



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

6:30 PM

Village Hall

I. Call to Order

Village President Vicki Scaman called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:33 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Present: 5 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

Absent: 2 - Village Trustee Enyia, and Village Trustee Parakkat

Consideration of Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session to Discuss Litigation

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

AYES: 5 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 2 - Village Trustee Enyia, and Village Trustee Parakkat

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

The Regular Meeting reconvened at 7:01 P.M.

VI. Roll Call

Trustee Enyia joined the Meeting at 6:41 P.M.

Present: 6 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

Absent: 1 - Village Trustee Parakkat

VII. Agenda Approval

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

VIII. Minutes

A. [MOT 24-200](#) A Motion to Approve Minutes from the July 9, 2024 Regular Meeting of the

Village Board

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

IX. Non-Agenda Public Comment

Stuart Barnes Jamieson: 25+ year resident and SEOPCO board member. Concerned about the relationship between the Village and Oak Park Regional Housing Center (OPRHC). Recommends establishing a community task force to work on this issue.

President Scaman expressed her gratitude for Village Attorney Paul Stephanides and his service to the Village of Oak Park. Village Clerk Christina Waters, the Trustees, Village Manager Kevin Jackson, and President Scaman read a statement. President Scaman and Liquor Control Review Board Chair Sarah Corbin presented Attorney Stephanides with a painting by local artist Tony Abboreno. Attorney Stephanides made remarks and expressed his gratitude. Deputy Village Manager Lisa Shelley read a statement on behalf of former Mayor Anan Abu-Taleb.

XI. Village Manager Reports**B. [ID 24-372](#) Review of the Updated Village Board Meeting Calendar for July and August 2024**

Public Works Director Rob Sproule provided an update on the major storm event last night.

Manager Jackson presented updated calendars for July and August. Trustee Robinson inquired about the next Finance Committee meeting to look at the revenue policy. Manager Jackson said staff can work to schedule it.

C. [ID 24-351](#) Presentation from the Community-Led Oak Park Reparations Task Force

Chief DEI Officer Dr. Danielle Walker introduced the Item.

Betty Smitherman: Resident of 30+ years and retired D97 teacher. Representing Euclid United Methodist Church. Urged the Village Board to adopt the recommendations of the Walk the Walk Oak Park Reparations Task Force.

Dot Lambshead Roche: Resident since age 10. Expressed gratitude toward the task force, Michelle Stigger, Bill Washington, Doug Dixon, Lynette Snorden, Sharon Holmes, Pat Brantley, Courtney White, and Betty Smitherman.

Jameel Rafia: We've come a long way but we have so far to go. Reparations are not new. Japanese and families of 9/11 were given reparations.

Lisa Shelton: Resident of 9 years. Hopes this will lead to more change and better outcomes in the village for people of color and especially those experiencing homelessness.

Sheila Wesonga: Resident of 10 years and one of 500 first cousins. Very few family members live in Oak Park because of past negative experiences.

Task force members Nancy Alexander and Christian Harris presented the Item. Dr. Walker provided additional information.

Trustee Buchanan inquired what the Village is doing to look at reparations. Dr. Walker said some of the Village is looking through our records. Attorney Stephanides said there is a dearth of information that does not lend itself to the kind of reparations program Evanston has so further study has to be done. Manager Jackson added that the Village is providing the space and opportunity for the task force to report out on their findings.

Trustee Buchanan said she finds the Village feedback wholly inadequate. It was on our Village Goals two years ago. She requested a proposal from staff on how this village can take the first steps in addressing reparations and would like to see a formal apology come to the Board for a vote as soon as possible. She said she would like to revisit that all taxes from cannabis sales go toward reparations and would like to hear more about a restorative housing program.

Manager Jackson clarified that the legal advice has been given and the Village is committed to helping the Board and community reach its goals. Attorney Stephanides referenced the slide deck in the July 2022 Agenda Item.

Trustee Robinson said she is less interested in Evanston's program and does not want to engage in any program that does not pass legal muster. She said she thinks a reparations analysis is the next step and would like to understand from our DEI office what framework we should be using as a local suburban municipality to recognize, acknowledge, and assess those historical harms. She noted that none of the municipalities listed in the memo were suburban and wondered if more similar municipalities have engaged in this process. She said she bristles at the comparison with Native American reparations. She said any program has to start with a conversation with Faith Julian.

Trustee Buchanan requested clarification on the task force's proposed definition of reparations versus Evanston giving cash. Attorney Stephanides said there is a difference between the asks of the task force and Evanston's program. She said she doesn't need proof of harm in writing to provide an apology. Trustee Robinson clarified she wasn't saying any harm should be proved up; we cannot have an apology that says the task force says we did bad things so we're sorry. We have to take ownership and do our own work.

President Scaman asked if issuing an apology before implementing reparations programs would put the Village in any kind of legal vulnerability. Attorney Stephanides said he did not think so.

