



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

6:00 PM

Village Hall

I. Call to Order

Village President Vicki Scaman called the Special Meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Trustee Straw arrived at 6:13 P.M.

Trustee Wesley arrived at 6:03 P.M.

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

Absent: 1 - Village Trustee Enyia

III. Agenda Approval

President Scaman moved Non-Agenda Public Comment after Proclamations.

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

IV. Minutes

- A. [MOT 24-143](#) A Motion to Approve Minutes from the March 12, 2024 Regular Meeting and March 19, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Village Board

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

VI. Proclamation

- B. [MOT 24-144](#) A Motion to Approve a Proclamation Recognizing Holi - Festival of Colors April 14, 2024

Trustee Parakkat read the Proclamation into the record. Chief DEI Officer Dr. Danielle Walker thanked the Holi planning committee for the event this Sunday. Clerk Waters announced a family-friendly Neighborhood Clean-Up event this Saturday at 8:30 am starting at Village Hall. Visit the Village website to sign up.

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

C. [MOT 24-146](#) A Motion to Approve a Proclamation Recognizing Arbor Day April 26, 2024

Trustee Buchanan read the Proclamation into the record. Public Works Director Rob Sproule said the Village is partnering with the D97 Brooks Middle School Science Club on April 16 to do a presentation on why trees are important. Students are invited to attend the April 26 event to assist with tree planting and observe the forestry staff tree climbing competition.

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.

D. [MOT 24-150](#) A Motion to Approve a Proclamation Recognizing the Retirement of Pastor Kathy Nolte from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

President Scaman read the Proclamation into the record and presented a copy of the Proclamation to Pastor Nolte. Pastor Nolte made remarks and expressed her gratitude to the community. President Scaman acknowledged partners Beyond Hunger, Housing Forward, and Positive Youth Development.

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

V. Non-Agenda Public Comment

President Scaman said she would read a statement on behalf of the Village Board and they will not move forward with an additional resolution. She began to read the statement and was interrupted by members of the audience. She requested to hear public comment first.

Tom Shallenberger: Changing leaf collection will disincentivize people to plant trees. Bags are not the way to go.

Rabbi Max Weiss, Oak Park Temple: A ceasefire resolution will cause further divisiveness and is performative politics that will accomplish nothing.

Angelica Nunez: Presented 'A Permanent Ceasefire and Humanitarian Aid for Gaza' resolution and urged the Village to join 100+ other municipalities.

Dean Christ: Supported the resolution. The ceasefire will have a direct positive effect on our Palestinian/Jewish residents and the release of hostages.

Carollina Song: Supported the resolution. Has been living Jewishly for 30 years. Asked the Village to join the 130+ municipalities.

Hajjar Mohammed-Herbert: Arab American of Palestinian descent who grew up under Israeli occupation. We are suffering. The Village should join

the 130 localities.

Nicole Lombardi (reading for Dr. Deborah Adelman): Jewish and asked for support in passing the resolution in Oak Park.

Micah Nasrallah: First-generation Palestinian OPRF senior. Urged Village Board to vote yes to the resolution.

Caren Van Slyke: Jewish resident and member of Committee for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel. We need the Village Board to use its voice now and support a ceasefire.

Dr. Timothy Milonovich: Professor of Biblical Theology. Urged leaders to condemn this violence in Gaza and call for a ceasefire.

Faisal Alabsy: Palestinian American resident. Asked the Village Board to act on the resolution and amplify a message of peace.

Laurel Niedospial: Jewish resident. Finds it egregious that a Village so hell-bent on marketing themselves as progressive needs to debate the need for a ceasefire.

Marc Segal: Member of local Jewish community. Asked the Board to not consider the resolution, which will thrust Village government into an international conflict for which it has no responsibility or expertise.

Jim Poznak: Jewish resident. The resolution is a humanitarian item and is not anti-Semitic. Step up and take your vote on the record.

Ruth Babcock: Of Jewish heritage. Silence during genocide is a crime. She said she will work hard to unseat every Trustee because this is not a democracy.

Judith Alexander: Hopes the Board will decline to consider the resolution. A ceasefire would leave Hamas in power. Please follow Evanston in declining its consideration.

Alan Peres: Asked the Board to not adopt the resolution. You are not elected to deal with foreign policy but to solve local issues. Work to calm tensions in the Village.

Loren Williams: Thanked the Board for not wasting its valuable time on international relations that are not part of its mandate.

Rabbi Adir Glick: Leader of Temple Har Zion. Concerned the Board is

even considering the resolution. Voting on foreign policy resolutions is not part of Oak Park's mission or goals.

