

DOWNERS GROVE ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMISSION
April 14, 2005
Public Works Community Room
7:00 PM

Chairman Pro tem Goodman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was established.

I. Roll call

Present: Members: Dr. Gordon Goodman, Joseph Sterner, Laura Feste, Robert Pawlak, Jeffrey Lifka, Brian Freeman

Absent: Chairman Mike Gilbert

Staff: Marketing/Media Dir. Kozlowski

Dr. Goodman welcomed the members of the public and invited them into the discussion.

Mr. Steve Vogrin, General Manager for BFI, discussed the last meeting he was invited where there was some concern about the past impression he made at the meeting and that clarification was in order. BFI was trying to incorporate a modified volume-based program where a one can limit or two can limit per person would exist depending upon what the village decided. Discounts would be offered for senior citizens. While the current recycle program was volume-based, BFI was promoting and encouraging recycling, which appeared to be misinterpreted at the last meeting. Mr. Vogrin discussed that September 26 through 30, 2005 were the tentative dates scheduled for the amnesty date to help promote recycling. He suggested having a charitable drop off the weekend prior and was willing to work with the village. Mr. Vogrin recommended contacting Sharing Connections in Downers Grove which picks up used furniture and provides them to families in need in DuPage County. The donation was tax deductible.

Mr. Vogrin briefly commented on an industry-related article which discussed producer responsibility for recycling its products. BFI sees that trend continuing. Lastly, Mr. Vogrin closed by indicating BFI was here to assist the village in its recycling efforts and to answer any questions.

Ms. Patty Paige, the environmental club chairperson from Lester School in School District #58 attended to find out how her club could assist this commission and vice versa in promoting recycling and reuse. Dr. Goodman welcomed her comments throughout the discussion.

II. Old Business

1. Staff Update on Tree Preservation Ordinance and New Waste Hauling Contract - Marketing and Media Dir. Kozlowski handed out information regarding the discussions that took place between the Manager, Council and staff regarding the tree preservation discussion taken at the last council meeting. Main concerns included whether staff would be able to enforce the ordinance. In these discussions, the Village forester had indicated that the ordinance could be enforced using a combination of code services staff and herself, due to the fact that her budget had been restored. Dir. Kozlowski walked through some of the questions that council expressed concerns about, emphasizing that the tree preservation topic was scheduled to be on the May 10, 2005 Village

Council agenda. Dr. Goodman noted that May 10th was a workshop and the commission should get a better indication and comfort level from the Village Council on this matter.

Mr. Pawlak raised concern that not enough staff existed for enforcement and that a full time person may be necessary. Dr. Goodman added that while he understood the concern, in order to make the ordinance successful, the Village would have to put more resources into enforcing the ordinance, where in Ms. Feste indicated that the Village Forester believed she had enough staff and she was the best person to determine that. Further dialog followed that it was not the commission's charge on how to provide resources for additional staff. Addressing the resources aspect, Ms. Feste suggested to add a consumer tax on polystyrene to pay for the additional resources.

Regarding the new waste hauling contract, Dir. Kozlowski confirmed with Mr. Vogrin that he did hand out to the commission Mr. Vogrin's letter which was forwarded to Mike Baker. The letter discussed the alternatives for leaf collection and spoke about the alternatives that other communities used. Based on the current contract, Dir. Kozlowski explained the Village would be maintaining the *Bag and Tag* program but as the contract neared its end, there would be discussions to revise the way the leaf collection takes place in Downers Grove. In reviewing the alternatives for yard waste, Mr. Vogrin proceeded to explain the steps and locations as to where yard waste was taken and where it finally ended up being composted into dirt and then sold to retailers such as Home Depot or Lowe's. Branches/twigs were either ground into wood chips or other materials. Mr. Vogrin offered to find out the specifics on the yard waste.

Dr. Goodman proceeded to explain that the Village recently voted for the BFI contract and negotiated a two-year contract with them which incorporated the items originally listed in the five-year proposal. He also explained that the community supported using BFI. Mr. Vogrin concurred and continued to explain the importance of separating recyclables from refuse. He pointed out that should residents in the community see a worker combining refuse and recyclables into a truck, they should notify BFI.

Minutes of the March 10, 2005 meeting were approved on motion by Ms. Feste, seconded by Mr. Freeman. Motion passed by voice vote of 6-0.

