



**Village Manager's Report
Week ending May 4, 2018**

Meetings scheduled for next week:

- Monday, May 7:
 - Executive session, 6:30 p.m., room 130
 - Reception & