

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Village Hall – Council Chambers

801 Burlington Avenue

May 17, 2023

7:00 P.M.

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Minutes from the March 15, 2023 meeting**
- 3. Public Hearing**
 - a. None**
- 4. Old Business**
 - a. None**
- 5. New Business**
 - a. Certificate of Appropriateness Overview**
- 6. Public Comment**
- 7. Adjournment**

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES OF March 15, 2023 7:00 P.M.**

Chairwoman Gassen called the March 15, 2023 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, Ms. Chalberg, Mr. Styczynski, Mr. Renner, Mr. Reimer, Ms. Ciuffini-Kemp

ABSENT: Ms. Kolev

STAFF: Flora Leon, Senior Planner

VISITORS: Greg Elisha

2. APPROVAL OF December 21, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Reimer, second by Ms. Chalberg to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2022 meeting. Roll call:

AYE: Ms. Chalberg, Mr. Styczynski, Mr. Renner, Mr. Reimer, Ms. Ciuffini-Kemp, Ch. Gassen.

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

Motion passed.

3. PUBLIC HEARING: None

4. OLD BUSINESS: None

5. NEW BUSINESS: An Update from the Downers Grove Historical Society

Ms. Flora Leon, Senior Planner, introduced Greg Elisha.

Mr. Greg Elisha shared that he has been with the Downers Grove Historical Society for about seven years and that he currently chairs the Events Committee. He then shared that his presentation would provide an overview of some of the programs offered by the Downers Grove Historical Society. Mr. Elisha provided an overview of the Centennial Home Program and indicated that the main requirement was that the home had to be at least 100 years old.

Mr. Elisha also provided a summary of the Historic Homes Program that was created and the requirement was that the home had to be at least 50 years old. He added that in addition to the age of the structure the home had to have some sort of historical significance to qualify. Once the Historical Society completes their research for these homes, a report is published and kept at the Downers Grove Museum. He then noted that a map was available on the Historical Society website with both the Centennial and Historic Homes.

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Mr. Elisha then shared that the Historical Society was also a steward of the Main Street Cemetery. To avoid decay and vandalism, Mr. Elisha noted that the Village granted to society yearly funds to maintain the cemetery. Additionally, working with a scanner they were been able to identify two plots that were previously missed. Moreover, landscaping and lighting improvements have also been made to the cemetery. A landscape cemetery guide is available as a brochure and website.

Mr. Elisha the provided an overview of the Historian of the Year program. A newer award is the Montrew Dunham Award, which recognizes a community volunteers who have made a significant difference in Downers Grove. Additionally, the Historical Society puts together an annual event called the Living Cemetery where actors depict early settlers buried in the historic Main Street Cemetery. Other, education events include Home Garden Design, This New Old House, Sears Homes of Chicago, Bungalow Presentations, and The History and Architecture of the Avery Coonley School and the History on Tap event.

Mr. Elisha concluded his presentation by sharing that this year the Tivoli Tour will include a documentary of the Johnson Family, owners of the Tivoli.

Ch. Gassen asked if the board had any questions.

Mr. Elisha announced that the Historians of the Year were Willis and Shirley Johnson owners of the Tivoli Theater. Ch. Gassen added that they would be honored at the History Happens Here event May 2, 2023 at the Tivoli Theater.

Mr. Renner asked how the Historical Society funded all of the events. Mr. Elisha shared that a lot of funding is raised through the History on Tap fundraisers and memberships. The cemetery maintenance happens with funding from the Village.

Ch. Gassen added that the Village owns the cemetery. The Historical Society helps to maintain it with funding from the Village. Ms. Chalberg added that the funding is an allowance received yearly. Mr. Elisha noted that they struggle for storage but they work with the Museum for storage space.

Ms. Chalberg added that the Historical Society was established in 1968. The Historical Society established the accumulation of the collection that is currently at the Museum. When additional room was necessary the Village provided space on the second floor. Later on, the Park District provided space for the Historical Society. In 1987, the Park District decided to hire their own curator to run the Museum. Gradually the Historical Society became their own entity outside of the Park District and Museum. She noted that the Historical Society does not have their own collection. Instead, they have a website and they have storage in the basement of the Museum. Ms. Chalberg stated that the Museum and the Historical Society jointly owned the collection. She concluded by noting that the relationship with the Museum is very good and there is a lot of overlap and joint programming.

Ch. Gassen added that it is a common misconception that the Historical Society owns the Museum and runs the Museum. However, they function as two separate entities. Mr. Elisha noted that they have a robust volunteer membership.

Mr. Renner asked if they ran all of their efforts out of the Museum. Ms. Chalberg added that most volunteers do their work out of their homes. She added that they really do not have a physical space.

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Mr. Styczynski asked how the Historical Society was promoting their events because he was not aware of any of those events. Mr. Elisha explained they had a newsletter and email list. He also added that a communications team just started up. Ms. Chalberg clarified that there is a misconception that the Museum and the Historical Society are one in the same. However, since about 2000 they have been two separate entities.

Mr. Elisha added that the Historical Society provides more of an opportunity for people to learn about Downers Grove.

Mr. Reimer asked if Mr. Elisha could speak more about the membership options. Mr. Elisha explained there were lifetime and annual memberships. Members receive discounted rates. Ms. Chalberg added that pricing was reasonable with \$25.00 yearly memberships. Ch. Gassen added the family yearly membership was \$40.00. Ms. Chalberg added that a senior above the age of 62 the fee is \$15.00 and a senior couple is \$30.00. The business memberships are \$100.00. The life individual the fees is \$250.00 and the life couple is \$400.00.

Mr. Reimer asked how high school students could volunteer for the Living Cemetery. Ch. Gassen shared that volunteers originally came from the Herrick Drama Club. Ms. Chalberg added that a private drama club for young thespians currently volunteers for the Living Cemetery event.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chairwoman Gassen opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, she asked if there were any other updates from staff.

Ms. Leon shared the Certificate of Design Appropriateness (CODA) petition for 5126 Main Street was currently under review for the interior build out permit.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chairwoman Gassen called for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Styczynski moved, seconded by Mr. Riemer to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

/s/ Village Staff

(As transcribed by MP-3 audio)