



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Monday, July 17, 2023

6:00 PM Nineteenth Century Club, 178 Forest Ave., Oak Park

I. Call to Order

Village President Vicki Scaman called the Special Meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Trustee Enyia joined the Meeting via video conference per Village police 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 Straw to approve the Agenda. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

IV. Non-Agenda Public Comment

Tom Bassett-Dilley: Resident and architect specializing in energy efficiency. Read about the Village Hall and police station proposal. Presented information on retrofitting that he also emailed to the Village Board. Urged the Village Board to look carefully at the idea of renovation.

V. Regular Agenda

A. [ID 23-342](#) Village Board Goal Setting

Village Manager Kevin Jackson introduced this third goal setting session. The Thursday meeting is cancelled. A final session may be scheduled. Village staff will follow up with Trustees for their availability.

Strategic Government Resources (SGR) Senior Vice President Hilary Shine stated the meeting goals: review and revise the vision statement; flesh out the goals; and discuss key initiatives.

Vision Statement Discussion

Trustee Parakkat said he felt locational advantage, safety, and economic vitality were missing. He suggested "The Village of Oak Park is an attractive place to live and visit because of our location, our people, our shared values and culture. We are a leader in social transformation enabled by brave and thoughtful decisions coupled with committed and intentional action, decisions and actions that are racially and environmentally just to create a more safe and affordable community with a vibrant economy." Trustee Robinson said she likes it but thinks it is long.

President Scaman said she prefers "desirable" instead of "beautiful." Trustee Straw agreed. He questioned including locational advantage because a vision statement is aspirational and location is fixed. Trustee Buchanan agreed. Trustee Straw said he is okay with "safe" but does not want to drop "equitable and sustainable." Trustee Parakkat noted that same sentence includes "racially and environmentally just." Trustee Enyia agreed with "safety" and "vibrant economy" and suggested "highly desirable." The Trustees agreed. Trustee Straw noted there are other aspects of equity in addition to racial and environmental. President Scaman suggested "safe" and "vibrant future."

Trustee Buchanan said a lot of time has been spent on this vision statement. She recommended voting on it and moving on. Trustee Wesley agreed. President Scaman stated "Oak Park is a leader in transformational thought and action committed to making brave decisions that are racially and environmentally just and create a safe, equitable, affordable, and vibrant future." The Trustees were in agreement.

Values Discussion

VP Shine listed the revised Board values: community-centered in our thinking; fiscally responsible with our public resources; build trust and respectful dialogue in board actions; transparent and accountable to the community; engage and collaborate with the community and partners; and focused on equity, innovation, and sustainability. Trustee Buchanan suggested removing "community-centered in our thinking."

Board Goals Discussion

VP Shine listed the revised Board goals: community affordability; community health and safety; advancing racial equity; vibrant, diverse, connected neighborhoods; implementing the Climate Action Plan; and economic vitality. Community affordability strategies include: removing economic barriers, limiting the tax levy (to 3%), pursuing governmental partnerships, and diversifying the tax base.

President Scaman cautioned the 3% could change and be too limiting. Trustee Wesley suggested "limiting the tax levy increase to 3% or CPI." President Scaman said that sounds like a policy. Trustee Robinson agreed. Trustee Buchanan said she is okay leaving out the 3%. Trustee Straw said he is good with it as written. Trustee Parakkat said he favors leaving a number in and including CPI. Trustee Wesley suggested "limit the tax levy per finance policy." The Trustees were in agreement.

Manager Jackson explained that the financial policy is an addendum to the budget that provides guidance to staff on preparing the budget. He said perhaps there is a need for this Village Board to review it. Trustee Parakkat noted that cannot be done before staff present their budget in September. Manager Jackson responded that everything related to the budget is per the Village Board's direction and adoption. President Scaman noted that Trustee Parakkat is on the Finance Committee and the finance policy states how much the Village should have in reserves. VP Shine suggested codifying the practice of the 3% limit into policy.

VP Shine moved onto "community health and safety." Trustee Straw said not everyone knows that public health falls under community safety so he thinks it's important to add the word "health." Trustee Buchanan agreed. Trustees Wesley and Robinson said they did not have a preference.

VP Shine listed the Board strategies: reduce crime; provide for the safe use and enjoyment of private and public property; improve aging infrastructure to remove health and safety hazards; provide for safe mobility which includes walking, biking, driving, and ADA; and ensure healthy work environments for Village workers. Trustee Buchanan said "private" is confusing and suggested removing "enjoyment." Trustee Straw said the language does not convey the ability to be out and about in the Village and not be harassed for who you are. Manager Jackson wondered if that fits better into "welcome and inclusive community."

