



# Village of Oak Park

123 Madison Street  
Oak Park, Illinois 60302  
[www.oak-park.us](http://www.oak-park.us)

## Meeting Minutes

### President and Board of Trustees

---

Monday, July 10, 2023

6:30 PM Nineteenth Century Club, 178 Forest Avenue, Oak Park

---

#### I. Call to Order

Village President Vicki Scaman called the Special Meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

#### II. Roll Call

Trustee Straw joined the Meeting via video conference per Village policy for remote participation.

**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. Agenda Approval

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

#### IV. Non-Agenda Public Comment

There was no non-agenda public comment.

#### V. Regular Agenda

##### A. [ID 23-331](#) Village Board Goal Setting

Village Manager Kevin Jackson introduced the Item and outlined objectives: formulating a vision, updating our protocols, shaping perspectives, and team building.

Strategic Government Resources (SGR) Senior Vice President Hilary Shine presented the Item and facilitated the goal setting process with Trustees.

##### Values Discussion

Trustee Parakkat requested examples of city visions. VP Shine said Champaign has a good one. Trustee Parakkat noted the company and city visions may be different. He said the Village has a good set of values that

are not broadly understood in the community and the Village needs to use them more in its communications. Manager Jackson noted the distinction between community and organizational values.

Trustee Parakkat requested more clarification on values, such as defining community-centered and transparency. Trustee Buchanan said it is important to leave room for flexibility in case values are contrasting. Trustee Robinson said certain values will be more forward than others depending on the issue and many things discussed by the Village Board are influenced by external factors.

Trustee Straw said he would like to see the core values of equity and sustainability added because they need to be considered in every decision. Trustee Buchanan agreed. Trustee Parakkat noted they are included in the Board goals.

Trustee Buchanan requested a distinction between vision and values. VP Shine responded that values are how we go about our work and the things we hold dear. We will discuss them independently and then discuss how to put them all into a big vision. President Scaman said values should help guide you in reaching your goals so you can evaluate the now or later. VP Shine added that values help staff understand what they should bring the Village Board.

#### SWOT Analysis

Trustee Wesley requested a definition for "resource rich." VP Shine said it refers to financial and the sense that the Village has the ability to move forward on things. President Scaman said it also refers to the hundreds of community partners and nonprofit organizations.

Trustee Parakkat said the "progressive" political lens needs more definition. President Scaman noted they are Board defined strengths rather than community strengths. Trustee Parakkat said he would challenge the "good sense of direction" and he thinks more is needed.

Trustee Straw said he likes the balance between urban and suburban because it is thought of as a challenge but is actually a great strength of the community.

Trustee Wesley said one thing missing for him is that Oak Park is an aspirational community and very future forward.

Trustee Parakkat said where we want to go as a local economy is not defined and we are in a state of flux with recent departures including

OPEDC. He said affordable housing and economic diversity are not necessarily weaknesses; we are competing against our strengths and successes in other areas. Trustee Wesley agreed affordable housing is a strength and we are a market leader. Trustee Buchanan said there are people in the middle who do not qualify for affordable housing who cannot afford to live here. Trustee Wesley said Oak Park does not have enough housing stock for multi-generational living and the new high rises are not affordable.

Trustee Wesley said there are too many taxing bodies and the Village shoulders the burden of affordability. President Scaman said we have redundancy and competition and no community-wide master plan.

Trustee Straw said identifying new funding streams in a landlocked community is difficult as there is not much opportunity for retail growth. Trustee Wesley agreed.

Trustee Robinson said strategic communication should be included and be a flow of information with timing in mind. VP Shine stressed the importance of helping people navigate digital communication.

Trustee Wesley said data should be included and the Village is not transparent enough. Trustee Parakkat said the value of being community-centered supports the value of data. He said equity is issues from the past, affordability is issues of the present, and sustainability is future-focused. He said there needs to be a strategy to ensure we are addressing those in the right balance.

Trustee Wesley said he thinks having six governments is an existential threat. There are no checks and balances against each of the taxing authorities. We've been building a lot of economic value in the last 10 years but the community has not seen it because it gets taxed away. Once affordability goes away, Oak Park goes away. If diversity is lost, there is no chance at equity or inclusion. Manager Jackson suggested coordination as part of the strategy and working together as economic partners.

Trustee Parakkat said our state's tax revenue has increased and Oak Park gets a portion from online sales. Enabling local small businesses to have an online presence is another opportunity. Trustee Wesley agreed with and noted that Oak Park also gets more sales tax revenue as more people shop on Amazon.

