included in the program. The registration material will be included in the next edition of the Senior Resource Guide under the Safety and Home Security section.

Commissioner Stach shared information about a the Women in Need, Legal Defense and Educational Fund which is located in Downers Grove and offered to forward the information to staff. The organization helps women in need with legal assistance.

Commissioner Walaszek earlier in the meeting shared an article entitled, “DuPage older, more diverse, census shows” which appeared in *The Sun* newspaper on August 21, 2008.

VII. **Adjournment:** The meeting closed at 8:07pm
Submitted by: Andrew J. Matejcak, Staff Liaison
II. Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 6:15pm. A quorum was obtained.

III. Approval of Minutes: June’s Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved.

IV. Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

V. Discussion:

Director Matejcak updated the Commission with several social service items including the increased requests for Senior Resource Guides and Home Chore Program list requests, noting that both were featured in the Hometown Times newsletter that goes out to all Village residents. Also included in the newsletter was a brief notice that the Youth in Government applications were still being accepted and called for interested youth to download and submit their applications.

A rough draft of the general schedule for TCD3 was discussed highlighting the many levels of community input available over various forums. Also noted was the opportunity for the boards and commissions to provide input and how that will be one of several opportunities to address the human service related items. The TCD3 will also help the commission better gauge what the residents’ concerns are, at what level, and which areas of concern the Human Service Commission could address. It was also noted that the HSC’s Citizen’s Survey questions completed last month had been forwarded to the Manager’s office for inclusion in the development of the TCD3.

In June’s meeting the commission requested information on the scope of the problems relative to inappropriate behaviors in the Downtown (Downtown district, Public Library, Main St. Train Station and area parks, etc.) and requested supporting information from the Police Department. Staff provided the commission with a report from the Police Department. (Staff Note: See attachment). The report provided a breakdown of some of the crimes more commonly associated with homeless individuals within locations that are more often frequented by homeless individuals. Director Matejcak stated it was important to note that the Police Department’s reporting system does not keep track of residency without having to go through each and every record. Therefore, the report indicates all calls for service in those identified areas, regardless of whether they were perpetrated by a D.G. resident, a resident of another community or by someone reporting no residency at all. The report also separated out juveniles, so as to include only adults. For perspective, the report also included the total number of calls in the Village for emergency, non-emergency and service calls (waiting behind a car until a tow could arrive, etc) The discussion went on to note that out of the 200 thousand plus of 911 & non-emergency calls and service responses each year, there are relatively few for inappropriate behaviors in the areas such as the
downtown, the train station, the parks, the Library and the shelter sites. It also noted that some of the businesses such as the Library and the shelter sites direct the Police to remove the subjects from their premises as their standard intervention (versus signing complaints for an arrest to be made.). Commission members noted that the Park District does not have its own law enforcement staff but utilizes the Village’s Police Department for law enforcement services.

Director Matejcak reported on a conversation with Christopher Bowen of the DG Public Library regarding the issues being addressed by the Human Service Commission. He noted that some of the people utilizing the library tend to leave when the homeless shelters close down for the summer and while that was the case this year, they appeared to stay longer than they had in the past.

Commission members asked about Library rules and if sleeping was allowed or not and if not what were the protocols for addressing. The commission members also discussed the concerns they hear from others in the community about the rules being enforced at the library. Noting that when there is a concern in the general community, people call the police and that when there is a concern at the library, people tell library staff but it was unclear to them what the actual Library staff response is to such problems. The commission wondered if the Library kept records of individuals who violate rules and if there is a log of individuals who are barred access to the library as noted in their approved rules. The commission also discussed the need for inappropriate behaviors at the library to be addressed but also to distinguish between issues of safety and rule compliance with issues that are more related to one patron’s discomfort with another’s appearance or level of functioning and the expectation of library staff to do something about the latter. The fine line of various units of government working together while also respecting each other’s autonomy was discussed by staff and the commission. The commission members also discussed the issue of protecting the public assets and that when public tax dollars are being spent it is a reasonable expectation for the public to feel comfortable and safe. The commission noted the importance of resident’s expressing their concerns in constructive venues, most notably, at the various publicly held meetings of the unit of government they are concerned about.

Similar to a request of information from the Police Department, information from DuPage PADS, Inc. was provided to the commission following the commission’s request from the June meeting (Staff Note: See attachment). The information stated that from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007, 27 of their clients had given Downers Grove as their last residence. From July 1, 2007 through May 31, 2008, 32 clients had reported Downers Grove as their last residence. The report also noted the range of services in Downers Grove that are available to address the myriad of issues related to homelessness and homelessness prevention. The supportive services are offered all year long through their Wheaton offices even when the local Downers Grove shelters are closed during the warmer months. While communities do have the option of zoning where shelter sites may be located, the present commission has looked at the question and defers the option as a policy decision to be determined by Council if it so chooses.