III. Discussion - Follow up on March 23rd Community Dialogue

Dir. Kozlowski reviewed how the community meeting took place as it relates to the discussion of tree preservation ordinance and the proposed bulk standards for redevelopment. Much of the discussion at the meeting centered on the fact that the developers' interests were not being represented. Those that opposed development and large houses were satisfied with what was presented but believed the changes did not go far enough. Those residents who lived in the larger homes felt that it was an affront to their neighborhood and felt that if the regulations were enacted, none of the larger homes would have been built. Dir. Kozlowski explained the topic of property rights, etc. was a sensitive and emotional issue at the meeting. He also indicated that prior meetings were held with the developers and the architects, and the developers and the architects felt that what was discussed at those prior meetings was not presented by Code Services Asst. Dir. Scheidler at the March 23rd community meeting. Dir. Kozlowski stated he was not at those prior meetings.

In conclusion, staff explained the Code Services Department will present different proposed requirements as it relates to restricting height, sideyard setbacks, etc. and will be holding a meeting next week with the developers and the architects to refine their concerns. Staff sees the main issue as devaluing the property in the community by getting overly restrictive with the bulk standards. Dir.

Kozlowski believes both sides were trying to balance the issues. On another matter, the Village Council has not reviewed the information yet but was aware of the discussions that took place at the March 23 community meeting.

One matter that was clear to staff was that the department did not present information as to what other communities were doing as it relates to the same topic, which was a concern. Dr. Goodman believed contacting other communities could provide a very good model for Downers Grove. From his reading of the comments, Mr. Freeman indicated it looked as if everyone came to the table with their own interests. From the comments he has heard, Downers Grove provided a wonderful array of housing and was a “delightful little town.” However, with the teardowns occurring, Mr. Freeman believed there may be a fear that Downers Grove will not be the “delightful little town anymore.” Mr. Freeman, again, reiterated it was not this commission’s duty to tell Council what to do but instead provide a perspective on environmental issues, such as saving the trees, green space, etc. or discuss concerns about asbestos when razing a building. Ms. Feste, after reviewing the comments, said it appeared there were builders who lived and worked in Downers Grove, but that a particular builder did not, and, because of him, those builders residing in Downers Grove were being punished. She asked if there was any way to review or provide a reference check on a builder’s permit, wherein, Dir. Kozlowski explained there were certain rights that limited that information. He agreed certain builders did have a vested interest in the community while others did not, which was a monitoring issue.

Discussion followed that there was not enough control going into the process, whereas other villages used step-by-step processes from the initial permitting process to the application of the demolition. However, Dir. Kozlowski understood that some of the builders in town believed the Village’s process worked fine and it was those other developers who were taking away from staff’s time.

Dr. Goodman believed this commission was still concerned about demolition control and health protection measures taking place while a demolition was occurring. He noted those items were not covered at all at the March 23rd meeting. He emphasized that when the issue of residential development is brought before the council, the commission must have a prior review and an improvement of the demolition as well as other adverse affects, associated with residential redevelopment.

Mr. Freeman indicated that he did e-mail Chairman Gilbert about a draft ordinance used in Glen Ellyn regarding demolitions and believed this commission could consider the same ordinance for Downers Grove. Dr. Goodman also recalled the Winnetka demolition ordinance. He would like to review the ordinances and suggested that Dir. Kozlowski send the Glen Ellyn information, on behalf of Chairman Gilbert, to him and others. Dr. Goodman asked that this demolition control matter be added on the May 12, 2005 agenda at the Morton Arboretum. A short dialog followed on how to make the EPA information provided by Mr. Freeman available to commissioners. Mr. Sterner would also make available some of the ideas he had regarding inspections and keeping them simplified to get the matter moving forward.

Dr. Goodman summarized that the residents in general raised their concerns very well at the September dialog and they should not be lost. Additionally, this commission’s concerns about health hazards and environmental quality issues, as discussed above, should not be lost as well and should be brought to the Village manager’s and staff’s attention as well.