Jay Arbetman: Read for Robin Arbetman, educator at Oak Park Temple. Urged the Board not to adopt a resolution which is beyond the scope of community leaders.

President Scaman apologized for making a statement before hearing all comments and said the Village Board reads every email it receives. She expressed concern about division and said she wants to learn and hear from her neighbors. She explained the Trustees are not able to vote on an item that is not on the agenda. She continued to be interrupted by an audience member calling for the Trustees to take a vote. Assistant Village Attorney Rasheda Jackson also explained that it is not possible to vote on this item tonight. Audience members continued to interrupt President Scaman. She read a prepared statement on behalf of the Village Board.

Venessa Gonzalez (virtual): Asked that the Village Board reconsider their decision and pass a resolution to save lives and work toward lasting peace.

IX. Regular Agenda

E. [ID 24-200](#) **A Presentation and Discussion on the Outcomes of the Village Hall Renovation Feasibility Study and Recommendations of the Facility Review Committee**

Village Manager Kevin Jackson acknowledged the work of the Facility Review Committee (FRC) and Village staff. Public Works Director Rob Sproule introduced the Item. FRC Chairs Colette Lueck and Daniel Roush presented the Item. Johnson Laskey Kindelin (JLK) Architects President Meg Kindelin presented additional information. President Scaman expressed her gratitude to the FRC and JLK.

Trustee Buchanan said she is concerned with infrastructure (leaks, outdated HVAC, rotting wood) and inquired if those are considered in the cost estimates. President Kindelin said everything in the building can be repaired and are included in the estimates. Trustee Buchanan inquired if the scheme would keep the plaza. President Kindelin said most people arrive by car. The parking lot is dangerous and the back entrance is unclear. The addition on the south side would correct that and the courtyard needs to be programmed to make it more lively.

Trustee Robinson noted the report's distinction between architectural significance and historical preservation significance. President Kindelin said there have been no major modifications. It is significant because of its associations with democracy and its ideals associated with the form.

Trustee Robinson said it is important to figure out a way to move forward with the police station while taking a slower process with Village Hall. She requested more cost analysis and details. President Kindelin confirmed the \$30M is to cover the renovation of the Village Hall for continued use in Scheme 1 which does not have an addition. All schemes add the additional elevators and Scheme 1 provides space for additional staff. Only one of the three schemes can be chosen; parts of them cannot be combined. Chair Lueck said the Board needs to figure out some more things before any architect can move forward and fully develop a plan with numbers. She recommended a Board committee or a full-day retreat to get to the answer to be able to move forward.

Trustee Robinson said she would like to see a subset of the FRC remain intact to partner with Trustees as we move through the next phases. Chair Lueck said the FRC could generate a list of next step questions and activities. Trustee Robinson noted the proposed safety enhancements in Council Chambers. Chair Lueck agreed it was a real concern to be balanced with wanting to invite people in and make them feel welcome. Chair Roush noted part of this building's historical significance comes from Oak Park's efforts to be a racially integrated community of housing. Trustee Robinson clarified her preference would be for the police station to not be part of the Village Hall structure.

President Scaman inquired why the courtyard ramp is not feasible to be used. President Kindelin said it is very unsafe. The slope is off and it is not appropriate for use of a wheelchair. President Scaman requested Trustee Robinson's priorities. Trustee Robinson responded that her priorities would be accessibility and safety, which are embedded in the \$30M, and the building improvements to make it functional, like the HVAC.

Manager Jackson requested clarification on the stages of project development and how it relates to cost estimation. We are currently in the conceptual round. To get more refined numbers, we need to move to the next stage of schematic design. We paused on that to work together to identify a pathway for schematic design around which we could work with a firm to get more refined costs. Director Sproule said we cannot continue to flush out conceptual numbers without board feedback on priorities. We need to hone in on some specifics in order to refine those numbers further.

Trustee Parakkat said he voted against Option 4 last July and there has been no movement on the police station which has impacted our ability to attract and retain police officers. He said he is happy renovation is preferable and moving forward on the police station with urgency is his priority. Regarding Village Hall, he agrees with addressing the accessibility

and safety pieces though he would like to see us be more cost effective, look at it modestly and creatively, right-size, and phase it over a period of time. He said he would like us to explore grant opportunities for this historic building.