Trustee Straw said we should start doing the work with haste and specificity to bring forward a resolution acknowledging and apologizing for the actions of the Village and the generational harm caused. He said he would like a down payment assistance program to address the generational wealth gap as a result of racist housing policies. Preserving the Julian home and family legacy is vital and should be done with the input of Faith Julian. He requested the status of the ongoing racial equity assessment. Dr. Walker said the assessment has provided great insight and opportunities to collaborate with community task forces like this one to provide additional input and cultivate a plan.

Trustee Wesley inquired about the Evanston program's legal challenges. Attorney Stephanides noted it is the only program of its kind in the U.S. Trustee Wesley said Oak Park pioneered exclusionary zoning which still exists today and contributes to segregation. He shared more history related to zoning and Percy Julian and emphasized that Oak Park hired Harland Bartholomew who invented racist zoning to come and rezone our village. There is more we can do to uncover specific instances of action this Village has taken that would justify reparations. He said he would like to see specifics because a general apology is insufficient. He said he supports the continuing investigation and moving forward.

Trustee Enyia thanked the task force and noted Asheville, North Carolina is also going through this process. If we don't do it legally, it will not withstand. People live through trauma forever because of what has happened throughout history and people are still being denied housing to this day. He said he wants to continue to listen to the recommendations and keep our foot on the pedal. We can get these things done if we start to set timelines and take the time to get this right.

Trustee Straw suggested putting a grant out for a historian to study our

primary source records and put together a comprehensive history. President Scaman noted that Evanston took two years to compile their research. She said she does wish for the apology to be genuine and she would want to work with staff and the task force. She said she is committed to working with Faith Julian and honoring her wishes.

Trustee Wesley shared more information about the Unity Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church of Chicago and the actions of the Village Board at that time. When we think about race here in Oak Park, there is a lot of bad that comes with some of the good that we do.

President Scaman thanked the Trustees and public commenters for sharing their stories and said staff are dedicated to fostering healing, reconciling, and positive change, which has been driving our racial equity work.

XII. Village Board Committees & Trustee Liaison Commission Reports

There were no comments.

XIII. Citizen Commission Vacancies

- D. [ID 24-371](#) Board & Commission Vacancy Report for July 16, 2024

There were no comments.

XIV. Citizen Commission Appointments, Reappointments and Chair Appointments

- E. [MOT 24-202](#) A Motion to Consent to the Village President's Appointment of:
Board of Health - Janet Cosby, Appoint as Member
Zoning Board of Appeals - Matthew Shoener, Appoint as Member

President Scaman read the names into the Record and noted this is the first time she has made appointments outside of the Citizen Involvement Commission (CIC) process with the Village Clerk. She thanked the CIC for the work they do.

It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Wesley, that this Motion be approved. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

XV. Consent Agenda

Approval of the Consent Agenda

It was moved by Trustee Straw, seconded by Trustee Wesley to approve the items under the Consent Agenda. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 6 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 1 - Village Trustee Parakkat

- F. [RES 24-224](#) A Resolution Approving the Village Manager and Neighborhood Services Director/Assistant Village Manager as the Village's Certifying Officers for the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Electronic Reporting System for Environmental Reviews Required for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Projects
This Resolution was adopted.
- G. [RES 24-245](#) A Resolution Awarding a Small Rental Property Rehabilitation Loan and Authorizing the Execution of a Loan Commitment and Agreement for the Property Located at 1017 North Harlem Avenue (SRP-049)
This Resolution was adopted.
- H. [RES 24-246](#) A Resolution Awarding a Small Rental Property Rehabilitation Loan and Authorizing the Execution of a Loan Commitment and Agreement for the Property Located at 1122 South Lombard Avenue (SRP-045)
This Resolution was adopted.
- I. [RES 24-249](#) A Resolution Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for Community Development Block Grant - Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) Funds with a Requested Funding Amount of \$637,166
This Resolution was adopted.
- J. [RES 24-259](#) A Resolution Approving a Professional Services Agreement with Baker Tilly Advisory Group, LP, to Provide a Strategic Financial Management Planning Program in an Amount Not to Exceed \$75,000 and Authorizing its Execution
This Resolution was adopted.
- K. [MOT 24-190](#) A Motion to Approve the February 2024 Monthly Treasurer's Report for All Funds
This Motion was approved.
- L. [RES 24-247](#) A Resolution Approving a Three-Year Master Agreement with an Option to Renew the Agreement for up to Two Additional One Year Periods with Civiltech Engineering, Inc. for Professional Transportation Engineering Services and Authorizing its Execution
This Resolution was adopted.
- M. [RES 24-248](#) A Resolution Approving a Task Order with Civiltech Engineering, Inc. for

Professional Transportation Engineering Staffing and Services for 2024 in an Amount Not to Exceed \$250,000, Authorizing its Execution, and Directing Staff to Prepare the Necessary Budget Amendment

This Resolution was adopted.

XVI. Regular Agenda

N. [ID 24-306](#) A Presentation on Emergency Overnight Shelter in Oak Park

Manager Jackson introduced the Item and Neighborhood Services Grants Manager Vanessa Matheny presented the Item.

