

June 10, 2024

Plan Commission Chair and Commissioners

Village of Oak Park Plan Commission

The Business and Civic Council of Oak Park is delighted to endorse the Keystone Apartments project at 1106 Madison St. This initiative, led by Housing Forward and the Interfaith Housing Development Corporation, aligns with our community's dedication to inclusivity and support for low-income and disabled individuals. The planned 36-unit development will offer essential permanent supportive housing, promoting stability and well-being.

As an organization dedicated to fostering economic growth, civic engagement, and community development, We believe this project exemplifies our commitment to enhancing the quality and diversity of life for all residents. We applaud this effort and eagerly anticipate the positive impact it will have on Oak Park.

**Council Members**

Bill Planek

David Pope

Frank Pellegrini

Mike Fox

Tom Gallagher

Gary Collins

Everett Ward

Athena Williams, Executive Director -Oak Park Regional Housing Center

John Hedges

Julianne Nery

J. Michael Williams



**Bill Planek**

Phone: 708-358-2634 Fax: 708-848-2259 41 Chicago Ave. Oak Park, IL 60302

Celebrating 30 years of making a home in Oak Park.

Oak Park Plan Commission  
Village of Oak Park  
123 Madison Street  
Oak Park, IL 60302

Dear Village of Oak Park Plan Commission Chair and Commissioners,

I am writing to voice my support for the proposed development at 1106 Madison Street. As a homeowner near this site and a person who has worked for years running organizations that provide supportive housing, affordable housing, substance use and/or mental health services to the most marginalized populations, I am proud of Oak Park taking leadership in creating access to affordable and accessible housing options.

**Our country is in an affordable housing crisis. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition:**

- Nationally, there is a shortage of more than 7 million affordable homes for our nation's 11 million plus extremely low-income families;
- Seventy percent of all extremely low-income families are severely cost-burdened, paying more than half their income on rent;
- There is no state or county in our country where a renter working full-time at minimum wage can afford a two-bedroom apartment;
- In Illinois, a renter making minimum wage would have to work 80 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom rental unit.

I chose to move to Oak Park 17 years ago because I wanted to be a part of a community that does better than our dismal national averages. But, when you look at the average rental prices in our community, we are not doing well. Based on the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus "Strategic Vision for Housing" presented to the Village Board in March 2024, Oak Park has an affordable housing crisis:

- 75% of Oak Park's renter households with incomes below \$50,000 are housing cost burdened.
- The rental vacancy rate in Oak Park has been less than 7% since 2016 (a 7% vacancy rate is generally considered to be a healthy vacancy rate.) Affordable housing providers report vacancy rates around 1-2%.

As a result of these and other factors, the median rent in Oak Park has been rising faster than incomes across the region over the previous decade. We could continue to pretend that there is not a problem in our community, or we can do something about it. **My vote is that we do something about it.**

1106 Madison Street will not fix our housing crisis, nationally nor in my 60304 zip code. However, it moves us in the right direction in many ways: (1) it breaks a terrible trend where for-profit developers would rather pay a small fine rather than set aside units for affordable housing, (2) Oak Park has such rich offerings through our schools, park district, libraries, restaurants and businesses, (3) we all benefit from increasing diversity (race, religion, and socio-economic) in our neighborhoods.

It can also not be overstated that the project will be led by two agencies that have a proven track record of competence and accountability: Housing Forward and Interfaith Housing Development Corporation.

They each have decades-long experience in the field and the ability to deliver on their promises, unlike many Oak Park for-profit developers. In line with Oak Park's goals of diversity and inclusion, their vision will provide our community with 36 units of permanent supportive housing and wrap-around supportive services targeted to individuals with a chronic disability. Also in line with Oak Park's sustainability goals, the building will include solar panels and be fully electric.

