



# 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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Sunday, July 19, 2015

8:00 AM Works Center, 2nd Floor Conference Room (201 South  
Boulevard)

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### I. Call to Order

Village President Abu-Taleb called the meeting to order at 8:12 a.m.

### II. Roll Call

**Present:** 7 - Village Trustee Barber, Village Trustee Brewer, Village Trustee Lueck, Village Trustee Ott, Village Trustee Salzman, Village Trustee Tucker, and Village President Abu-Taleb

**Absent:** 0

### III. Agenda Approval

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

### IV. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

### V. Board Goals

#### A. ID 15-239 Review, Discussion and Update of 2014-2015 Board Goals

Manager Pavlicek introduced discussion of goals, explaining that these were adopted in 2013 and updated in 2014. Today they will again be reviewed, updated and amended as needed. Goals are based on the four core values: be fiscally responsible, be accountable, communicate and celebrate success and build trust. Trustee Barber asked to first evaluate how we have done on these goals.

#### OBJECTIVE 1: Economic Development

President Abu-Taleb remarked that we have addressed all of these. Trustee Brewer clarified that we have begun work with good progress on all of these.

Goal 1: One project, Lake and Forest, has begun; a second, Clark Street, will begin in the fall. The third development, Lincoln, will break ground in

spring.

There was discussion of the timeline for the Lincoln project and possible need for deadlines. Trustee Salzman noted that the project needs to be referred to the Plan Commission and should present to the Board. Trustee Tucker indicated that this needs to move ahead; Trustee Brewer cautioned against being too heavy-handed. Trustee Lueck noted that when referred to Plan, there will be a deadline. The Board requested a status report on their progress.

Goal 2: Trustee Ott asked about the EDC marketing plan. Trustee Barber noted that the current plan has a focus on several Village properties on Madison Street at this time, setting the groundwork for something bigger.

Manager Pavlicek noted that the partner agencies are funded for marketing, with the current focus on Visit Oak Park to more clearly focus. While the current focus is on Madison, with others to follow. Trustee Ott asked that this goal remain on the list for further development.

Goal 3: Manager Pavlicek gave a report on non-downtown business districts.

A staff recommendation will be available in the fall for funding for Roosevelt Road (TIF, SSA or business improvement district) and coordination with Berwyn. On North Avenue planning dollars are frozen by the state. On Harrison, the old plan is being used, but there is a lack of clarity on direction with many different perspectives.

Trustee Salzman noted that a new plan is not necessary; he recommended that John Lynch could meet with them to provide direction and a strategy for moving vacant properties. Trustee Ott reported that John Lynch will be meeting with members of the Arts District. Manager Pavlicek asked if there was a desire that the Arts Council work more closely with the Arts District.

President Abu-Taleb suggested that for Roosevelt, North and Harrison zoning could be eased, permits be efficient and community investment bonds be issued. These bonds could be 5-10% of total cost for 5-10 businesses which first apply. This could offset the lower property taxes of surrounding communities. These bonds or Section 108 loans could be used for this purpose.

Trustee Brewer noted that a zoning consultant has been hired and has already interviewed some of the Trustees. Trustees could provide this additional direction, first on Madison, and also for other districts. Make this clear now; that zoning be less burdensome in these areas. He also likes

the idea of a fund and that it should be available to all business districts, such as Oak Park Avenue. Perhaps the first \$2 million could be reserved for Roosevelt, North and Harrison. Trustee Barber cautioned that priority should go to these districts.

Trustee Lueck added that the Board lacks a policy on which business districts should have priority.

Trustee Salzman suggested that the arts organizations should work more closely with Harrison Street, as this discussion remains unfocused. Trustee Lueck noted that for years the arts organizations have been urged to work more closely together.

Goal 4: Manager Pavlicek cautioned that EDC should focus on the larger and more challenging projects which need an incentive, versus those that will come to Oak Park anyway. Trustee Ott asked about the vacancy rate as a goal.

