

AUGUST 21

League of Women Voters of Downers Grove-Woodridge-Lisle

Observer's Report

Agency: Village Council of Downers Grove

Date: August 21, 2012

Please check answers:

Type of meeting:  Regular  Workshop  Public Hearing  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Facilities:  Clean  Proper Size  Could See  Could Hear  
 Handicap accessible

Media Coverage:  Yes  No Editor of DG Patch

Public Present:  Yes + about 18 at the beginning of the meeting  No

Public Comment:  Yes  No

PROCEEDINGS

YES

NO

COMMENTS

Meeting start on time? yes

All members present? yes

Sufficient staff present? yes

7 staff members were present

Presiding officer control meeting? yes

Members prepared and attentive? yes

Members respectful and courteous to all present? yes

Adequate discussion of issues? yes

Information re issues available to public? yes

Sufficient opportunity for public input? yes

The meeting started with a proclamation and announcement of the Pink Heals Tour, a fund raising organization supported by fire fighters throughout the country that raises funds for cancer research. A local fire fighter explained the project and invited people to attend an event on August 23.

All but one item on the consent agenda were approved without comment. Those approved included payroll, bill payments, accepting a \$279,000 bid for a storm water work, and a \$39,000 for excess workers compensation coverage. One item was taken out of the consent agenda for discussion by Comm. Barnett + the labor

agreement with the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 150. Comm. Neustadt and Mayor Tully both commented the contract was negotiated in good faith and amicably. Comm. Barnett said the contract did not include a way to handle a downturn in the economics leaving the only way to handle that issue would be layoffs. The item passed 6 to 1.

There were four items on the active agenda and two engendered a lot of discussion. The first ordinance was to adopt a Stormwater Utility Ordinance and Amend Water Utility Provisions. There was substantial discussion among the Commissioners and Mayor. Comm. Waldack voted against the creation of the utility for two basic reasons: the homeowner loses the deduction on their taxes with the shift to a fee and the fee is easier to raise, burdening property owners. He also opposed the creation of a new bureaucracy and the extra expense for business owners. Comm. Barnett also opposed the ordinance as well because of the lack of deduction, the steep yearly increases and lack of citizen understanding. He felt a property tax increase would have been a better approach. All others support the ordinance for a number of reasons such as the fee is more fair, creates dedicated funds for storm water improvements, allows opportunity to obtain credits for permeable surfaces or best practices, minimal bureaucracy, sustainable, transparent, and a long process has taken place with extensive public input. The ordinance passed 5-2. Public education will take place soon and the first bills will be sent in January, 2013.

The other issue that was discussed on the active agenda was approval of OASIS Program changes. This matter was extensively discussed about a month ago during the Council meeting. After further input was given regarding a signage component for the grant process, the amended ordinance allows for signage applications with at least one other improvement on the property. The issue was business owners applying for signage grants only, in order to comply with the sign ordinance along Ogden Avenue. Comm. Waldack expressed concern that this amendment was not discussed among all members in an open meeting before being presented to the Council. Comm. Reingten and Manager Feldman advised there was a meeting with the Oasis Board and calls made with members to advise of this amendment, all in compliance with direction given to Comm. Reingten during prior Council meeting. Comm. Waldack's issue was not the language of ordinance, but the manner in which the ordinance was drafted. He seemed satisfied after further discussion. The ordinance passed 7-0.

Two other active matters were passed unanimously without discussion where in general criminal violations were standardized and clarified and a special service area was created in Green Acres subdivision. Two items were presented for first reading without discussion. The first was the extension by one year of an ordinance for a sales tax rebate for Packy Webb Ford. No rebate was paid in 2011, therefore the rebate ordinance would extend the payment by one year. The other matter for first reading was an ordinance allowing for 4 hour parking restriction along four blocks of Elm Street in response to student and commuter parking along Elm. There was discussion regarding enforcement of this type of parking restriction.

The Mayor announced and requested a vote on several appointments to Village boards and commissions. New appointees were Justin Simmer for Environmental Concerns, Don Brenner for Human Services, Jeff Jacobs for Liquor Commission and Michael McCann for Zoning Board of Appeals. Another announcement of note was the award to the Village of the Daniel Burnham Award for the comprehensive plan. The meeting concluded with announcements from each member and adjourned at 8:35pm

Observer: Hilary A. Denk  
2012\_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted: \_\_September 28,

<http://www.downers.us/govt/mayor-council>