Trustee Parakkat said he doesn't see the enforcement of laws included and he feels it should be. He said there is a perception that enforcement is lenient. Manager Jackson wondered if that would be a point under reduce crime or its own strategy. President Scaman noted that enforcement often happens based on complaints. Trustee Buchanan said she does not agree with increased enforcement as a goal because if something isn't being enforced, there is a reason, such as staffing. Trustee Straw agreed and noted that increased enforcement can create equity issues. He said "reduce crime" is too vague a goal. Trustee Wesley agreed. Police Chief Shatonya Johnson said violent crime is a priority along with proactive policing, which she defined as being present and involving the community. President Scaman said she would like to see Oak Park partner with the

juvenile adjudication program *Build* in the Austin neighborhood. Manager Jackson said that sounds like its own initiative.

Trustee Wesley said he would like to see the metric of implementing alternative response for the reduce crime goal. Trustee Straw suggested "reduce violent crime." VP Shine noted that would not include property crime. Trustee Parakkat said home invasions and carjackings are major safety concerns. President Scaman said engaging youth organizations is a strategy to prevent carjackings. Trustee Buchanan said she did not want it limited to violent crime. Trustee Straw said property crime is addressed in the "safe use and enjoyment of public and private property."

Manager Jackson suggested a separate point for "implement the BerryDunn recommendations" with a technology point beneath it. Trustee Parakkat suggested including the Vision Zero Plan. President Scaman suggested including the Neighborhood Greenways Plan and to "identify new opportunities for community engagement and community campaigns." She suggested "explore alternatives for youth adjudication and engagement." Trustee Enyia suggested including "the BerryDunn report in coordination with CPOC, CRC, and CISC to work with staff to address policies that may be outdated and predatorial towards minorities." Manager Jackson said the racial equity assessment could also be helpful.

VP Shine stated "advancing racial equity" as "ensure access to government services (language ability)." Trustee Robinson said access needs to be qualified by putting "equal" back in. Manager Jackson said staff will bring a proposal to the Village Board on language access. He suggested "equitable access" which Trustee Robinson agreed. President Scaman added "staff will identify language access plan." Trustee Straw requested an initiative under "ensure equitable access to government services" for improving disability access to Village Hall and services.

VP Shine stated "assess and address historical inequity (reparations)." Trustee Buchanan said she thinks it is fine to have reparations as a sub-point. Manager Jackson suggested adding "complete the racial equity assessment and develop a racial equity action plan." Chief DEI Officer Dr. Danielle Walker suggested "implementing the racial equity action plan." Trustee Parakkat inquired if "explore paths to home ownership" would be under this goal. Trustee Wesley agreed it should be. Trustee Parakkat wondered if the goal should just be "advancing equity." Dr. Walker responded that racial equity is an all-encompassing strategy that shows a deliberate strategy that leads with race. Trustee Enyia recommended creating a minority vendor list for the Village. President Scaman suggested putting it under "ensure access to government services and contracts."

Trustee Buchanan wondered if "enhance cultural competency" should be better defined and whether it is the role of the Village Board, staff, or community. Manager Jackson responded that staff will identify priorities and bring them to the Village Board. Trustee Wesley wondered if it should continue to be the role of the Board or if it should be expanded. Trustee Straw said this is more public engagement and education around what we are trying to achieve. President Scaman said she would like to see enhancing cultural competency amongst our partner agencies.

Trustee Parakkat shared a personal experience to highlight the need to prioritize cultural competency. Trustee Wesley agreed. Dr. Walker acknowledged Trustee Parakkat's experience of microaggression. President Scaman referenced *Dinner and Dialogues* and *Race Conscious Dialogues*. Manager Jackson said community-based training is an option. Dr. Walker mentioned fireside chats, a speaker series, and a cultural competency ambassador program.

VP Shine requested a definition of "vibrant, diverse, connected neighborhoods." Trustee Robinson referenced the housing trust fund. Manager Jackson responded that the interest is to support the sustainable advancement of affordable housing along with the completion of the housing study and the development and implementation of a housing strategy. Trustee Straw said he would like the Village to evaluate single family housing zoning and consider the possible diversification of housing stock. Trustee Wesley suggested "support additional housing units at scale." Trustee Robinson wondered if that would include reconsidering the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance (IZO) threshold limits.

Trustee Buchanan said she would like the Village Board to consider discontinuing the overnight parking ban. President Scaman said she supports that evaluation by staff. Trustees Parakkat and Robinson said they are not interested in having the conversation. Trustees Wesley, Straw, and Enyia said they are.

