



# Village of Oak Park

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

## Meeting Minutes

### President and Board of Trustees

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Tuesday, March 10, 2026

6:30 PM

Village Hall

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#### I. Roll Call

##### Call to Order

Village President Scaman called the Meeting to order at 6:34 P.M.

Village Trustee Wesley arrived at 6:48P.M.

**Present:** 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Eder, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, Village Trustee Straw, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Wesley

**Absent:** 0

#### II. Agenda Approval

It was moved by Village Trustee Eder, seconded by Village Trustee Straw to approve the agenda. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

#### III. Minutes

- A. [MOT 26-133](#) A Motion to Approve Minutes from the March 3, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Village Board

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

#### IV. Non-Agenda Public Comment

Resident Kris H. asked the Village to remove the new "Right Turn Only" sign, which has forced residents toward congested school and library areas. She reported that drivers still used Cuyler Avenue and were now diverting into alleys, increasing safety risks. She urged replacing the sign with a curb barrier that would block cut through traffic without restricting residents.

#### V. Proclamation

- B. [MOT 26-132](#) A Motion to Approve a Proclamation Honoring Faith Julian and the Julian Family Legacy in Oak Park, IL

Village President Scaman asked Village Trustee Taglia to read the

Proclamation aloud.

Village Trustee Enyia expressed deep gratitude and admiration for Faith and her family, noting their resilience in the face of hatred and injustice and their long-standing commitment to justice in Oak Park. He highlighted Faith's continued civic engagement, including recent efforts to ensure she could vote. He thanked the community for supporting the family's legacy and emphasized how honored the Village was to recognize them.

Honoree Faith J. thanked the Board for the proclamation and expressed how proud her parents would have been. She shared her hope that better things would come for the community and for the home tied to her family's legacy.

**It was moved by Village Trustee Enyia, seconded by Village Trustee Eder, that this Motion be approved. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.**

- C. [MOT 26-131](#) A Motion to Approve a Proclamation Recognizing Sandra & David Sokol as the 2026 Recipients of the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest's "Heart of Our Villages" Award March 12, 2026

Village President Scaman read the Proclamation aloud.

Resident Ray H. praised David for his strong service as a young Village Trustee, noting his willingness to voice his opinions and act as a role model. He also highlighted Sandra's major contributions to community relations and civil rights work, saying the recognition for both of them was long overdue.

Honoree Sandra S. expressed her gratitude for the recognition, reflected on her years of service in Village government, and thanked the Board, staff, and Historical Society for the honor. She also shared her family's appreciation, noting their long ties to Oak Park and how much the community has meant to them.

Honoree David S. recalled serving on the Village Board in the early years of the building. He expressed gratitude for the honor and reflected on raising his family in Oak Park, which became a home beyond what they ever expected.

**It was moved by Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, seconded by Village Trustee Straw, that this Motion be approved. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.**

## VI. Village Manager Reports

None; no action was taken regarding this item.

## VII. Village Board Committees

**VIII. Citizen Commission Vacancies**

- D. [ID 26-237](#) Board and Commission Vacancy Report for March 10, 2026

This report lists the expected number of members, current number of members seated and number of active vacancies for the Village’s 18 citizen boards and commissions. There are currently 23 vacancies.

**IX. Citizen Commission Appointments, Reappointments and Chair Appointments**

None; no action was taken regarding this item.

**X. Public Hearing**

**XI. First Reading**

**XII. Second Reading**

**XIII. Consent Agenda**

Approval of the Consent Agenda

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

**AYES:** 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Eder, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, Village Trustee Straw, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Wesley

**NAYS:** 0

**ABSENT:** 0

- E. [RES 26-152](#) A Resolution Approving an Amendment to the Renewal of an Independent Contractor Agreement with Cerniglia, Co. for 2026 Emergency Water and Sewer Repair Work to Increase the Not to Exceed Amount from \$40,000 to \$75,000 and Authorizing its Execution

**This Resolution was adopted.**

- F. [ORD 26-114](#) \*Concur with the Zoning Board of Appeals and Adopt an Ordinance Granting a Special Use Permit to Operate a Warehouse/Distribution Facility at 6209 North Avenue

**This Ordinance was adopted.**

**XIV. Regular Agenda**

- G. [ID 26-213](#) A Presentation on the Status of the Shape Oak Park - Missing Middle Housing Zoning Ordinance Update Project

Development Services Director Craig Failor reviewed the Village's 2020 Strategic Vision for Housing Plan, outlining its major goals, including expanded multifamily housing, missing middle zoning reforms, and holistic parking and housing updates. He explained that the Shape Oak Park project is an early phase of implementing these strategies, with consultants presenting a progress update and seeking Board feedback ahead of a final presentation expected in May or June.

