



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Monday, February 26, 2018

6:00 PM

Village Hall

I. Call to Order

Village President Abu-Taleb called the Meeting to order at 6:03 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Present: 6 - Village Trustee Taglia, Village President Abu-Taleb, Village Trustee Tucker, Village Trustee Moroney, Village Trustee Boutet, and Village Trustee Andrews

Absent: 1 - Village Trustee Button

III. Consideration of a Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session to Discuss Personnel

It was moved by Village Trustee Tucker, seconded by Village Trustee Andrews, to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) - personnel. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

V. Reconvene to a Special Meeting at 7:30 pm in Room 101

The Special Meeting reconvened at 7:30 P.M.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Village Trustee Button, Village Trustee Taglia, Village President Abu-Taleb, Village Trustee Tucker, Village Trustee Moroney, Village Trustee Boutet, and Village Trustee Andrews

Absent: 0

VI. Agenda Approval

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

VII. Public Comment

Bonita Robinson. Ms. Robinson discussed the Village's failure to enforce their nuisance code and requested that they correct her problem. She was not interested in mediation.

VIII. Regular Agenda

A. [RES 18-815](#) A Resolution Approving the Lake Street Improvement Projects' Scope, Including the Projects' Limits, Decorative Materials, and Specialty Features

Village Manager Pavlicek commented that this is a continuation of the discussion from the last meeting. She gave an overview of the presentation from that meeting. Specific

costs will be discussed this evening based on questions heard last week. Staff is looking for direction subject to the Board's discussion this evening.

Village Engineer Bill McKenna stated that there will be a presentation of costs broken down by various components of the project.

Kitty Conklin. Ms. Conklin expressed concern regarding the Village's bond issues and the cost to residents through property taxes. She asked for a breakdown of labor by trade versus materials within the proposal this evening.

Lisa Pearah. Ms. Pearah and others are worried about rising property taxes and how the Village's taxing bodies are spending their tax dollars. She was concerned that half of this evening's \$18 million proposal is for the cost of nothing other than beautification.

James Peters. Mr. Peters stated that after reading the National Citizen Survey, he concluded that there is not a very high satisfaction with the value of tax dollars spent in Oak Park. He discussed how to save \$2 million in the Lake Street project.

Michael Fox. Mr. Fox discussed his background in Oak Park's business community. He noted that the Lake Street project has been scaled back already. He preferred not to put his tenants through 18 months of construction without a nicer finished product in the end.

Frank Heitzman. Mr. Heitzman discussed the history of Downtown Oak Park, his experience with the re-streetsing of Lake Street and his work on the Streetscape Steering Committee. He supports using high quality materials and believes the streetscape design is in line with the Comprehensive Plan.

Anne Pezalla. Ms. Pezalla acknowledged that the construction is inevitable and asked the Board to keep small businesses in mind during that time.

Maureen Kleinman. Ms. Kleinman reiterated the comments of those who are in favor of a more pragmatic approach to the streetscape.

Village President Abu-Taleb asked Village Manager Pavlicek to confirm that the bond issuances, amounting to over \$76 million, as mentioned by the first speaker, are refunding of bonds, with the exception of the parking garage. Village Manager Pavlicek gave dates and amounts of the refunding of various bonds. She also discussed the annual abatement of property taxes to levy.

Village Trustee Tucker proposed that the Board set a budget in the amount of \$12 to \$15 million for the project rather than design it. He acknowledged that cuts are warranted for the project. He does not think bluestone is necessary, however he does want an element of connectivity. He noted that a special feature near the Lake Street Theater and enhanced bicycle friendly infrastructure are priorities for him. He asked why some of the current bluestone is failing. Mr. McKenna stated that with bluestone being a natural material, there will be some failed squares. In general, he is confident that it will hold up in a pedestrian setting. In addition, sealing bluestone will protect it and increase its longevity. Village Trustee Tucker asked Village Manager Pavlicek to confirm whether or not the project is being funded by the TIF. She stated that although the expenditures for the street and infrastructure are TIF eligible under state law, the TIF will expire prior to the start of construction. Regardless of that, the current settlement agreement between the Village and the School Districts make these expenses ineligible. She described allowable TIF uses. There was a discussion regarding contingencies in the project.