I whole-heartedly support the proposed development, 1106 Madison in my community. While one building cannot solve all of the problems of affordable housing, diversity, or climate change, 1106 Madison demonstrates that we can move in the right direction while being consistent with the values of our Oak Park community.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Potts  
839 Highland Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60304

*Cheryl Potts is the executive director of Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park Township where she oversees the funding of mental health and substance use providers. She has worked in the field of human services for over 25 years, beginning in HIV care and housing for the vulnerable and more recently promoting access to care for people living with mental health and substance use disorders. She has dedicated her professional life, and much of her personal life, to being a champion for those who are marginalized in the community. Before the Community Mental Health Board, Cheryl served as the executive director of AMITA Alexian Brothers Housing and Health Alliance, was the executive director of The Kennedy Forum, and participated in numerous local and national committees aimed at eliminating social disparities of health. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from DePaul University and a Masters' of Business Administration from North Park University.*

Plan Commission Chair and Commissioners  
Village of Oak Park  
123 Madison Street  
Oak Park, IL. 60302

To the Oak Park Plan Commission Chair and Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the Keystone Apartments housing development project at 1106 Madison Street, developed by Interfaith Housing and Housing Forward. As a member of the community, I believe this project will significantly benefit our community.

Interfaith Housing has a commendable 30-year track record in developing affordable housing, exemplified by their successful project, Grove Apartments. By partnering with Housing Forward to specifically address the unique housing needs for individuals with chronic disabilities, this development goes even further in fostering a stable living environment and promoting the well-being of our community members in need.

Moreover, the location of the development has many benefits for future residents and for the community as a whole. Being directly across from Rush Hospital on Madison Street offers convenient access to healthcare services—a vital consideration for the residents who will benefit from this housing opportunity. The transition from a single-story building to a five-story structure not only enhances the area aesthetically but also optimizes land use effectively. Furthermore, the inclusion of solar panels and the commitment to a fully electric building demonstrate a forward-thinking approach to sustainability, contributing positively to our Village's environmental goals.

In conclusion, I personally support this housing development project by Interfaith Housing and Housing Forward and encourage your support as well. This development not only aligns with our community's values of compassion and inclusivity but also promises to make a meaningful impact on the lives of its future residents.

Thank you for considering my support for this important project.

Best,  
Jayne Furlong  
Oak Park Resident  
Events and Communications Manager for Downtown Oak Park Business Alliance  
Member of the Oak Park Homelessness Coalition

*R.P. Fox & Associates, Inc.*  
*Fox Partners, L.P.*

1110 PLEASANT STREET • OAK PARK, IL 60302

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July 8, 2024

Plan Commission Chair and Commissioners

Oak Park Village Hall

123 Madison Street Oak Park, IL 60302

Village of Oak Park Plan Commission,

I am writing to support the development of the proposed Permanent Supportive Housing community at 1106 Madison Street. Interfaith Housing and Housing Forward are proven entities that have the ability to provide quality affordable housing. Both organizations have a track record of success to develop outstanding housing opportunities for those most in need.

Providing quality affordable housing is difficult for every community and Oak Park is not immune.

Units that help those experiencing homelessness are especially difficult to find and maintain. This development will provide Oak Park with a new construction building with 36- unit affordable housing units. Most importantly, it will have the supportive services people need.

Thank you,



Michael Fox

RP Fox and Associates, Inc

Carleton Hotel

1110 Pleasant St

Oak Park, IL 60302



**KERRY THOMAS** • CHAIR  
**JESSICA LUCAS** • VICE CHAIR  
**CHRISTOPHER O'HARA** • PAST CHAIR  
**DAVID YOUNG** • SECRETARY  
**LUTICIA FIORITO** • TREASURER

**JENNIFER C. HILL** • EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 9, 2024

Plan Commission Chair and Commissioners  
Village of Oak Park  
123 Madison Street  
Oak Park, IL 60302

Via email to Craig Failor, [cfailor@oak-park.us](mailto:cfailor@oak-park.us)

Members of the Plan Commission:

On behalf of the Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County, I am pleased to support Housing Forward's 36-unit project at 1106 Madison Street in Oak Park. As the lead agency for the Cook County Continuum of Care, we at the Alliance see the need for housing and social service programs to support the west suburban communities. We will gladly partner with Housing Forward in providing that support.

Housing Forward has played an active role for over 20 years in the Continuum of Care (CoC) through their work in the housing sector and related services provided to the homeless population. Housing Forward has assisted with Coordinated Entry, the Point-in-Time Count and the Housing Inventory Count, all of which helps the CoC determine the level of need within Suburban Cook County.

Interfaith Housing Development Corporation has likewise been a great partner to the Alliance. Interfaith developed Grove Apartments in Oak Park and has a 30-year track record of developing permanent supportive housing, including 20 buildings.

Thank you for your commitment to offering high-quality housing opportunities to the Oak Park community.

Sincerely,

Jennifer C. Hill



July 8, 2024  
Plan Commission Chair and Commissioners  
123 Madison Street  
Oak Park, IL 60302

Village of Oak Park Plan Commission,

Hello, my name is Elaine Phillips, LCPC and I am the Clinical Program Manager for Thrive Counseling Center's Crisis and Access Department. I am also a member of Oak Park's Homelessness Coalition. I am writing in support of the proposed Permanent Supportive Housing community at 1106 Madison Street, Oak Park.

This development is sorely needed. Navigating life without housing stability is stressful and impacts one's wellbeing in a variety of ways. Our community has an opportunity to respond to the housing crisis and provide a safe option for those seeking housing.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

Elaine Phillips, LCPC

On behalf of the Oak Park Homelessness Coalition

July 8, 2024

Plan Commission Chair and Commissioners  
Village of Oak Park  
123 Madison Street  
Oak Park, IL. 60302

To the Members of the Plan Commission,

I am writing in fervent support of Housing Forward's planned supportive housing building for those with chronic disabilities, to be located at 1106 Madison.

As a local Realtor, I have had countless hard conversations with would-be tenants and their family members, looking for rental housing in elevator buildings that is appropriate and available to those with little financial wherewithal (e.g. SSDI as their only source of income). There is virtually none.

Furthermore, as the parent of such a young adult, currently living at home, I am all too aware of the looming housing challenge that will face him and his sibling when my husband and I can no longer care for him here. As you may know, a local advocacy group comprised of other such parents facing this very need recently arose from the planning process of last year's housing study. The need is acute!


The bottom line is that within Oak Park's and the region's overall lack of affordable housing, *the lack of suitable housing for such individuals is even greater*. Typically, they are overlooked or forgotten because they are out-of-sight and often cannot advocate for themselves.

The building as planned has a multitude of positive attributes: a multi-story building = increased density = the "greenest" way to develop in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its sustainable bonafides will include solar power for its 100% electric energy use, per the Village's Climate Ready plan. It is easily accessible to both bus and trains for those who can utilize public transportation (and for their family members and in-home care providers, as needed, to reach them). Its location directly across the street from Rush Hospital provides accessible healthcare options for the residents.

The co-developer, Interfaith Housing, has a proven record with the Grove Apartments, and Housing Forward has been very successful with their scattered site model meeting the specific needs of those transitioning out of various unhoused situations (e.g. those being released from the hospital at Sojourner House, families who need larger units at Ohana House).

This project seems to me to exemplify all that is good in Oak Park. It provides a concrete way "to live our values" and I hope you will agree to enthusiastically support it.

Sincerely,



Deborah Wess  
208 S. East Ave.  
Oak Park, IL  
60302



**OAK PARK  
HOMELESSNESS  
COALITION**

June 20, 2024

Plan Commission Chair and Commissioners  
Oak Park Village Hall  
123 Madison Street  
Oak Park, IL 60302

Village of Oak Park Plan Commission,

On behalf of the Oak Park Homelessness Coalition, I am writing to support the development of the proposed Permanent Supportive Housing community at 1106 Madison Street.

Interfaith Housing and Housing Forward are mission-driven providing quality affordable housing. Both organizations have a track record of success to provide outstanding housing opportunities for those most in need.

Oak Park needs affordable housing, and particularly units that help those experiencing homelessness. This development will provide Oak Park with a beautifully-designed building, 36-unit affordable housing units and the supportive services people need.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Harris", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Harris

On behalf of the Oak Park Homelessness Coalition



STRONG FAMILIES. BRIGHT FUTURES.

July 7, 2024

Plan Commission Chair and Commissioners  
Oak Park Village Hall  
123 Madison Street  
Oak Park, IL 60302

Village of Oak Park Plan Commission,

On behalf of the being a resident of Oak Park for over 50 years, I am writing to support the development of the proposed Permanent Supportive Housing community at 1106 Madison Street.

Interfaith Housing and Housing Forward are mission-driven providing quality affordable housing. Both organizations have a track record of success to provide outstanding housing opportunities for those most in need.

Oak Park needs affordable housing, and particularly units that help those experiencing homelessness. This development will provide Oak Park with a beautifully-designed building, 36- unit affordable housing units and the supportive services people need.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gail Shelton".

Gail Shelton  
Resident and Director of Parent Education and Recruitment