Manager Jackson wondered if separate goals should be created for community engagement and infrastructure. Trustee Parakkat said he would like to make it easier for community organizations to organize events. President Scaman said she would like to review the Village's special event process to see if it's possible to make it more affordable. Trustee Straw recommended putting the Neighborhood Greenways Plan under "infrastructure that promotes active and sustainable transportation." Clerk Waters noted that the business districts are part of the vibrant neighborhoods. President Scaman and Manager Jackson agreed.

Trustee Buchanan said she feels the Climate Action Plan is missing

milestones to get us to the 60% reduction by 2030. Chief Sustainability Officer Marcella Bondie Keenan listed the key strategies for buildings and housing and transportation to get to the 2030 scenario. Manager Jackson noted the systematic reporting on the Plan's implementation progress. Trustee Buchanan said she feels more engagement is needed to educate residents on what they need to do differently. She suggested creating new revenue sources to implement the Plan and charging a higher rate for gas-only SUV vehicle licenses. Trustee Straw recommended twice annual reporting on progress to the Village Board. Trustee Parakkat said he would like to see investment in grant writing capacity for the Plan.

President Scaman noted there many environment and energy groups in the community and she would like to see some consolidation. She said she recently purchased a hybrid EV vehicle and she doesn't feel enough information is available for residents to make the decisions they need to for us to stay on task. Trustee Robinson noted that people buy cars infrequently and she feels incentivizing is more productive than penalizing. Trustee Buchanan suggested giving EV owners a discounted fee though that would not raise money for the climate fund. Trustee Straw said he is fine with including potential fees for discussion.

VP Shine requested a definition of "economic development vitality." Trustee Parakkat said his highest priority is to look at the problem holistically because there is no economic development infrastructure. He said he would like to consider distributed development looking at the other business districts and prioritizing streetscaping along Oak Park Avenue. President Scaman agreed with supporting all small business districts and infrastructure. She referenced the North Avenue Streetscape Plan and the need to create a similar plan for Roosevelt Road. Trustee Wesley said millions have been spent on streetscaping and it hasn't worked so he'd like to see something more tangible. President Scaman noted the North Avenue Plan is funded by Rep. Lilly. She suggested "create an economic vitality plan for North Avenue" and one for Roosevelt Road. Trustee Buchanan wondered if there are smaller plots along North or Roosevelt that the Village wants to consider purchasing. Trustee Wesley said he is in favor of that because it is easier to get something built and the Village would have more say in what gets built.

President Scaman requested an investigation by the Finance Committee on the Village's incentive and acquisition policies. Trustee Parakkat said there are multiple strategies, including exploring land acquisition, TIFs, or tax incentives. Manager Jackson said these core elements should come out of the plan to help the Village develop an incentive policy.

Trustee Wesley said he would like to see the sales tax revenues and

business license applications continue to increase. Trustee Parakkat wondered if the Village can keep the current pace with the current occupancy rate. Trustee Wesley said he'd like to see retail vacancy stay below 3%. Trustee Parakkat agreed that would be a better metric and requested to add hotel/motel and short-term rental taxes. Manager Jackson said the interest might be to broaden the tax base. Trustee Wesley said having larger department stores and more residents would generate more sales tax revenue. Trustee Straw suggested "support new and existing small businesses to get us under the 3% retail vacancies." Trustee Wesley agreed with that. President Scaman "recruit and retain new and existing small businesses." Trustee Straw recommended "support" instead of "retain." President Scaman agreed.

Trustee Straw noted our community gateways, such as the vacant Marshall Field's building and Mohr plant, and what that message communicates to visitors. Trustee Buchanan said OPEDC worked on both of those for four years. Trustee Parakkat noted the homeless encampment at the Metra station. Trustee Wesley said there needs to be more density in the single family home districts to support small businesses there.

VP Shine moved onto "affordability." President Scaman recommended a dispensary tax. Trustee Straw said it is not maximized from what we can raise it to or how we can drive more business there. He suggested thinking about creating regional destinations to broaden the tax base. Trustee Wesley suggested collaborating with Visit Oak Park. President Scaman said Forest Park's row of restaurants and bars started with infrastructure and then hosting events such as parades and Mardi Gras. Trustee Enyia agreed dispensaries are a missed opportunity and suggested creating incentives to shop local, create a nightlife in Oak Park, and recreate "Midnight Madness" special events. Trustee Buchanan recommended making it a goal, which Trustee Wesley seconded. Trustee Parakkat said he wants to first understand the costs before making it a goal. Manager Jackson suggested the goal of expanding nightlife opportunities in Oak Park. President Scaman and Trustee Straw said they supported that. Trustee Robinson mentioned First Fridays as a test case.

VP Shine ended the session by stating she will shape these goals and send a draft to the Village Manager's Office.

VI. 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 10:10 PM, Monday, July 17, 2023.

**Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Hansen**