Village Trustee Taglia was glad to see this being addressed and hoped to come to a decision tonight. He acknowledged the concern of the Board for the tax burden and that \$18 million is excessive. They all want to see an attractive downtown but do not want to overspend. He acknowledged that he does not want to focus on the engineering and design elements; the Board should focus on the budget. He is comfortable with Village Trustee Tucker's suggestion of \$12 to \$15 million as a budget and allow staff to execute the plan.

Village Trustee Button agreed with Village Trustees Tucker and Taglia. This project is not an option, it needs to be done. She agreed that the \$12 to \$15 million mark is reasonable. She would like to see bluestone embellishment rather than full sidewalks and a water feature that would create a sense of space. She stated that construction on North Marion Street is not a priority and would not add value. She asked what the proposed timeline for construction is and what portion of the street would be worked on first. Mr. McKenna stated that the general schedule is to start in spring of 2019, extending to summer of 2020. The project will be done in a modular fashion that finishes one part of town in its entirety before moving on to the next. This allows for flexibility to schedule street closures. Village Manager Pavlicek added that staff will work with the Business Districts on scheduling and other items. Village Trustee Button would also like to look at budgeting to help small businesses in 2019 and 2020.

Village Trustee Moroney asked how much has been spent to date on the project. Mr. McKenna discussed design and other costs that are in addition to the \$18 million for the project, as well as sources of financing. Village Manager Pavlicek discussed different financing options and identified sources outside of bonds. Village Trustee Moroney asked questions related to bond interest rates that support such projects. Village Manager Pavlicek commented that it is difficult to speculate but staff can give some scenarios. Village Trustee Moroney acknowledged that replacing water mains and underground infrastructure is necessary. He noted that sidewalks from Harlem to Forest are currently in bad condition and asked if sidewalk repairs can be expedited. Mr. McKenna stated that safety concerns can be addressed, but typically sidewalks are done last in this type of project. Village Trustee Moroney thanked staff for providing what is necessary versus what is luxury. He is comfortable with a \$10 million budget and could possibly support \$12 million. However, \$15 million is too high.

Village Trustee Boutet agreed with scaling back the project. She asked about timing in regards to replacing infrastructure related to each section of this and other projects. Mr. McKenna discussed infrastructure improvements which have recently been done and stated that street improvement projects are generally done in conjunction with infrastructure improvement. He explained how staff identifies what infrastructure needs to be replaced and how it is scheduled. Village Trustee Boutet asked how much money has been spent on bluestone repair, as well as crosswalk and speed tables on Marion Street. Mr. McKenna commented that no capital funds have been used for bluestone repairs. Crosswalk and speed table repairs have been approximately \$400,000 to \$500,00. Village Trustee Boutet commented that there are other materials with a cost in between bluestone and concrete. She would like the intersections to have some type of esthetic with a different material and prefers landscaping in lieu of the fountain. She would like to scale back on Marion Street, not use bluestone but another material with a long useful life and have bike racks. Village Trustee Boutet also commented that she would like staff to look into the Village buying a portion of the sidewalk area at Westgate that is in great disrepair but the association cannot afford to repair it. She is comfortable with a budget of \$8 million to \$10 million.

Village Trustee Andrews reiterated what Village Trustee Moroney said about the

sidewalks between Harlem and Forest. He understands the concept of creating a sense of place but does not want to diminish the sense of place that Oak Park already has. He does not want to overdo the esthetics; connectivity can be done with landscaping, etc. Village Trustee Andrews also noted that they need to be sensitive to business district equity, and discussed other business districts that have not received the attention that Downtown has. He expressed concern that the proposed bumpouts in the project are dangerous for cyclists and that the proposed lighting does not point down. He is also uneasy with the idea of children playing in a fountain at the busy intersection of Lake and Forest. He also suggested that Downtown Oak Park SSA contribute to the cost of the project, as the Village has provided tools such as kiosks and signage to promote their businesses that other business districts do not have. He is comfortable with a \$12.3 million budget.