Opticos Design Principal Jennifer Settle explained that Oak Park's shrinking household sizes and aging population mean the village is housing fewer people in the same number of units, posing long term challenges for the tax base, schools, and infrastructure. She acknowledged concerns about teardowns and land value pressures but noted that large scale redevelopment is currently unlikely, while emphasizing the need to study these risks and include tools to limit harmful demolitions, prevent lot consolidation, and incentivize smaller, more attainable homes. She also highlighted that middlehousing types can maintain neighborhood scale, reduce lot coverage compared to large single family rebuilds, and better align with sustainability and open space goals, all while expanding housing choices and addressing barriers created by the existing zoning code.

AllTogether Principal Marisa Schultz explained that the quality of the zoning recommendations depends on strong community engagement and shared that more than 600 residents have participated through surveys, focus groups, workshops, pop ups, and online tools. She described efforts to humanize zoning discussions by using character based storytelling to help residents consider different perspectives and overcome concerns about parking, taxes, and neighborhood change. She emphasized that this approach has broadened participation and set the stage for continued education and communication as the project moves toward regulatory recommendations.

Sightline Founding Principal Jake Seid explained that several zoning barriers-such as districts allowing only single family homes, lot assembly requirements, and complex design standards-limit Oak Park's ability to provide missing middle housing. He noted that current rules favor large single family development, add cost and uncertainty, and restrict accessory dwelling units. He concluded by showing potential options for simplifying and consolidating zoning districts to better support diverse housing types.

Village Trustee Straw requested deeper survey breakdowns, particularly renter versus homeowner responses, since renters were underrepresented in the formal data. He emphasized that missing middle housing can expand affordable ownership opportunities by offering alternatives to the teardown to luxury home trend, where first time buyers cannot compete with cash

purchasing developers. He clarified that the approach aims to create new attainable ownership pathways rather than diminish them.

Village Trustee Wesley pressed for a clear guiding goal for the zoning initiative, arguing that without explicit objectives-such as increasing total housing units, boosting affordability, or correcting racial inequities-the reforms risk having little real impact. He criticized the use of terms like “character” and “context” as historically exclusionary and emphasized that true equity requires distributing new housing across single family areas rather than concentrating density on busy corridors. He also argued for legalizing existing nonconforming buildings, enabling more height and more units, and designing zoning updates that expand supply, integrate affordability, and reflect the Village’s long term demographic and social goals.

Village Trustee Leving Jacobson thanked the team for their extensive work and expressed strong support for loosening zoning restrictions to allow more multi unit middle housing options. She emphasized that achieving equity and affordability is ultimately the Board’s responsibility, and that zoning reform must be paired with intentional policies such as incentives, updated inclusionary housing rules, and other tools to ensure meaningful affordability outcomes. She also raised concerns about who participated in engagement efforts, asking whether cost burdened residents or those at risk of displacement were included, and urged continued, intentional outreach to underrepresented voices so their experiences shape the final recommendations.

Village Trustee Eder thanked the consultants for their extensive work and acknowledged the difficulty of tackling zoning reform in the community where they themselves live. He expressed strong support for the direction of the project, framing zoning updates as one component of a broader strategy that cities like Minneapolis paired with funding, incentives, and inclusionary housing reforms. Drawing on personal examples he emphasized the need to make it easier for residents to create flexible, multi unit housing within existing footprints. He also highlighted the environmental benefits of added density, warned of the risks of doing nothing, and asked for clarity on real world data from cities that have eliminated single family zoning to understand expected rates of change.

Village Trustee Enyia thanked the consultants and acknowledged the difficulty of engaging residents given busy schedules and current national challenges. He emphasized that equitable outreach must continue, particularly through schools, senior networks, and other trusted community channels. Reflecting on his own family’s housing experience in Oak Park, he stressed that zoning reform is just one part of a multi layered effort

required to create long term, equitable housing opportunities. He urged residents to participate now and affirmed strong support for the direction of the project while encouraging creative solutions to remove participation barriers.

Village Trustee Taglia thanked the outreach team but reiterated concerns that many residents remain unaware of the zoning initiative despite strong efforts, noting that only a small fraction of the community has engaged so far. He confirmed with staff that a formal public hearing will occur and stressed that zoning changes could have major implications for population, services, infrastructure, and parking. He also expressed worry that developers might outbid first time buyers for teardown opportunities, threatening the stock of entry level homes and long term pathways to homeownership. He emphasized the need to balance new housing types with protecting starter home affordability, preventing displacement, and preserving opportunities for families to build equity in Oak Park.