Trustee Robinson said she does not understand how avoiding brave conversations is responsive to this because she thinks this Village Board has tackled some big issues that required courage to talk about. VP Shine

said if the brave conversations stopped and the Village Board started becoming fearful of having these conversations, that would be a threat.

Trustee Straw said that might tie into the complacency/stagnation point and there may be a resistance to the values of wanting to be a leader on things like equity and sustainability. Trustee Wesley said he views that as a lack of competition because Oak Park has been first in a lot of things, such as racial equity and community policing. Competition allows you to realize you need to do more and without it, you get stagnant and complacent. Trustee Parakkat suggested proportioning the amount of time the Village Board gives to different items to reflect our priorities and values.

Trustee Wesley noted there is a limited amount of resources, like TIFs, to jump start an economic district and North Avenue and Roosevelt Road are not in close proximity to other districts. Manager Jackson responded that we are moving toward trying to create a holistic economic development strategy that tries to address some of those issues. We need a vision, strategy, Board policy, and direction on what we are willing to vie as a community to help advance economic development in this tough environment.

Trustee Wesley said the cul de sacs have walled off North Avenue and Roosevelt Road. Trustee Parakkat noted that is a competing priority with traffic calming. President Scaman said we need to learn about our neighboring communities so we can work together toward the same goals. She said small businesses and the community's integration are strengths. Trustee Wesley said a limitation is not having a well honed community engagement process, which results in community backlash and losing investors. Trustee Enyia said it is a balance between trying to preserve the past and build the future and we need to ask residents what they want. President Scaman said there are residents who have their sense of community elsewhere because it is not welcome in our village. Trustee Parakkat agreed more could be done.

#### Vision Discussion

VP Shine shared examples of vision statements from Champaign, IL and Sunnyvale, TX. She asked what the Village Board wants Oak Park to be known for and what will make it successful long-term. Responses included equity, aspirational, sustainability (inspirational), diverse and inclusive (integration), innovative, leadership, affordability, brave, parks, racially and environmentally just, sense of ownership, resilient, sense of community, bridge builders, destination.

Manager Jackson added that Oak Park is referenced as a small

community yet it is very dense with an urban feel of a larger city.

#### Board Goals Discussion

VP Shine listed the 2021-2023 Board Goals: community affordability; community safety; leader in racial equity; support vibrant diverse neighborhoods; and invest in sustainable future. Additional pieces included economic development, governance, fiscal responsibility, transportation safety, and gun violence prevention.

The Trustees felt that transportation safety and gun violence prevention can be elements within community safety. Trustee Straw noted that community safety means more than community policing. President Scaman said she wanted to include a bike walk community, which Trustee Wesley said he feels that falls under community safety, sustainable future, and vibrant diverse neighborhoods. VP Shine suggested adding the word "connected" to vibrant diverse neighborhoods.

Trustee Parakkat said economic development should be its own goal. Trustee Wesley agreed. Trustee Robinson said economic development and fiscal responsibility should be merged into a new goal and affordability should remain separate. VP Shine noted that fiscal responsibility is a value.

Manager Jackson wondered if community engagement or transparency should be a goal or value. VP Shine said she can see it being part of connected vibrant diverse neighborhoods. She questioned if engagement should be added to the core values. The Trustees were in favor of that.

Trustee Straw wondered if being a leader in racial equity should be a goal or a value or both. The Trustees agreed with making racial equity a value. Manager Jackson noted that there is heavy agenda and a lot of work to be done for sustainability and racial equity. Trustee Parakkat suggested adding them as values and including them under vibrant diverse neighborhoods. President Scaman said she thinks governance is more about community engagement and transparency and decision-making are protocols.

President Scaman noted that technology is not included and could be included in governance if that becomes a Board goal. Trustee Wesley said that would include open data, the portal, and Police RMS. Trustee Enyia said privacy could be included in community safety. Trustee Parakkat said it could be included in sustainability. Trustee Wesley wondered if innovation could be a value.

President Scaman said she thinks economic development is a priority and community affordability is a value. She wondered if it should be economic vitality. Trustee Robinson favored vitality because she feels development is too narrow.

VP Shine said she will shape these goals and values and bring them back to hone in on in the next session to draft the vision statement and add definitions and determine if there are any gaps. The following session will discuss the principles of good governance and the I Opt results.

## **VI. Adjourn**

**It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Enyia, to Adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:31 P.M., Monday, July 10, 2023.**

**Respectfully submitted,  
Deputy Clerk Hansen**