

**League of Women Voters  
Observers Report**

**Board meeting attended:** Downers Grove Village Council

**Date and Location of meeting:** September 12, 2017 Council Chambers, 801 Burlington Ave.

**Meeting started:** 7 p.m.

**Meeting adjourned:** 10:40 p.m.

**League Observer(s):** Mary Blanchard

**Board Members/Trustees present (P) not present (NP) tardy (T):**

Mayor Martin Tully	P
Bob Barnett	P
Margaret Earl	P
Greg Hose	P
Nicole Walus	P
William Waldack	P
Bill White	P

**Estimated Number Attending (excluding Board and Staff):**

30

**Meetings are Streamed and Archived at:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORMvXHmXDWs>

**Agenda can be found at:**

[http://www.downers.us/public/docs/agendas/2017/09-12-17/AGENDA\\_DOCUMENT.pdf](http://www.downers.us/public/docs/agendas/2017/09-12-17/AGENDA_DOCUMENT.pdf)

**Minutes of Council Meetings:**

September 5, 2017 minutes approved.

**PROCLAMATION – Mayor Tully:**

1. Friends of the Edwards House gave an award for the favorite historic home (a survey has been taking place all summer long at the Farmer’s Market). This was awarded to the owners of The Foote House, at 1130 Franklin St.
2. Constitution week takes place the week of September 17<sup>th</sup> and is the 230<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the constitution.
3. The executive director of Giving DuPage, Shefali Trivedi, presented and shared information about Do Good DuPage. This is a year-long service initiative and Giving DuPage is hoping that 150,000 people in DuPage sign up to do good. Link here for more information. <https://givingdupage.org/dogood/>

## **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Friends of the Edwards House co-chairs shared information on the second annual landmark house tour, September 23, 11:00 to 3:00. Four homes will be open with advance tickets \$10, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/landmarked-house-tour-tickets-35939978443>

Friends of the Edwards House will be hosting an event on September 26, 6:30 p.m. at Emmett's on how to landmark your property.

Scott Curran complimented the Council on their recent uptick in social media use and on running a difficult meeting the week prior very well. Scott then commented that appointments that the Council makes have consequences, and he asked about the process of finding and selecting board candidates. Scott had multiple comments concerning multiple applicants in the applicant pool and noted that those selected applied only days prior to appointment. He also stated that several area newcomers who applied for board positions were not given a clear process on application. He noted that diversity should be a priority in selection. He asked for transparency to this process.

Mayor Tully responded at this point noting that he intended to share this during the Mayor's Report but would address it at this point of the agenda.

He stated that the Mayor nominates board candidates and the Council approves. He stated there "is no process" - with each Mayor deciding how they will go about appointments and that this has changed over time. Appointments typically expire in August. His current flow of selection is as follows: Village staff identifies anyone that does not want reappointment; way more people apply (50 people applied for library board as an example). Mayor asks for a list of applications, reviews for required criteria (for that particular board), then contacts applicants to determine if they are still interested. He stated that staff is supposed to communicate with each person on the applicant list annually to find out if they are still interested in being on a board. The process takes two to four weeks and then applicants are put on the agenda for Council approval.

Mayor stated he is a proponent of diversity, noting that he has appointed women to boards as well as an African American lawyer to the liquor committee. He mentioned that the boards do reflect our community demographics. He also mentioned the library and a request that individuals appointed have children that utilize the junior room, adding that he has accommodated that request. He noted that the public is welcome to speak at every type of board meeting in the Village about anything they want to bring up to that board.

Scott Curran said he is excited to see this process detailed on the Village website, and the Mayor commented that the Council believes in transparency.

## **REPORTS (board members, staff, and administrators)**

No reports

## **PRESENTATIONS**

No presentations

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

No items

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Consent agenda was approved.

## **ACTIVE AGENDA**

Three ordinances on the active agenda all pertaining to Flavorchem Corporation rezoning of property. All the ordinances concerned Brook Drive.

Brook Drive will be closed in order to accommodate the need for more parking for Flavorchem and to create a campus for them.

Multiple business owners/people that will be impacted by this rezoning commented during the public comment portion. The planning commission voted 6:1 against this decision in their recommendation to the Council. Initially there was a proposal to do a vacation of the land for this use and that was changed to a license to close. There was no one that spoke up in favor of this change. Those who spoke were upset and emotional. One individual from an engineering firm had spent his day getting signatures from other businesses in the area, none of whom were aware there was a vote on this matter, indicating this will negatively impact their businesses. It was noted that FlavorChem's own study indicated there will be a negative effect on surrounding businesses, as well as property values.

Mayor's comments were that the planning commission is only a recommending body; the Council can make a different decision. The process was followed to alert businesses this vote would be taking place; this solved a traffic/public safety issue that had been identified in this area; and this is not unprecedented (using PermaSeal utilizing a public street as an example). Barnett noted a traffic study that was done indicating little impact on the businesses and that access to Finley and Butterfield are available. Waldack appreciated the public comments and said the Council has been studying this for weeks. He encouraged people to look online at the report. White stated this is a small traffic inconvenience. He also said if Flavorchem moves out of the buildings Brook Drive can be reopened.

All three of the rezoning ordinances were approved unanimously.

## **FIRST READING AGENDA**

Ordinance and Resolution regarding authorizing special use for 42-76 Ogden Avenue to permit a drive through (Cumnor & Williams). Barnett asked about left turn to go east on Ogden and if that is of concern.

## **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Coffee with the Council September 16, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. at the Farmer's Market.  
Fourth Annual Oktoberfest for the DG58 Foundation on September 16, 17.

