



Village of Oak Park

123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302
www.oak-park.us

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Monday, October 23, 2023

6:30 PM

Village Hall

I. Call to Order

Village President Vicki Scaman called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:31 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Present: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

Absent: 0

III. Consideration of Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session to Discuss Pending Litigation

It was moved by Trustee Parakkat, seconded by Trustee Wesley, to adjourn in Executive Session. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

V. Reconvene to Regular Meeting in Council Chambers and Call to Order

The Regular Meeting reconvened at 7:03 P.M.

VI. Roll Call

Present: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

Absent: 0

VII. Agenda Approval

It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Straw, to approve the Agenda. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

VIII. Non-Agenda Public Comment

Cate Reading: Commends the Village Board to potentially allocate \$2M to provide housing and services to people living at Districts 15 and 25. Asks all elected officials to move every lever possible to get people into stable housing.

Chris Donovan: Village of Oak Park does not have a residential exterior lighting ordinance. DarkSky International promotes environmentally reducing lights. Requests it be added to the Environment and Energy Commission's 2024 work plan.

Village Clerk Christina Waters read the following public comments into the record:

John and Patricia Duffy: Asks Village Board to collaborate with other officials, municipalities, and organizations to seek and provide immediate shelter and relief resources to asylum individuals and families.

Kelly Bencola: Urges Village Board to step up in support of our new neighbors. We need to step up to lead by advocating for greater funding, coordination, and by leveraging the incredible resources of our village.

Meghan Paulas: Urges Village leaders to use positions of authority to lead our community forward. Leadership is needed between individuals seeking asylum, community members, organizations, and government entities.

Dot Lambshead Roche: Asks the Village of Oak Park to provide funds and coalesce efforts in support of new arrivals. Leadership is needed to ensure coordinated and sustained care for our fellow humans.

Michelle Major: The humanitarian challenge needs local government's leadership. Trustees can play a critical role in advocating with the township, county, and state and coordinating a task force to address this challenge.

Ryan Pintado-Vertner: Asks Trustees to create a plan for supporting these new neighbors that conveys justice and mercy. Millions of dollars in grants are available for municipalities and the Village has its own general fund.

IX. Village Manager's Report

Village Manager Kevin Jackson introduced Chief DEI Officer Dr. Danielle Walker and Grants Supervisor Vanessa Matheny who provided an update on the asylum seeker support.

Manager Jackson said the Village put a plan together to provide a facilitated direct response working with our partners. The issue is trying to work with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) to see if there is an opportunity to get a reconsideration to be able to utilize the \$150K to

execute the plan and/or get additional funding. The Village has reached out to MMC leadership multiple times.

Resident and volunteer Celine Woznica presented the efforts of the Catholic parishes of Oak Park in response to the migrant crisis.

President Scaman thanked the staff, advocates, and volunteers and said her top priority is advocating as hard as she can to the MMC.

Trustee Straw said the Village needs to continue urgently pushing for the money from the MMC. We need to figure out everything we can do as a community to bridge the gap during the winter months.

Trustee Robinson inquired about the timeframe for a response from MMC. Dr. Walker said it can be as early as tomorrow to potentially next week. Staff have not yet seen an agreement. The municipalities that received funding are listed in the memo to the Village Board.

Trustee Robinson said she was surprised there was no reference to language access needs and inquired about the forms the migrants are required to fill out. Dr. Walker said the Village included language access in its grant application. Thrive is able to provide support in Spanish. Trustee Robinson suggested the Village also coordinate with smaller groups and individuals and centralize efforts into one place like the Village website.

Trustee Enyia thanked everyone for their efforts and urged others to help where they can. Legal aid is needed.

Trustee Buchanan thanked volunteers and agreed with the Village coordinating all of the services. She said she wants to ensure the other governing partners are also involved. She inquired about the migrants' opportunity for employment. Village Attorney Paul Stephanides said there has been expedited work authorization for some migrants. President Scaman noted that someone has to be registered in the system before they can work and that takes time.

Trustee Parakkat said \$150K is a lot of money and the Village can work with community partners who have grant writing or access to additional funding to figure out how to multiply that money and get us through the winter. Dr. Walker clarified the money awarded was for planning purposes and the Village is waiting to hear if the \$150K can be used to provide direct support. Trustee Parakkat asked if grant writing is considered planning. President Scaman said that has not been clearly articulated. The Village has a plan and does not need a consultant. The organizations currently providing aid need the help now.

Manager Jackson said staff will keep the Village Board updated on the conversations with the MMC.

X. Regular Agenda

A. [ID 23-467](#) A Presentation and Discussion of the Oak Park Avenue Streetscape Project and the Oak Park Avenue Streetscape Steering Committee's Recommended Conceptual Design and Alternatives

Village Engineer Bill McKenna introduced the Item.

Design Workshop Principal Manisha Kaul presented the Item.

Terra Engineering Senior Project Manager John Helfrich presented the project budget.

Oak Park Streetscape Steering Committee Chair Mike Fox shared his experience.

