



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Tuesday, October 1, 2024

7:00 PM

Village Hall

I. Call to Order

Village President Vicki Scaman called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:06 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Trustee Straw joined the Meeting at 7:27 P.M.

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

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

III. Agenda Approval

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

IV. Minutes

- A. [MOT 24-246](#) A Motion to Approve Minutes from the September 3, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Village Board

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

V. Non-Agenda Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VI. Proclamation

- B. [MOT 24-236](#) A Motion to Approve a Proclamation Recognizing Breast Cancer Awareness Month

President Scaman read the Proclamation aloud in a pre-recorded video.

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

- C. [MOT 24-237](#) A Motion to Approve a Proclamation Recognizing Domestic Violence Awareness Month

President Scaman read the Proclamation aloud in a pre-recorded video.

Lawn signs are available at Village Hall for supporting Sarah's Inn.

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.

- D. [MOT 24-238](#) A Motion to Approve a Proclamation Recognizing World Migratory Bird Day

President Scaman read the Proclamation aloud in a pre-recorded video.

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.

VII. Village Manager Reports

- E. [ID 24-470](#) Update on the Status of the Pete’s Fresh Market Development at 668 Madison Street

Development Services Director Emily Egan presented the Item. Developer Eugene Grzynkowicz provided additional information. There were no comments.

XIII. Village Board Committees & Trustee Liaison Commission Reports

There were no comments.

IX. Citizen Commission Vacancies

- F. [ID 24-474](#) Board and Commission Vacancy Report for October 1, 2024

There were no comments.

X. Citizen Commission Appointments, Reappointments and Chair Appointments

- G. [MOT 24-245](#) A Motion to Consent to the Village President’s Appointment of:
Citizens Involvement Commission - Greg Kolar, Appoint as Chair
Liquor Control Review Board - Sarah Corbin, Appoint as Chair

Village Clerk Christina Waters read the names aloud.

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Enyia, that these Appointments be approved. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

XI. Consent Agenda

Approval of the Consent Agenda

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

- H. [MOT 24-212](#) A Motion to Approve the June 2024 Monthly Treasurer’s Report for All

Funds

This Motion was approved.

- I. [MOT 24-242](#) A Motion to Accept the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and Supporting Documents as Reviewed at the Regular Board meeting on September 3, 2024
- This Motion was approved.

XII. Regular Agenda

- J. [ID 24-447](#) A Presentation and Discussion of the Village's Fair Housing Testing Project

Assistant Village Manager/Neighborhood Services Director Jonathan Burch presented the Item, along with HOPE Fair Housing Center's Executive Director Michael Chavarria and Associate Director of Enforcement Blake Mitchell.

Trustee Enyia said it is alarming that six buildings were not in compliance with fair housing practices. He inquired about the course of action on the Village's part. Director Mitchell said the current ordinance is unclear about how it deals with enforcement so staff is looking at that. Trustee Enyia asked if the Housing Programs Advisory Committee (HPAC) would be able to participate in some of the annual meetings to understand the practices and help inform the community. Director Mitchell said they can make sure to involve HPAC in that. Director Chavarria said he is excited to hear there is contemplation of implementing penalties on the license.

President Scaman asked if the Village has ever done an audit of this sort previously. Director Burch said the Village them before in 2015 and 2017-2018. She asked if the Village has maintained data on complaints received throughout the years. Director Burch said data was gathered in 2021-2023 as part of the recent strategic vision for housing process. Staff only reviewed the complaints that were then translated into formal fair housing complaints, of which the number was 0 for those three years. Director Chavarria added that HOPE ran this project for six months and during that time organically received 7 complaints that were investigated.

Trustee Straw said he finds the findings of this report quite disturbing. We need to dig in on the enforcement side of this. We should consider whether or not it makes sense to include a private right of action and have attorney's fees recoverable in a private right of action for a fair housing violation under Oak Park ordinance. These kinds of violations are the kinds of things that prevent people from moving into Oak Park and it's just unacceptable.

Trustee Robinson requested clarification on the sources of income issues. Director Chavarria said they were only able to find a policy for two of the

seven housing providers. One was out of written compliance, though the practices were all out of compliance. She said she is unclear on how the Village is consistently conducting training and education sessions yet what is reported back is a lack of education and awareness. She said she is less concerned with the frequency of the sessions as the content. Director Burch said the way the Village has done training has changed after COVID-19. We get less interactions with landlords when we are doing the trainings remotely. The Village is requiring them only for the owner or designated agent. We want to make sure we are talking to the right group of people in addition to covering the right content.

She said she supports increasing the frequency if we are also paying close attention to the content and expanding the target audience. Director Burch noted there are two supplemental trainings in November and December which the Village has not historically done. She said there is a subjective portion that is going to require a very careful and detailed level of training and education effort to make sure that landlords are aware of exactly what that means. She suggested adding this information to the Village website.

She asked if the training sessions apply to landlords that have to be licensed. Director Burch said the Village has different tiers of the rental license. All landlords are required to attend the training session under the current ordinance. She said it is critical the training sessions are as detailed as possible because there will be some landlords who are not professionals and are just renting one or two units. She said the goal is to have great tenancies in this community which will take supporting both tenants and landlords.

She noted the Board goal on page 20 of the Board goals document. She said she didn't love the housing coalition idea. We have the housing coalition, the Board, and Neighborhood Services department. She expressed concerns about decentralizing the process so much that these different areas become siloed and there is not a comprehensive perspective.

She said the lack of language support services is a big miss in both presentations. National origin is a protected class at the federal level and immigration is a protected class at the state level. We have to fold in a language access piece and be able to communicate with people, especially when discussing issues of discrimination.