Trustee Wesley inquired about the 112 folks with unsheltered homeless status. Manager Matheny said demographics include disability and area median income. He noted that drug use accounts for only 20% so the narrative that a significant majority experiencing homelessness are drug users needs to stop and we need to approach the situation with empathy. He inquired about the area median income (AMI) of 30% or less. Housing Forward CEO Lynda Schueler said that means someone has \$0 to about \$26K. He asked how many have \$0 income and she said she can supply that number.

Trustee Straw asked what the pipeline looks like from unsheltered to permanent housing and where can we best deploy resources. CEO Schueler said the Oak Park Homelessness Coalition hired an outside consultant during COVID to determine capacity. Housing Forward is the largest operator of permanent supportive housing in suburban Cook County. In order to maintain a steady state of 65 rooms at the Wright Inn and 40 beds at the emergency shelter, we need exponentially more housing. 77% have stayed less than 30 days. Trustee Straw said he is absolutely supportive.

Trustee Robinson said there are community benefits to addressing homelessness. She asked if the CDBG CV application for \$637K is the 23% number. Manager Matheny said the 23% was supposed to represent \$200K but the cost estimate has come back to \$795K. Trustee Robinson said she would consider SMASS 3 for this very limited scope should the CDBG CV application not be successful. She asked where staff recommended the \$200K come from. Manager Matheny said it can be unallocated ARPA funds or reallocating unused alternative calls for service funds. President Scaman added the Village will pursue the \$200K previously approved for the final migrant expenses.

Trustee Wesley said he supports SMASS for helping the homeless population and would like to motion to bring it back to the Board to waive all fees. He suggested Housing Forward apply for an exclusion for the

windows on the Wright Inn. He asked if more outreach leads to more folks entering the system. CEO Schueler said two of the five full-time outreach staff are dedicated exclusively to Oak Park. The Village supports Housing Forward through the Affordable Housing Fund. The Flexible Rental Assistance Program (FRAP) is relied on heavily when state prevention resources are not available. There is another bucket of funds specifically for families and 18-24 year-olds.

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

CEO Schueler recommended an ordinance requiring landlords to staple resources from Housing Forward when issuing eviction notices. Trustee Wesley made a motion to ensure that when someone is getting evicted that they are provided with the resources necessary to reach out for help. Trustee Robinson said she would like to first discuss the process for getting the materials to landlords. Attorney Stephanides noted the state-mandated process would have to be examined. CEO Schueler said it would also help if renters were not required to have a credit score of 640. President Scaman said that fits into the racial equity discussion as part of the Board goals.

Trustee Buchanan inquired about the chances of getting the \$600K grant. Manager Matheny said the Village worked with Metro Strategies to put together a strong application and is hopeful we will be awarded those funds. Trustee Buchanan asked if Housing Forward has asked for funding help from the 26 other participating communities, which CEO Schueler said they have not, though Housing Forward does receive support from Berwyn and Cicero. Trustee Buchanan recommended seeking the most sustainable choices in rehabbing decisions.

Trustee Wesley asked if the special use permit/text amendment could come straight to the Board for use cases like this. Manager Jackson noted it is scheduled for August 1. President Scaman said the special use permitting processes and work of the staff and commissioners is there to protect the Village. When it comes to the Board, it will hopefully be on the Consent Agenda.

Trustee Straw agreed we should fast-track projects like this, though it is important they go through the commissions for legal and procedural reasons. Manager Jackson noted that staff worked to expedite this one. President Scaman said the Community Development Citizen Advisory Commission (CDCAC) does an amazing job and their reports can be extremely informative to the community.

Neighborhood Bridge Executive Director Prentiss Butler introduced

himself.

XVII. Call to Board and Clerk

Clerk Waters said people can register to vote at Village Hall and reach the Clerk's Office at 708-358-5670. She thanked the Public Works Department and ComEd for their work after the storm. She thanked Attorney Stephanides.

Trustee Enyia thanked the task force, Public Works, and Attorney Stephanides.

Trustee Buchanan thanked Attorney Stephanides.

Trustee Wesley thanked Public Works. He made a motion for a study session on information sharing in the eviction process in Oak Park, which Trustee Straw seconded. He thanked Attorney Stephanides.

Trustee Straw thanked Attorney Stephanides. He said there is uncertainty around our fall elections and what next year will hold on a federal level. It is important that we in Oak Park continue to work toward being accountable and honest about who we are as a community and who we strive to be.

Trustee Robinson thanked Attorney Stephanides.

President Scaman thanked Attorney Stephanides. She agreed with Trustee Straw and said Oak Park can set an example of how to engage in respectful dialogue on difficult topics. She said she is saddened about the attempt on a former president's life and resorting to violence is never acceptable. She called on all residents to be good listeners and respectful in our dialogue with our neighbors.

XVIII. Adjourn

It was moved by Trustee Straw, seconded by Trustee Wesley, to Adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:37 P.M., Tuesday, July 16, 2024.

**Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Hansen**