IV. Discussion –Educational Opportunities regarding the Village’s Recycling Program, Composting and General Environmental Awareness

Dr. Goodman explained that this commission will have to determine what role it wants to play in providing educational opportunities for the Village’s recycling program. Mr. Freeman believed using the Village’s internet web page would be inexpensive and the commission could use the *Village Corner*. A question was raised as to how residents received the brochures from BFI, wherein staff and Dr. Goodman explained that a number of kiosks existed and the Chamber of Commerce provided a new resident with a welcome packet. Dr. Goodman asked Mr. Vogrin to find out if BFI still participated in the Chamber’s Welcome Wagon program. Other ideas on getting the recycling information out included direct mail, having a booth at Heritage Fest; providing a written piece in the water bills or sending an edited brochure to the various school PTAs. Ms. Paige suggested contacting Christine Liptrot (phonetic spelling) who deals with all publicity and communications for School District No. 58. However, Ms. Paige, the environmental club chairwoman for Lester School, indicated District 58 as a whole was not very pro-recycling and much waste occurred at the schools. She offered, however, to supply the names of the other environmental club chair persons who could help this commission in getting the word out.

In hearing the above comments, Dr. Goodman felt the commission should focus on District No. 58. He further explained that in prior successful programs, it was the information that was sent home through the school system that appeared to receive the most attention. He believed opportunities existed to cooperate with the school district. Lastly, he asked that members think on how to organize two half-hour segment of a show -- one segment which discusses recycling and amnesty donations and the other segment discusses composting. Dir. Kozlowski discusses the steps he would use to tape the segments.

Further conversation was raised about handing out the recycling brochure with the new recycling bins. Regarding the broken bins, dialog followed that if there were deposit points for the bins, BFI could pick them up and recycle them. In the past BPI used the Salvation Army for a donation site and typically used government sites. Mr. Vogrin asked if it would be better for his employees to deliver the bins to the residents to which Mr. Freeman thought was a very good idea. Mr. Vogrin offered to speak to the Salvation Army and Sharing Connections and then speak to Dir. Kozlowski on this matter.

In summary, Dr. Goodman believed a two-pronged approach should take place: provide continuing publicity to Sharing Connections and speak to the Salvation Army about drop off sites associated with Village-wide Amnesty Day (September 26, 2005) and ask if the Salvation Army would be willing to cooperate with Sharing Connections. Discussion then followed regarding the extra space at the Belmont Station for hazardous materials and the fact that it was a central location. Mr. Vogrin indicated that usually a designated date was assigned to receive the recyclables and it was usually one week prior to the Amnesty pickups. A suggestion was made to have the drop-off at the parking deck due to inclement weather. Dr. Goodman suggested that a press release be done for the month of August and the first part of September, including the video program, and that **this matter should be revisited at the May 12th meeting.** Staff would prepare a summary for production and send it out to the commissioners.

V. New Business

Mr. Freeman commented on his recent enforcement sampling in the City of East Chicago and the amount of arsenic found in front yards of residents due to certain grass fertilizers. Details followed.

Commissioners reviewed the agenda topics that staff provided for the upcoming months. Dr. Goodman confirmed that the demolition review and the recycling/composting/education program would be added to the May 12th agenda. Staff concurred.

Dr. Goodman said he received a brochure on the Gypsy Moth and was glad to see that the flakes were being used for its control. He also conveyed that the Environmental Concerns Commission was satisfied with program in the Village and that it was being successful. As a side note, Dr. Goodman noted he would be traveling during the June and August meetings.

Mr. Sterner raised conversation about the safety of mosquito sprays. Members agreed to receive a report from the contractor with material safety sheets and to discuss what triggers treatment at the June meeting.

Dr. Goodman opened the meeting up to the public.

Resident Patty Paige inquired whether the commission was considering holding a recycling event, such as the electronics recycling event in Westmont, wherein Dr. Goodman stated the commission did not discuss it but it could be considered by this commission. Ms. Feste recalled this discussion occurring at a prior meeting and suggested checking the minutes. Staff would follow up. Ms. Paige suggested contacting Kay McKeen (phonetic spelling) about sponsors for such an event. She also suggested including the students from School District No. 58 to participate in a recycling demonstration at Heritage Fest, since it will draw in the parents and appears to be working at her school. She hopes to have a *Walk to School Day* to promote lowering air pollution.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. on motion by Mr. Freeman, seconded by Mr. Sterner. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Celeste K. Weilandt
Celeste K. Weilandt, Recording Secretary