President Scaman inquired why a coalition was recommended in the first place. Director Mitchell said the intention around the coalition was to give us a dedicated working space to consider fair housing related issues.

Trustee Wesley said he finds it troubling that all of the landlords tested show violations. There is an imbalance of power due to the lack of vacancies that we have for apartment units. He referenced the Village's housing study which showed renters face barriers ranging from credit and eviction history to logistical hurdles of the housing choice voucher program and parking. This is a verifiable problem and antithesis to the values we proclaim as a village so we have to move forcefully to fix it. He said he supports Trustee Straw's comment about private right of action and recoverable attorney fees. He noted the FCRA and FCDPA have statutory damages and he would love to see that implemented as well.

He asked if landlords were unable to articulate the benefits of their units or neighborhood. Director Chavarria said no, they are good salesmen. Trustee Wesley said it sounds like they are selectively confused about fair housing law. Director Chavarria said HOPE was baffled to see uniform lack of knowledge on source of income and just housing amendment.

Trustee Robinson noted the source of income became a protected class much more recently. Director Chavarria said source of income discrimination has been illegal under the Cook County human rights ordinance of 2014 and the Illinois Human Rights Act was amended to also include source of income protections in 2023. The project period of six months included the testing and analysis. Trustee Wesley said he would support continuous testing. He asked if landlords can be required to have the paperwork with the application. Director Chavarria said they are proposing that as part of the ordinance change.

Trustee Enyia said secret shoppers makes you deliver the service you are supposed to. We should have been holding ourselves to a higher standard a long time ago.

Trustee Robinson raised two points on behalf of Trustee Parakkat who was not present. One is how we fold in landlord participation and the coalition has two slated positions for housing providers. The second is the consideration of the increased costs of associated regulations to landlords that may be passed onto tenants. Director Chavarria said they can come back with information.

President Scaman asked a question on behalf of Trustee Buchanan who was not present. She asked if the landlords polled were diverse in terms of building size. Director Chavarria said due to resource constraints, they looked at landlords with larger market shares that impacted more residents. He encouraged the Village to look at a more comprehensive and diverse approach. He said they are seeing a lot less person-to-person communications which is making discrimination tricky to demonstrate and

prove. She said she wants to create partnerships with these landlords. She said this Board brought the RTLO into our own ordinance in 2021 and made it stronger than the Cook County RTLO.

On behalf of Trustee Buchanan, she asked if the Village would take over the Oak Park Regional Housing Center's services and invite them into the coalition. Director Chavarria said OPRHC was more on the front-end of the process. The Village brings a different dynamic by enforcing property maintenance standards. Some internal work needs to be done to determine if a coalition is the right next step. She said she is not looking to bring everything in-house if we have good partners in the community and she has a lot of trust in how they are going to proceed because of the transparency of this information. She said online training should be available as a back-up for accessibility purposes.

She shared Trustee Buchanan's concern about increasing our race data on rental units and how we can keep that as accurate as possible. Director Chavarria said they have flagged that as part of the ordinance process. He encouraged anyone aware of an issue to contact him.

President Scaman said she would be interested to know how many complaints we are able to resolve amicably. Director Burch said staff will follow up on that.

K. [RES 24-296](#) A Resolution Authorizing the Reallocation of Funds within the Fire Department's FY24 Budget to Increase the Overtime Line Item by \$235,000

Oak Park Fire Chief Ron Kobyleski presented the Item.

President Scaman asked what was the 2023 budget. Chief Kobyleski said it was around \$1M. For 2024, it was originally \$850K and then reduced to \$600K. This is a reallocation and not asking for new money.

Trustee Straw asked if additional staffing would reduce the need for overtime. Chief Kobyleski said it definitely would. Trustee Straw said it would be far preferable to have three additional salaries than paying those same funds in overtime to reduce workload, stress, and injuries. He said he would like to see additional data on that. Chief Kobyleski said we are asking for three more full-time positions in this budget and there will be further information following up to support that.

President Scaman and Trustee Wesleys and Enyia agreed. Trustee Enyia said he would like to see historical sick time.

This Resolution was adopted.

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

NAYS: 0

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

- L. [RES 24-300](#) A Resolution Setting Halloween "Trick or Treat" Hours between 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 31, 2024

There were no comments.

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

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

NAYS: 0

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

XIII. Call to Board and Clerk

Clerk Waters said Viva was a great event and she thanked the DEI, Public Works, and Communications departments. The Clerk's Office will partner with Housing Forward, Change Illinois, and the League of Women Voters OPRF at the Oak Park Public Library Main Branch on Oct. 22 from 4-8 pm to register voters and answer questions. Early voting begins at Village Hall Oct. 21-Nov. 4. There is no voting at Village Hall on Election Day. Voters must go to their polling place on Election Day. Please call 708-358-5670 if you need assistance with finding your polling place. The Clerk's Office is participating in a diaper and wipe drive in support of A House in Austin. Community members can drop off diapers and wipes at Village Hall. Dia de Muertos in Oak Park and River Forest registration is open now. Register your ofrenda by Oct. 19. Ofrendas will be displayed Oct. 27-Nov. 3. More info is on Facebook and Instagram. Trick or Treat signs can be printed from the Village website.

Trustee Robinson said the second annual Viva event was phenomenal. She thanked staff and community members for organizing and planning. There is a video on the Village's social media.

Trustee Straw said he adopted a dog from Almost Home Foundation and said it is always good to consider adoption instead of buying a pet.

XIV. 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 Tuesday, October 1, 2024, 9:06 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Hansen