Manager Pavlicek noted that the EDC goal is to grow the tax base; not always the same thing. The Board had further discussion of vacancy rates vs growing the tax base. President Abu-Taleb noted that he gets solicited to open additional restaurants in other communities. EDC should be doing this for Oak Park. There was further discussion of how EDC might attract additional businesses for large and smaller businesses.

Manager Pavlicek suggested that additional language be added to clarify focus on big and unique projects. These should be those which generate taxes and build customer volume. Trustee Salzman suggested that EDC needs to do both. Manager Pavlicek suggested that they may have less strength in the retention area. Trustee Brewer noted that this is part of their contract for services. The business community should be clear about who to contact for assistance.

There was further discussion of creating incentives for new businesses through a fund to provide a percentage of funding for infrastructure and exterior improvements for a set number of applicants over the next 18 months. Trustee Brewer suggested that this be handled through a loan program with interest to avoid burdening taxpayers. There was further discussion of possible funding arrangements and zoning issues, as well as distinctions between arterial street districts and small business districts.

Goal 5: There was agreement to get more frequent reports on the vacancy rates. Second floor spaces are seriously outdated, and could use reinvestment for upgrades. Trustee Lueck noted the Medical Arts Building as an example.

President Abu-Taleb noted the contributions of the Chamber's executive

director, Cathy Yen, and proposed that over the next several years the Chamber work more closely with the EDC under the same roof. Trustee Brewer asked if this has been discussed with the Chamber; President Abu-Taleb said that he has discussed this. Trustee Ott suggested that this could help with streamlining. While River Forest and Forest Park businesses are members, EDC work would be restricted to Oak Park. This should be part of the Board's goal list. This could provide additional sources of funding and more staff. There was general Board support for this proposal.

President Abu-Taleb provided a summary of what he would like to see in economic development over the next ten years: generate an additional \$25 million in property taxes (through new development), new investment in the Village of \$600 million, and an increase collection of sales tax of 50% (\$5 million to \$7.5 million), and proposed adding these numbers to our goals. These could be adjusted as we go forward. Trustee Brewer asked what the baseline was. The agreement was an average of 2013-2015.

President Abu-Taleb asked that an analysis of TIF districts be added to Objective 1.

## OBJECTIVE 2: Intergovernmental Relations

Goal 1: Trustees Barber and Lueck met on Saturday, July 18, with the I-Gov Committee. The recent forums hosted by I-Gov with all local elected officials addressing finances have included discussion of how local governments can maximize resources and limit tax increases, including timing of referenda, for example. The authority is to facilitate sharing of information and work more collaboratively, sharing information more comfortably. Membership changes every two years, but the group is committed to continuing with the next meeting of the group set for October. The April meeting was quite helpful. The next focus will be on social and demographic issues. Are we diverse? Can people afford to live here? How has this changed over the decades? Are boards comfortable with these changes? If not, what should be done?

Trustee Lueck asked for data, demographics to show changes. CDBG should have the necessary data; I-Gov will be reviewing these issues and what data is needed from the Village and the schools. Trustee Salzman asked how the data could be used, as CDBG already does funding. Trustee Lueck suggested that this could lead to policy decisions.

Trustee Salzman suggested that I-Gov could become more forward-looking, proposing direction for the governing bodies. The Village

could be doing more from peer governmental services, with intergovernmental collaboration, "early childhood collaboration" for grownups, to strengthen our community. Each board has its own priorities; future referenda are planned for future services and facilities. What are the changes such as loss of seniors and people of color? Manager Pavlicek noted that there are 1000 children under 5 years old in Oak Park who live under the Federal poverty level.

President Abu-Taleb asked what would happen if I-Gov did not exist? Trustee Lueck noted that we would lose shared information built on relationships; nothing gets done without relationships. Trustee Barber noted that Park District Board President Paul Aeschleman has a vision for Parks, but also the relationship of the Parks to the Village as a whole. The taxing bodies pay attention to each other through this process. I-Gov creates an atmosphere in support of a change process. President Abu-Taleb proposed support from other boards for EDC as a result of this process. There was further discussion of how such an issue could be proposed to other boards.