Village President Scaman acknowledged that zoning updates will not immediately produce major population change, but emphasized that the reforms are a crucial foundation for long term goals centered on density, equity, and affordability. She underscored the need for robust and inclusive public engagement, respect for Oak Park's architectural heritage, and a realistic understanding of how zoning interacts with incentives and market forces. She said the Board may ultimately choose more ambitious reforms, but Opticos' analysis will help them assess impacts and trade offs while protecting naturally affordable housing and historic character across the Village.

H. [ID 26-202](#) A Presentation on the History of Historic Preservation and its Influence on the Village of Oak Park

Urban Planner Brenton Boitse presented his analysis of the economic impact of historic preservation using direct, indirect, and induced effects, noting that heritage tourism alone generates an estimated \$1.89 billion in total economic impact for Oak Park. He emphasized, however, that an even larger, often overlooked economic engine comes from local preservation related industries- architects, craftspeople, woodworkers, glass specialists, and skilled trades- demonstrating that Oak Park has an unusually high concentration of these jobs, giving it a clear competitive advantage. He warned that weakening preservation policies could harm these sectors, leading to layoffs and ripple effects across restaurants, services, and other local businesses, and offered to conduct deeper analysis in the future.

Landmarks Illinois Advocacy Manager Kendra Parzen explained that preservation today is not about freezing places in time but about managing

change in ways that respect history while supporting inclusivity, housing needs, and environmental goals. She emphasized that modern preservation focuses on everyday stories, marginalized histories, embodied carbon savings, and opportunities for adaptive reuse that can create new housing and economic development. She highlighted examples from across Illinois to show how historic buildings can support affordable housing, sustainability, small business growth, and community identity. Kendra later clarified that preservation is not infallible nor meant to be immune from change, but that it offers significant benefits beyond aesthetics. She stressed that preservation is not an impediment to other village goals and urged the Board to treat it as an equal consideration alongside housing, zoning, and equity objectives.

Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest Executive Director Frank Lipo described Oak Park's long, community driven history of historic preservation and its deep connection to the Village's identity, equity efforts, and architectural heritage. He traced how preservation emerged from 1960s civil rights era organizing and evolved through public private partnerships, volunteer leadership, and major survey work that documented the Village's rich architectural legacy. Frank explained how historic districts, landmark protections, and organizations like the Frank Lloyd Wright Trust and Pleasant Home Foundation grew from this movement, strengthening tourism, economic development, and community pride. He emphasized that preservation has always been about serving people not just buildings, and added Oak Park's ordinance is widely regarded as a model balancing individual rights with collective stewardship. He concluded by highlighting how decades of local investment, advocacy, and education have built one of the most robust preservation programs in the country.

David Sokol described arriving in Oak Park in the early 1970s, overcoming mortgage discrimination and quickly becoming involved in community issues and local advocacy. His interest in architecture and preservation led to work with the Frank Lloyd Wright community, the development of architectural tourism, and eventually a role on the village board. For over 50 years, he contributed to major preservation initiatives, served on multiple commissions, and helped establish Oak Park as a certified local government committed to historic standards. His continued involvement at both local and state levels reflected a lifelong commitment to preservation and a deep appreciation for Oak Park's architectural heritage.

Historic Preservation Commission Chair Asha Andriana explained that the HPC's role is often misunderstood-the commission does not impose arbitrary aesthetic opinions but evaluates exterior changes using the Secretary of the Interior's standards, with most demolition and alteration requests approved administratively. She emphasized the commission's

collaborative approach, the availability of economic hardship hearings, and Oak Park's unique mix of single family and multifamily housing, particularly within the Ridgeland Historic District. Asha highlighted the importance of adaptive reuse, the sustainability benefits of retaining older buildings, and the need to protect smaller "starter homes" from footprint expansions that erode affordability and limit opportunities for younger or first time home buyers.

Village Trustee Eder asked for clarity about the purpose of the conversation and how it relates to broader zoning discussions occurring the same night. He noted tensions between historic preservation requirements and housing flexibility documented in the Shape Oak Park memo, and asked whether Opticos was proposing any changes to historic districts. He said the history and benefits of preservation were illuminating but felt the presentation leaned heavily toward defending the current system; he requested more balanced data, including costs, regulatory burdens, and the real impact of preservation on project timelines. He emphasized wanting a fuller picture- both the advantages and disadvantages- so the Board can make well informed decisions.

Village Trustee Taglia thanked presenters and questioned why the Village is pursuing construction of a new council chamber rather than reinvesting in the historic building currently being used. He asked for clarity on the legal distinction between HPC decisions and recommendations from other commissions.