Manager Jackson said the Board can select an option that would allow the staff to efficiently do some in-depth financial analysis and come up with a strategy inclusive of identifying multiple opportunities to address the Board's priorities on a specific option. Trustee Parakkat said if he knew the Village could get \$25M in grant funding, that would make his decision a lot easier. Manager Jackson said the staff can identify grant opportunities for historic preservation and they would explore every opportunity to bring down the cost. Director Sproule added that grantors want to give funding for projects that are ready to go. President Kindelin said the restrictions would be how much can you get for a historic restoration. She recommended looking at energy efficiency federal grants and monetizing tax credits. Director Sproule said staff are working to have an independent financial consultant join the May meeting.

Trustee Wesley said he likes the work that was done but not the price tag. These numbers are now in the same ballpark which makes it hard for him to choose. President Kindelin said the conceptual recommended is \$39.2M. He inquired about the difference between that and the \$57M scheme. President Kindelin said the preferred scheme was pared down even further. Instead of having three levels of functional space, the lobby will be on the main level with no programming on the basement level. The next stage will give the ability to answer the harder questions about value engineering. The two things that drive a project are schedule and budget so this building buys you time. She recommends making a 10-year master plan.

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.

Trustee Wesley said he is not advocating tearing down this building. It is about opportunity cost and what is the best value we can get for it. If we build something new, we'd spend the same amount of money and gain a lot more flexibility. He doesn't want to spend \$112M on just a new Village Hall and police station. He said he would like to explore the possibility of integrated and commercial uses, like the Vantage building. Manager Jackson said we would try to extend the lifecycle of this building another 70-80 years which is a big value. Technology will need to be upgraded and that analysis will be concurrent with any option chosen.

Trustee Straw said the different price points reflect how we live into our values differently. He said he liked Scheme 2B with the customer-facing

services in the addition. This isn't just feasible--it's more cost effective than the previous Option 4. We are looking at a minimum of \$30M to get this Village Hall to where it needs to be to function into the future. He said thinks we are going in the right direction and it allows us to take a phased approach to have the least disruption to Village services. Director Sproule said staff will compare the existing Option 4 to the options presented tonight for the May meeting. Trustee Straw said he wants to highlight accessibility, inclusivity, sustainability, and environmental impact in whichever design is chosen.

Trustee Buchanan said she doesn't see how the Board can make a decision about Village Hall without knowing what we are doing with the police station. She said she does not like the architecture of this building and referenced brutalist architecture designed by predominantly white men as their artistic expression. She wondered how much they were considering the people who were going to be working in and visiting the space.

President Scaman said she grew to appreciate this building more through the FRC process and it is important to her that we are doing what we need to do so the work we are doing here is matching our values. The cost and burden to the community matters to her and she would like to see what is possible with partners in the community.

Trustee Wesley said he would like to see the anticipated maintenance costs of this building versus new buildings over time to be able to understand the total cost of ownership. President Kindelin noted this is a strong building that has not had much change in 50 years.

President Scaman said she is confident we will have a path forward at the May 7 Board meeting and she encouraged Trustees to reach out to staff before then.

X. Call to Board and Clerk

President Scaman acknowledged the passing of Cook County Clerk Karen Yarbrough and extended her sincere condolences to her family. Clerk Waters read a statement in memoriam of Clerk Yarbrough.

Trustee Straw acknowledged the public comments and said he has been reading and thinking about the horrible ongoing humanitarian crisis and he wants to see the violence end. He noted that no one asked him about foreign policy during his campaign. He said the Board did have conversations and there was not a will to move forward with a resolution, which does not mean your voices were not heard and your comments were not valuable. He said he would be willing to continue in conversation whether there is anything he can do as an individual citizen to lend any

voice to making peace here in Oak Park.

Trustee Buchanan said tonight was the most difficult meeting she has attended. She saw Oak Parkers at their worst; their treatment of people who reasonably disagreed with their position was unacceptable. The accusations at us as a Board as if we are not horrified by the deaths in Gaza or care about our Palestinian residents was frustrating, maddening, and just sad. She said she leaves this meeting with a very heavy heart.

Trustee Parakkat said he ran for office to be included and involved and give back to the community. Tonight's Holi proclamation paves the way for inclusion for more people in our community. Holi is about unity and he would like to correlate that with what he saw unfold during public comment. He said he wants the community to come together and have reasonable discussions about how we can set aside our differences and work toward common goals. He said he looks forward to celebrating Holi with everyone in the community this weekend. He wished everyone, especially our Muslim neighbors, a very happy Eid.

President Scaman apologized to her fellow Trustees and acknowledged that her opening statement contributed to the tensions during public comment.

XI. Adjourn

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Robinson, to Adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 10:49 P.M.

**Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Hansen**