Trustee Salzman raised the issue of suicides and firearms and what can be done by local government. Could something more be done for adults who need this support, as we are already making investments for our most vulnerable children. Trustee Lueck can bring this back to I-Gov. Trustee Tucker raised the issue of low-income housing for families, as has been done for single adults through Grove Apartments. There was general support for this issue.

Trustee Ott asked about the policy-setting role of I-Gov, as each board has a very different culture. How should a conversation be conducted in terms of communication among board members or between boards? What is the best approach to collaboration? there was discussion of approaches.

Goal 2: This goal of outreach to neighboring communities has not been fully developed. Trustee Salzman suggested that this is really not an I-Gov issue, but is intergovernmental.

How can we jointly impact state funding? This was discussed at I-Gov. It would be helpful know from all of the governments how much the Village receives overall. Manager Pavlicek noted that intergovernmental groups are usually like governments (as municipal governments) versus different governments. The COG and direct relationships with legislators have been the vehicles for communication. Oak Park has been one of the largest communities involved and has had a greater voice. Trustee Salzman suggested revisiting this in the fall when state funding issues are finally resolved. Home rule authority and unfunded mandates are the two

largest issues.

Another goal is building relationships with neighboring communities; Oak Park and River Forest are more collaborative. What more can we do? What are their key issues? President Abu-Taleb talked about building a greater spirit of joint effort and collaboration which he has worked to foster. There was further discussion of how the housing collaboration has evolved to become more trusting as they have seen that Oak Park is interested in their growth and development. Trustee Brewer asked how we can do the same to neighboring Chicago communities. Can this be part of a work plan? The Police Department and Community Relations Commission have addressed this. The work plan could be strengthened to emphasize the importance of this work; and police are supportive of the relocation of the office along Austin. President Abu-Taleb has reached out to the new alderman. The CRC could also ask Trustees for help. Trustee Barber noted that many Austinites shop in Oak Park, based on recent studies. Oak Park has not encouraged this as they have with River Forest, for example. More could be done, and there was discussion of working with the Austin Chamber.

#### OBJECTIVE 3: Service Delivery

Goal 1. The IT strategic plan has been developed, with updates to come.

Goal 2: Financial software is still a work in progress.

Goal 3: This is tied to financial software, also a work in progress.

Goal 4: Staff training has been a focus, with increased training in supervisory roles and customer service.

Goal 5: There will be another Gallup survey shortly after Labor Day. Leadership has been working through areas of concern for communication changes. Trustee Barber expressed hope for some improvement in areas of concern.

President Abu-Taleb suggested eliminating merit pay as not a useful tool. He explained how this might be done as part of future negotiations. There was board discussion of what might be done. The Federal Government uses merit pay extensively as a way to distinguish high performers versus longevity, but there are ways to improve execution of this policy versus eliminating it. President Abu-Taleb noted that the amount of merit pay is small and that it creates dissension. If the culture and environment does not support people, it won't lead to good customer service. This change could reduce tension with supervisors.

Trustee Brewer suggested that the opposite was true, and that lack of merit pay would seem to reward those without a good customer service approach. He suggested that implementation needs to be improved. Trustee Salzman noted recent labor negotiations with merit pay as a focus and agreed with the concerns raised about the current evaluation system. The Personnel Committee could discuss this issue in more detail. Supervisors deserve support from management, with fair evaluations and recognition of good work. Trustee Barber noted that there have been anecdotal reports of significant improvements in customer service. Manager Pavlicek noted that layoffs in 2008 resulted in people reassigned to customer service positions that they did not want and some promotions of technical staff to supervisors need to assure that they have good supervisory skills, including working with staff strengths. Trustee Tucker noted the positive stories that have come out in the past year. President Abu-Taleb talked of recent changes in the Permitting Department, and has asked for a "dashboard" report on the turnaround time for this department. This will be coming out soon on a frequent and regular basis.

Trustee Salzman asked that merit pay be evaluated in Personnel: Is it effective? Are there other alternatives? What are the costs?