There was a discussion regarding the timing of the Albion construction and coordinating that with the streetscape project.

Village President Abu-Taleb asked a representative from the Lakota Group to explain why the Village should do this project. The representative stated that it is an infrastructure investment in the community and considers the entire project economic development. The benefits are not just to the businesses but to the community overall and suggests a commitment to long-term growth and opportunity. He spoke about the various materials that were brought to the site in order to view. He commented that bluestone moves with temperature change where concrete does not. He suggested that Oak Park has set an example for other communities. Village President Abu-Taleb agreed that the investment is important. He acknowledged that his colleagues are trying to be conservative in regards to how much they are going to invest. He referred to the chart providing necessity and luxury and identified areas of agreeable compromise for a budget of approximately \$15 million. He asked for consensus.

Village Trustees Button, Tucker and Taglia supported \$15 million. Village Trustee Moroney discussed several recent extravagant projects. He does not believe the taxpayers can afford \$15 million. He was adamant that the maximum should be \$12 million. Village Trustee Andrews agreed. Village Trustee Boutet expressed concern about the unpaid fire and police pensions. She preferred to invest in a way that would pay them back. She agreed with Village Trustees Moroney and Andrews.

It was moved by Village Trustee Tucker, seconded by Village Trustee Button, that this Resolution be adopted at the budgeted amount of \$15 million. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 4 - Village Trustee Button, Village Trustee Taglia, Village President Abu-Taleb, and Village Trustee Tucker

NAYS: 3 - Village Trustee Moroney, Village Trustee Boutet, and Village Trustee Andrews

ABSENT: 0

Village President Abu-Taleb commented that if the project can be done at \$12 million to aim for that. Otherwise, they have direction to go up to \$15 million.

B. [ID 18-800](#)

Presentation and Discussion of the 2017 Village of Oak Park National Citizen Survey Results.

Village Manager Pavlicek stated that the Village has been doing this survey every two to

three years since 2000. She noted that it is a standardized survey so there is no latitude to change the questions, which is one of the nice benefits of this. Three hundred other communities are benchmarked against Oak Park.

Bonita Robinson. Ms. Robinson commented that Oak Park residents' rating of Governance in General is on a downward trend. She spoke about her personal experience with the decrease in quality. She urged the Board to listen to the voices of Oak Park residents.

Director of Communications David Powers discussed his background. The survey was conducted by mail by the National Research Center. Mr. Powers gave a presentation, highlighting mostly strengths of the community. Overall, Oak Park residents enjoy a high quality of life. The complete results are on the Village website. He stated that a random sample of 1,500 residents were chosen to take the survey.

Village Trustee Button would like to see a broader audience reached through ways other than mail. Mr. Powers explained why that can't be done with this survey.

Village Trustee Moroney expressed concern that the number of responses is approximately 1% of the population. He does not have a lot of confidence in surveys in general. Village Trustee Moroney also identified some results that are concerning for him.

Village Trustee Boutet commented that the results are consistent with what they have already heard. She noted that it is important to listen to community members and work to build trust.

Village Trustee Andrews validated the methodology of the survey but questioned the cost for 475 respondents. He suggested a random sample from a larger social media survey. He also noted that he does not put too much credence in the results.

Village Trustee Taglia acknowledged that the Board should be addressing concerns noted in the results.

IX. Adjourn

It was moved by Village Trustee Tucker, seconded by Village Trustee Boutet, to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:39 P.M., Monday, February 26, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,

**MaryAnn Schoenneman
Deputy Village Clerk**