Village Trustee Enyia expressed strong appreciation for the presentation, saying it deepened his understanding of preservation's impact, both culturally and economically. He said Oak Park's historic identity is a major draw for residents and visitors and emphasized the need for clarity for homeowners who purchase in historic districts. He highlighted the emotional and community value of preservation and encouraged ongoing collaboration between the Board and HPC to balance density, economic development, sustainability, and heritage. He emphasized trust in the expertise of the HPC and thanked commissioners for their dedication.

Village Trustee Straw said the presentation was a valuable foundation for ongoing preservation discussions, appreciating the framing of preservation as "a conversation with our past about our future." He noted the need to understand how historic districts intersect with the missing-middle housing initiative, especially regarding contributing structures. He raised questions about the time and process costs for homeowners navigating HPC review and expressed interest in exploring modest revisions to rules for contributing buildings while still preserving the architectural character that benefits Oak Park. He stressed the goal of balancing resident flexibility

with preservation of community identity.

Village Trustee Wesley thanked presenters but expressed strong criticism of Oak Park's preservation system, arguing that while he values historic buildings, the Ridgeland Historic District was rooted in policies designed to manage-and limit-Black migration in the 1970s and 1980s. He cited census data and historic policy tools to argue that the district acted as a racial barrier rather than a purely architectural designation. He emphasized that preservation nationally grew out of inequitable systems, and Oak Park must acknowledge that history rather than claim preservation has "always been inclusive." He distinguished between valuing historic buildings and opposing a system built on past racial exclusion.

Village Trustee Leving Jacobson thanked presenters and reflected on how much information was shared, saying she would need to rewatch the presentation. She recalled that the only HPC appeal she has voted on involved building height and said that specific issues-like height and affordability-should be discussed directly rather than getting lost in broader policy debates. She appreciated the history and expertise shared and encouraged continued conversations that examine both shared values and points of tension.

Village President Scaman explained that this educational session was initiated years earlier due to repeated preservation related appeals and the Board's responsibility to understand preservation's purpose, history, and value. She stressed that while the HPC's perspective is critical, trustees must sometimes balance preservation with broader policy goals such as housing and zoning reforms. Scaman encouraged trustees to communicate openly with constituents and the HPC, watch commission meetings before appeal votes, and articulate their reasoning when the Board diverges from the commission. She emphasized the need for continued dialogue, use of the Landmark Illinois Relevancy Guidebook, and thoughtful decision making that respects both historic assets and modern policy challenges.

Village President Scaman summarized key themes from the Board: interest in understanding the costs of maintaining historic homes, the meaning of "contributing structures," district boundaries, and where preservation intersects with zoning and equity goals. Scaman reaffirmed the Board's role as the final appeal body and stressed the importance of trustees educating themselves on HPC discussions before voting on appeals, acknowledging that difficult decisions are part of maintaining Oak Park's density, diversity, heritage, and long term goals.

- I. [RES 26-143](#) Resolutions Approving the Grant Agreements in Lieu of Using CDBG Funds and Authorizing their Execution

Neighborhood Services Director/ Asst. Village Manager Jonathan Burch

explained that three of the nine organizations awarded FY25 CDBG public-service grants declined the funds upon seeing the grant agreement requirements, which they hadn't anticipated during application. This created a downstream gap in service delivery. To keep services whole for the current year, staff requested a one-time allocation of ~\$70,000 from the existing CDBG fund balance, and noted they'll delay the application release until April to ensure grantees are fully informed of any changing requirements before applying.

Village President Scaman encouraged residents and trustees to read the CDAC (Community Development Advisory Committee) reports, which detail the community benefits provided by partner agencies. She highlighted the Infant Welfare Society as an example, noting it offers free or sliding-scale medical, dental, mental health care, and vaccinations for children under 18-regardless of citizenship status-and shared a recent example of the organization providing free physicals for high school athletes.

Village Trustee Straw criticized federal restrictions that effectively pressure local service providers to limit support for immigrant/migrant neighbors. He urged the Village to use CDBG funds creatively and then reallocate general fund dollars to service organizations so critical, sometimes lifesaving services aren't constrained by federal conditions.

**It was moved by Village Trustee Wesley, seconded by Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, that this Resolution be adopted. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:**

**AYES:** 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Eder, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, Village Trustee Straw, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Wesley

**NAYS:** 0

**ABSENT:** 0

## **XV. Call to Board and Clerk**

## **XVI. Adjourn**

It was moved by Village Trustee Wesley, seconded by Village Trustee Straw to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 11:25 P.M.