Trustee Enyia inquired about the date changes for the different options. Engineer McKenna said the changes would not be substantial and would be within the construction season. The underground project is predicated on sewer conditions and water main replacements. Trustee Enyia asked if there would be a middle bump in the benches which is a point of contention for our homeless community. Engineer McKenna said the Village hasn't gotten to that level of design detail. It has gotten feedback from the Aging in Communities and Disability Access Commissions. There are funds in the draft 2024 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget to do additional outreach for construction impacts.

Trustee Enyia said he likes the string lights and wonders if there is a solar component. Engineer McKenna said the street lighting is LED so the power output will be lower. The Village can look at solar options during the design phase. The charging stations have not been designed. The Village can reach out to the Library to learn from their experience.

Trustee Robinson requested the amount allocated in the CIP budget. Engineer McKenna said 2024 has a placeholder for construction. \$750K is for the Phase 2 detailed design and \$150K to start the Phase 3 construction coordination with the business district. 2025 is the only out year and has placeholders that are closer to \$6M for underground and \$5M local capital.

Trustee Robinson inquired about the durability of materials. Engineer McKenna said the low, medium, and high options have different durabilities. For sidewalks, concrete is best. For roadways, asphalt is best.

Brick is not a large incremental cost increase. The Village does not forecast out 50-80 years in commercial areas because they will be refreshed long before then. Trustee Robinson requested that durability be worked into the next round of conversation.

Trustee Robinson requested the Climate Ready Oak Park (CROP) plan section be included and the goal category be matched with it. She asked if linear parks have been considered. Engineer McKenna said curb planters would use native plantings along with tree canopy. Creating a linear garden throughout the length of a commercial area gets challenging with all of the needs for the narrow sidewalk space. Principal Kaul added that a healthy tree canopy along the length of Oak Park Avenue would contribute to the linear green infrastructure.

Trustee Robinson referenced the CROP goal of contracting with disadvantaged business enterprises. Engineer McKenna said the Village contracts out for landscape maintenance in commercial areas and this would be part of the Village's annual maintenance contract. Manager Jackson added that the draft Board goals will be distributed soon and staff will evaluate the Village's purchasing policy and discuss its direction with the Village Board.

Trustee Buchanan wondered if more than two EV charging stations will be needed. Engineer McKenna said the charging stations on North Boulevard are planned and the Parking Services Department is waiting to hear back on grant applications which could increase the number. The biggest challenge is finding that power supply from ComEd. Trustee Buchanan inquired about Hunter Court West. Engineer McKenna said there are businesses there and pedestrians can use the alley for connectivity to the garage and business district. Principal Kaul added it could also be used for art installations.

Trustee Straw inquired about the different material options. Manager Helfrich said the change from low to medium shows a lot more pavers and from medium to high shows a different type of paver. Trustee Straw inquired about the impact of the permeable parking lanes on the sewer system. Manager Helfrich said the Village is looking at grant opportunities to help quantify the benefit, which staff can then bring back to the Village Board. Engineer McKenna noted it would help reduce the burden to the sewer system in the immediate area and in the overall system. The rain gardens store water until they reach capacity and then it flows into the sewer system.

Engineer McKenna confirmed there are opportunities for bump-outs in parking areas to increase safety. The CTA is making their stations more

accessible which will enlarge the footprint so there will be some parking loss on South Boulevard. Trustee Straw said some of the unused parking areas along South Boulevard further west of the CTA station should be reconsidered.

Trustee Parakkat noted the 2025 CIP has a placeholder for \$8.75M and the range is going to be between \$9.5M and \$14.6M. Engineer McKenna confirmed the Village will adjust the 2025 numbers based on the direction received from the Village Board. Trustee Parakkat said the high option makes sense and recommended optimizing it if at all possible. He inquired about the maintenance costs on Marion and downtown. Engineer McKenna said bluestone pavers are resealed every 5-7 years and are higher maintenance but most is done in-house. This project would use smaller pavers which are better for maintenance.

Trustee Parakkat asked if the project could start in January and be segmented into smaller portions. Engineer McKenna said segmentation is likely and the Village will rely on weather forecasts to determine the best time to be consistently productive.

Trustee Parakkat inquired about the communications plan to small businesses. Engineer McKenna said staff will seek direction from the Village Board with any kind of business incentive plans, parking rate changes, etcetera. The Village will start engaging with businesses as soon as it has reliable information.

Principal Kaul showed bluestone and manganese paver samples. Trustee Wesley said he does not like bluestone because it does not hold up well. He noted tree canopies create safer streets. He said he favors making more parking spaces EV ready and transforming unused parking spaces into a better use. He said he favors the high option.

Trustee Straw recommended making some of the parking spaces Level 3 EV ready. He said the high option makes sense and he likes the bluestone pavers.

Trustee Robinson noted the bluestone pavers would tie into the ones on Marion Street.

Trustee Buchanan said she favors the medium option because there are a lot of other priorities.