## **ATTORNEY REPORT**

The Ordinance authorizing special use for 42-76 Ogden Avenue with variation request of a drive through for a commercial, multi-tenant building.

## **Meeting recess for 10 minutes**

Reconvened in Committee Room  
Outside of Council and Staff approximately 25 people remained.

## **MANAGER'S REPORT**

Discussion of Downtown Development Regulation Framework Report

Goal to discuss: progress, process, recommendations, framework, uses, and have public participation/comment.

Link here for the document used during this report:

[http://www.downers.us/public/docs/agendas/2017/09-12-17/INF%202017-7501%20-%20Downtown%20Development%20Regulation%20Framework%20-%2009-12-2017\\_6660.pdf](http://www.downers.us/public/docs/agendas/2017/09-12-17/INF%202017-7501%20-%20Downtown%20Development%20Regulation%20Framework%20-%2009-12-2017_6660.pdf)

Mayor Tully began the discussion stating land use regulations guide certain limitations on what can be done, and other parts of the plan are aspirational (outside of financial constraints) – a vision of where they might like things to go. The tax increment financing (TIF) expiring is a driver for looking at the future of downtown – to get a jump on the discussion before the TIF expires in 2020. He stated that downtown is the geographic and emotional heart of our town. This Council looks to prepare the next Council for success.

Stan Popovich, Director of Community Development, showed a presentation (the lights were turned down for this) and reviewed the report (accessible via the link above). Several boards have been involved in the creation of this report, with the process starting in April of 2016. Maps show the areas considered the downtown core, downtown edge(s), and downtown transition. Height reductions in buildings have been recommended/included in this plan for all areas of downtown. Density reduction in downtown are also recommended. Dave Fieldman met with each member of Council individually with the maps and information showing the new work versus the old plan.

There are changes recommended from the original plan to this plan. For example, in the current version the recommended height for buildings is: downtown core, three stories; downtown edge1, six stories; downtown edge2, five stories; transition zone, three stories; and residential areas a 35 foot peaked roof.

Upon the conclusion of the presentation the Mayor asked that the lights be turned back on indicating the Council believes in transparency.

At this point Council members began bringing up various points in turn (approximately 90 minute discussion). Each person on Council contributed something to the discussion with the exception of Nicole Walus, who said nothing at all. The highlights of the discussion are summarized here, not in order, but by topic. Further, there was much discussion by Council about public input but not a lot of opportunity for such input during this meeting necessarily because of the lengthy Council discussion and as the meeting was running late.

There was an idea posed by White about forming another committee that includes building owners in the community and the public, especially those that have expertise in engineering, architecture, and development to discuss all of this. Mayor asked if a consultant could be hired for professional comment on design. Barnett commented that they've gotten the information they need through existing committees.

Bob Barnett asked the Mayor how he would like to go about engaging in the discussion about the report. Mayor wanted to focus on regulations first, then design, then the future of downtown.

Downtown: Be aspirational to maintain character-don't be bargain basement and keep unique identity of the Main and Curtiss area. Discussion about types of businesses at street level and, once agreed upon, incorporate zoning with incentives so property owners abide by regulations. Discussed requirement for all street level to have glass front windows – no walls.

Building: Density versus building size and number of units in a building. Downtown Management and Economic Development should also give feedback. White stated that there should be public input on the newly presented height reduction with Barnett commenting that, based on previous public comment, changes were made.

Overall: Mayor said get it right versus get it done fast and believes there is more agreement than disagreement and wants to manage expectations and translate those into detailed instructions with clarity on rules and regulations.

Hose commented on the terminology of density versus building size and number of units in a building.

White said they require public input – wants a committee about the plan to include public versus people coming to council and talking in the microphone.

Tully stated they've already had ad hoc and planning committees.

White believes the height reduction on buildings requires further public input.

Barnett stated they made changes over the summer based on public input.  
 Tully wants purposeful/structured comment.  
 Fieldman asked if they can consider showing business owners the report and reconvene for a district by district review – offer at regulations level for public comment.

Public comment section – people were not required to identify themselves so a summary here of comments made:

Parking and traffic are an issue. The information about this plan has not been socialized enough throughout the business and property owner and residential communities. Concern about property values. Belief that Council decides what they want to do and no matter what the public says they won't listen (referencing the fact that we just sat through the meeting where community/business owner concerns were brought forth about FlavorChem and ignored). Mayor commented that they do listen and take various factors into account and can't always do what the community wants. Questions about what other towns do and why it seems to work well in Hinsdale and Geneva as examples. Builders want to maximize their investment and the community is left with what they've done (traffic/parking/etc.). Maintain the character of our town, saving tax dollars shouldn't always be the priority.

Fieldman next steps: work with downtown management to hold informational meetings and get further public and business and property owner feedback.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

**Comments/Concerns:**

**General Features**

	Yes	No	Comments
Did the meeting start on time?	x		
Were members attentive and prepared?	x		
Were members courteous to each other?	x		
Were members attentive to the public's comments?	x		
Was the facility adequate?	x		
Could the audience see and hear?	x		

Were visual aids easily visible to the audience	x		
Were the meeting facilities handicapped accessible	x		

**FOIA (Complete once, unless information changes.)**

**Illinois Open Meetings Act requirements**

	Yes	No	Comments
Was the agenda posted 48 hours before the meeting? If yes, note where	x		
Did the agenda items clearly describe what was to be discussed?	x		
Were background materials made available to the public?	x		
Was there adequate discussion of the issues?	x		
Was there a closed session before, during or after the meeting?		x	
If there was a closed meeting, was any action taken after the closed session? If so, what action?		x	

**Date Submitted: September 22, 2017**

**By: Mary Blanchard**