VI. **New Business:** No new business.

VII. **Adjournment:** The meeting closed at 8:22pm

Submitted by: Andrew J. Matejcak, Staff Liaison
Attachments:
DGPD Crime report for selected portions of the Village and overall service request volume.
DuPage P.A.D.S. info sheet on shelter services.
VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
Human Service Commission
Minutes
June 4, 2008

Commission Members Present Chair: Jeff Rogers, Members: Lisa Stach, Lynn Bedalov, Diane Johnson, Scott Jacaway, Kathryn Engel-Accettura (ex-officio)
Members Absent Members: Dave Dahm, Catherine Rivera, and Theresa Carlquist
Staff Liaison: Andrew J. Matejcak, Director of Counseling and Social Services
Visitors: Tim Meaney, 420 Franklin St., Downers Grove and Mark Thoman, 1109 61st St., Downers Grove

II. Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 6:28pm. A quorum was obtained.

III. Approval of Minutes: April’s Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved.

IV. Public Comment:

Mr. Mark Thoman stated that this was his first Human Service Commission meeting attendance and that the topic of homelessness has sparked some interest in the community. Mr. Thoman shared that he had also found the Illinois Municipal League’s Q&A sheet regarding the regulation of homeless issues, (a handout included with the meeting’s materials provided for the commission and the public) through his searches on the web. Mr. Tim Meaney noted that this was also his first attendance of a Human Service commission meeting. He also expressed his interest in the topics covered at the evening’s meeting: proposed questions for inclusion in the Citizen Survey and issues related to Homelessness. Mr. Meaney also noted the homeless issues have been a subject of discussion on a local blog, and that some of the posts have been rather “outspoken”.

V. Discussion:

Commissioner Jacaway asked if the commission could still develop an e-version of the survey. Director Matejcak indicated that from previous internal discussions, it would be feasible to develop a survey that was less scientific but yielded the information the commission was interested in knowing (the community’s human service related concerns). However, a statistically sound e-survey would be much more complicated. Commissioner Stach asked if staff knew when the Citizen Survey would be distributed; Director Matejcak indicated that staff did not know when that would be. HSC members then continued to refine the human service related questions for submission to staff and to be included with the next Citizen Survey. Upon completion of the of the refinement of survey items, the Commission members voted unanimously to accept the items and to have staff forward them for use in the next Citizen Survey.

Addressing the next item on the agenda, Director Matejcak noted that from time to time the Village receives complaints regarding issues commonly perceived as “homeless” issues. Staff was requesting the Commission address the perceived issues with a focus on three major areas: 1) Clarification of the perceived problems 2) Identification of interventions within the purview of the Village and 3) Recommendations for residents, businesses and community partners. He went on to report some of the problematic behaviors by individuals who are frequently and, at times, inaccurately referred to as “homeless”. The complaints centered on such behaviors as sleeping in the library and parks, congregating in the public spaces, sleeping in benches and on floors or spreading out one’s belongings.
Additional complaints of public intoxication, aggressive pan-handling, public urination and defecation, trespass, selling illegal substances, bathing washing and sleeping in public restrooms and viewing pornography on Library computers were also noted.

Director Matejcak also provided a copy of the Illinois Municipal Review’s, Q&A paper regarding legal issues and regulating the Homeless (See attachments). The paper outlined some of the issues, options and regulatory limitations that municipalities face. He went on to say that as far as the Village is concerned, the Village enforces ordinances and is concerned with appropriate behavior, regardless of whether an offender, who is demonstrating inappropriate behaviors, is a resident of the Village, a visitor from another town or reports having no permanent address.

Director Matejcak further noted the vast majority of PADS residents are only temporarily homeless and are able to utilize the shelters, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing in the community to maintain their ability to work, keep their kids within their schools and be contributing members of the community. He further noted that PADS has been a good community partner in providing a service for the homeless and has worked well with Village staff to address solutions. Director Matejcak underscored that the Village is not concerned with someone’s residential status but rather that they behave appropriately. He further noted that some of people viewed as homeless are our residents that may have some mental health issues, developmental delays or other compromises in their social skills but live on their own or in homes with their adult parents or other family members.

Director Matejcak asked the commission, as members of the community, to share some of the issues they were aware of from their own observations and from those shared by other residents. Commission members discussed the loitering at the train station as noticeable at various times of the day. Questions were raised if the Park District Board had addressed concerns in their recent meeting. Ex-officio member, Kathryn Engel-Accettura reported that it had not been among the issues addressed by the Park District Board but added there have been other issues such as acting out youth that have been of concern.. Other members added that they were aware of people sleeping in wooded areas, congregating near a local methadone clinic and near PADS sites. Commission members asked if there was a correlation between the closing of the PADS sites (during the summer months) and the number of issues as a result, whether there was an increase as a result of no shelters or a decrease as a result of moving to other communities.. The Commission also wondered if other communities experienced problems noting that many of the homeless individuals utilize the train lines for transportation among the neighboring communities.