President Abu-Taleb raised the issue of permitting delays in the Fire Department (review of Fire Codes). There was discussion of this issue and how it might be resolved, including relocating those doing reviews to Village Hall while doing this work to improve turnaround time.

#### OBJECTIVE 4: Minimize the impact of the Eisenhower Expressway on our Community

President Abu-Taleb suggested that this topic be removed as a Board goal. Trustee Salzman asked how long this would remain given the multi-year time frame. Trustee Brewer suggested changing the title to "maximizing opportunities" and keeping it on the list. There was general support for this name change.

There have been improvements in the process in the past year. We are beginning to get some compensating benefits. Trustee Lueck said that difficult decisions are ahead of us, and even though the working group is going well, the larger community of may not support it. This has the potential to be the largest impact of anything on Oak Park. There is a lot to be done yet; keeping this as a priority also sends a message to IDOT. There was also discussion of the responsibility for payment for infrastructure.

## OTHER POSSIBLE GOALS

Trustee Barber suggested a review of parking, while not necessarily a change, in order to clarify parking policy.

He also proposed offering guidance on the budget for the coming budget season. Manager Pavlicek has the last Monday in July scheduled for this presentation and any policy topics. President Abu-Taleb encouraged all board members to attend the Finance Committee meetings. Trustee Lueck was concerned that while the Finance Committee met extensively, there was only one meeting for the full board on the budget. She noted that there were policy discussions that should be brought to the full board and asked that any policy decisions being considered should be brought to the full board right away, such as decisions regarding the health department. Trustee Barber suggested discussing what could happen if the budget was cut by 5% or 10% as a more drastic proposal.

Trustee Salzman noted that the role of the Finance Committee is important, but the Board has gotten away from a comprehensive review at the Board level. Manager Pavlicek noted that quorum issues forced cancellation of some budget meetings. Trustee Lueck noted that the public is not likely to show up for committee meetings versus the full board meetings. Trustee Tucker suggested that the Board needs to publicize it, and asked that the Committee reports at the Board meeting should be more detailed. He noted that policy decisions are being made at all committee meetings. Trustee Lueck noted that it minimizes the contributions of the other three board members. Trustee Ott asked for three meetings of the full board to discuss the budget. President Abu-Taleb suggested that two meetings would be sufficient. Two to three was agreed upon. Trustee Lueck asked for a full report after every finance committee meeting. Staff can provide bullet points for the finance committee.

Trustee Lueck noted that there is a perception that the board is focused on economic development and only those departments are valued; that public safety and public works are key services, with other departments are not valued but are marginalized. Public dollars are needed to fund these services; with subsequent backlash last year as a result. Trustee Salzman noted that his first year was a very good budget year, with good balance between finance committee and board review.

Manager Pavlicek noted that department budgets represent \$50 million of \$125 million total budget; but it is the enterprise funds which needed



attention and required fee increases. Trustee Barber noted that there were significant fee increases and there wasn't sufficient discussion of these changes. He also wanted to hear from the manager versus the department heads regarding changes in the department structure. Trustee Lueck added that departmental changes are awkward to talk about.

Trustee Barber asked again about Parking as a goal. Trustee Ott suggested a comprehensive parking analysis. President Abu-Taleb noted that renters need parking relief, and that an even-odd system could also help. Greater clarity regarding the snow ban is also needed. He discussed a specific night parking issue.

Trustee Salzman suggested the same approach that is being used for zoning, with a focus on "problem" blocks with specific parking challenges. Trustee Brewer asked if this would include outsourcing of parking. Is this a government function, and if so, can it be outsourced. Manager Pavlicek distinguished between meters and parking garages versus resident overnight parking issues. There is a need to look at the issue broadly. He suggested buying land to pull in for brief stops in business districts. Trustee Barber suggested that the Village also needs to encourage driving alternatives in our support for sustainability. How can all of this be balanced, or is it not important? President Abu-Taleb asked that this be a goal, with evaluation of parking and a goal to ease parking in Oak Park.

**B.     ID 15-240****Review, Discussion and Update of Board Protocols dated June 16, 2014**

President Abu-Taleb asked for the following change in committee assignments. Andrea Ott will be removed from the I-Gov committee, leaving two members.