Trustee Robinson said she favors the medium option given our other CIP goals and the durability issues with the high range materials.

President Scaman said she thinks we will see the investment come back over time. She said she is leaning towards the high option and does not have a preference for the pavers.

Trustee Wesley suggested creating a task force to mitigate the impact on the businesses. Manager Jackson said staff will have a specific strategy and plan for that and have been talking to businesses already. This is an economic development project that will have a plan to bring it all together.

Trustee Parakkat said he agreed with the task force suggestion to reach the newer businesses that are more vulnerable and have less of a voice.

B. [MOT 23-97](#)

A Motion to Receive the Citizen Police Oversight Committee's Semi-Annual Report

Assistant Village Manager/HR Director Kira Tchang introduced the Item.

Citizen Police Oversight Committee (CPOC) Member Dana Wright presented the Item.

Trustee Buchanan inquired if one-third of the stops were in error because the flock database had not been updated. Member Wright confirmed that is correct. Police Chief Shatonya Johnson said for those 12 stops, OPPD gets an alert from the license plate reader that the vehicle has been stolen. Upon making the stop, the officers will learn it is the registered owner. The only agency that can remove the data is the agency that entered it. None of the 17 complaints were from the mistaken flock stops. Trustee Buchanan said she thinks one-third is way too many mistakes.

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Straw, to continue the meeting past 10:00 P.M. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

Trustee Straw asked how many alerts are received about stolen vehicles. Chief Johnson said she can provide that information. Trustee Straw said it would be helpful to know how many police interactions we are creating by utilizing flock. He noted Zone 3 had eight complaints from one complainant.

Trustee Straw requested an understanding of the process. Member Wright said CPOC get the cases ahead of time and can review the documentation. They can view the video at the CPOC meetings and discuss before taking a vote. CPOC is able to request more data to make a decision.

Trustee Parakkat said he does not see anything concerning in the report and that CPOC seems to be working fine and OPPD is doing everything it is supposed to do. He asked if those stops would have been made without the flock data. Chief Johnson said without the flock data, OPPD would not

have been able to stop 12 vehicles and recover three firearms. Trustee Parakkat asked if having more technology would enable OPPD to be more effective. Chief Johnson said it would be beneficial to have more cameras in several blind spots in town. Trustee Parakkat said he supports that direction.

Trustee Wesley requested the number of vehicles that fled or could not be located. Chief Johnson said she can provide that information. Trustee Wesley said CPOC is working well but he is on the fence with the flock data because he appreciates the stops that turned into arrests but the stops due to bad data were all black. He wondered why only black folks get victimized by the data not being removed in a timely fashion. Chief Johnson said she is not sure if the other agencies know the race of the individuals by the license plates entered into the system. Trustee Wesley asked if there is regional data. Chief Johnson said OPPD could survey other police departments for that information. Member Wright wondered if it might be a self-reporting issue.

Trustee Robinson said she supports additional cameras. She referenced the housing study and very low rate of African American homeownership. She noted there could be a correlation between homeownership which provides a secure garage and crime related to car thefts. She asked if the agency is contacted to correct the data following an incorrect stop. Chief Johnson confirmed it is. Trustee Robinson commended OPPD for voluntarily opening itself up to this level of transparency.

Trustee Straw noted the placement of the cameras and that 6 of the 8 cameras are Washington Boulevard or south and 6 of the 8 cameras are Taylor Avenue or east. He said the cameras are targeted to specific areas and wondered if that is why they are picking up black vehicle owners. Chief Johnson said the cameras are placed based on crime data.

Trustee Enyia inquired what would have happened if CPOC's 3-3 vote was a 4-3 vote. Chief Johnson said there would have been more discussion to see if additional investigation was needed. OPPD is always available to clarify information. Trustee Enyia referenced the BUILD program and inquired about the age of individuals arrested from flock data. Chief Johnson said they are mostly in their early 20s. She said her approach is to determine the root cause to help eliminate it. She said she looks forward to working with BUILD to empower our youth to make wiser decisions.

Trustee Parakkat asked if any of the vehicles were in an accident or hit and run. Chief Johnson said OPPD uses flock data for violent offenses and felonies, not for traffic incidents. Trustee Parakkat asked if it is possible to correlate the data to accidents. Chief Johnson confirmed it is possible.

Trustee Wesley requested to get a key for the complaint table. Chief Johnson said she can provide that tomorrow. Trustee Wesley said if we can figure how to scale the system without also scaling the bad data, he would be in support of adding more cameras.

President Scaman inquired about OPPD's policy to check that the vehicle is not still stolen. Chief Johnson said it could be a situation where the vehicle was taken by someone the victim knows and the victim did not report that it was recovered.

It was moved by Trustee Parakkat, seconded by Trustee Buchanan, that this Motion be approved. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

XI. Adjourn

It was moved by Trustee Parakkat, seconded by Trustee Straw, to Adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:44 P.M., Monday, October 23, 2023.

**Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Hansen**