Staff and the Commission highlighted the importance of distinguishing between the concerns over appropriate vs. inappropriate behaviors, regardless whether the person is a resident of this or another community or claim no permanent residence. The Commission also commented about the congregation of people at the Library, noting they’ve witnessed sleeping on steps, in the children’s section and noting it as a major area of concern for some. The Library’s rules and policy, located on their website, was also referenced.

Additional questions had also related to the economic impact of the loitering in the commercial and public sectors. Also noted was the changing of the downtown landscape including a recent growth in downtown residential buildings where it was once mostly just commercial sites. The question of zoning options for addressing some of the concerns was noted later in the discussion and was also addressed in the Legal Q&A paper. The topic of an increase over the past years in homelessness was also addressed from the perspective of the greater metropolitan area filling in as compared to being isolated communities in years gone by. Also noted was the closing of long term psychiatric hospitals for the chronically mentally ill during the 1980’s. With the closing of many state hospitals throughout the nation, few alternative services were put in place to assist those with ongoing needs.
The commission considered if there were difference in crime problems during the day or evening. They asked if staff could get information from the Police Dept. about the actual scope of the problem, to see how big or small the problem actually was. Similarly, they requested information from PADS to learn more about their services and homelessness in the community and what other communities have shelter sites. The commission also wondered if the community is more attractive to homeless individuals by nature of the availability of shelter sites, low crime and the willingness of the community (residents and businesses) to assist others.

The commission moved to continue the discussion at the next set of meetings.

VI. New Business:

Commissioner Jacaway asked for a check on the status of an online survey initiative. Chairperson Rogers asked to hear from other entities at the next meeting such as PADS, the Library, etc. and Commissioner Bedalov asked about information that other communities, similar to Downers Grove that are along the train line may have on the issue.

VII. Adjournment: The meeting closed at 8:34pm

Submitted by: Andrew J. Matejcak, Staff Liaison
Attachments:
Human Service Commission’s proposed survey items for Citizen Survey
Legal Q&ARegulating the Homeless May 2008/ Illinois Municipal Review
Commission Members Present: Members: Lynn Bedalov, Theresa Carlquist, Scott Jacaway, Diane Johnson, Catherine Rivera, and Lisa Stach,
Members Absent Chair: Jeff Rogers, Members: Dave Dahm, Kathryn Engel-Accettura (ex-officio)
Staff Liaison: Andrew J. Matejcak, Director of Counseling and Social Services

II. Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 6:47pm. A quorum was obtained.

III. Approval of Minutes: March Minutes were unanimously approved with noted corrections.

IV. Public Comment: No public comments were made.

V. Discussion:
The Commission worked throughout the duration of the meeting on refining the proposed list of questions for inclusion in the upcoming Citizen Survey as part of the TCDIII. The Commission expects to complete the items selection in the May meeting.

A request was made for a permanent change in the meeting time of the Commission. Many of the newer members had volunteered to serve on the commission with the understanding that meetings would generally run about one hour. Given the additional length of the meetings, a request was made to move the meeting time. Present commission members voted unanimously to move the start time to 6:15pm. (Staff note: in subsequent individual follow-ups, the move in time did not present any attendance problem for the remaining commission members who did not vote.)

VI. New Business: No new business

VII. Adjournment: The meeting closed at 8:35pm

Submitted by: Andrew J. Matejcak, Staff Liaison
I. **Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 6:45pm. A quorum was obtained.

II. **Approval of Minutes:** December minutes were approved as presented.

III. **Public Comment:** No public comments were made.

IV. **Discussion:**
Staff collected survey items submitted by commission members since the February meeting. The March meeting consisted of commission members discussing their questions in detail, responding to the clarifying questions and comments from other members. The questions were broken down into general categories for further refinement during the April 2, 2008 meeting which will be submitted for inclusion in the upcoming Citizen Survey. Additional survey items may also be maintained as the Human Service Commission is expected recommend to Council a community wide survey to assess the needs and awareness of social services being provided in the community. Commission members also discussed better ways that the Village may communicate with their residents including: drawing better attention to the messages on the bottom of the water bills or adding inserts to the water bills and better representation of community services on Channel 6. Staff was asked to check into the availability of such opportunities and will report back in the April meeting. Members also suggested the creation of a volunteer database for Downers Grove residents to help within a community. Unlike the givingdupage.org website, which lists social services agencies needing volunteering assistance, the creation of a website specific to Downers Grove would connect volunteers to assist with individual residents or with neighborhoods.

V. **New Business:**
A request was made for a permanent change in the meeting time of the Commission with discussion to take place on the April 2nd meeting.

VI. **Adjournment:** The meeting closed at 8:20pm

Submitted by: Andrew J. Matejcak, Staff Liaison