President Abu-Taleb noted that his work as Village President is really a full-time job. As president he sets the tone for relations with other communities through various committees, etc. He would like to appoint Trustee Tucker as Vice President who can attend some of these meetings for him. This will be more efficient and will allow him to delegate some duties to the Vice President, including meeting with people.

He also noted that outside of Oak Park, people don't understand the term "Village President" and wants to use the term mayor interchangeably on his business card. Such changes could continue beyond the current term. He noted that the mayor of Forest Park is paid a larger stipend. To do this job he suggested that a candidate needs to be retired or independently wealthy. He suggested that Oak Park pays twice as much as other Villages for the Clerk's position, and that this money could go to increase compensation for the Village President.

Trustee Brewer noted that in some communities the liquor commissioner is a paid position. He suggested a category/budget line item to provide extra money for the Village President, possibly even in the next budget.

Trustee Brewer suggested that everyone should have the opportunity to substitute for the Village President. There should be a workable system for those who wish to to help. He also noted that President Abu-Taleb doesn't need to attend all committee meetings, and could share his position if he cannot attend.

Trustee Salzman noted that the officers of the school board are elected by the board, and suggested that there be a board election; he also referred to Robert's Rules as a guide. If the Vice President position is established, that person can step in when needed. Manager Pavlicek suggested that some communities amend the Code; or the Protocols could be amended. If

he wishes to, the President can appoint committee chairs. These are some alternatives.

Trustee Tucker noted that stipends were established many years ago, and it would be helpful to know what those stipends would be worth in today's dollars.

Trustee Lueck noted that the Village Manager form of government has been altered by past presidents who took on far more than the role of the Village President. She noted that the Manager should be handling day to day work and management.

There was further discussion of use of the term "mayor" informally versus making the term more formal and how much time the Village President commits to committees and other duties. President Abu-Taleb explained that his involvement in the community has increased the positive attitude toward the Village and helped him stay abreast of issues. The Board discussed the possibility of an increase in the stipend and the political sensitivity of any proposal to address this. Trustee Ott suggested looking at other municipalities to see what they are doing. There was consensus to informally allow the Village President to use the term mayor in his dealings with other communities and to investigate increasing the stipend for the board for the next terms of office.

President Abu-Taleb also proposed that the office at Village Hall currently shared with Trustees should be for his use; the Board concurred that this would be appropriate and that this had been the practice in the past; the sign can be changed. The President will share the Village Manager's secretary as well.

#### TRUSTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Trustee Salzman's name should be removed as liaison to the Eisenhower "Ike" Committee.

The Board reviewed the list of committee assignments. The Economic Development Committee has been removed from the Code with changes in the EDC agreement. Trustee Barber should be on the EDC.

Trustee Ott will be added to Personnel. Trustee Lueck will be added to Reinventing Government.

The Liquor Control Review Board should be under Trustee Salzman's name instead of under President Abu-Taleb. Trustee Barber suggested that the President review the list of assignments; President Abu-Taleb

noted that he chooses which of these add value to attend.

## PROTOCOLS

Trustee Tucker noted that there is not a need to waive reading of the Consent Agenda.

Trustee Salzman suggested that the Vice President role should be added to protocols. In some communities this is codified.

Page 1.A: Remove second bullet point.

Page 2.E: Agree to revise first bullet point to 10:00 p.m.

Page 3:E. Remove second to last bullet point (Clerk monitoring time) as no longer needed.

Page 3: II: Remove third bullet point.

Page 4: Remove second bullet point as this is being handled in practice. Fourth bullet point should designate Friday, not Thursday.

Page 5: It was proposed that the Proclamation can be on the Consent agenda if no one is present to receive it. If there is something important to speak about, they can be pulled from the Consent agenda.

Other changes will be provided by the Village Manager as strikethroughs in a draft revision.

## VI. Adjourn

It was moved by Village Trustee Ott, seconded by Village Trustee Tucker, to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 12:15 P.M., Sunday July 19, 2015.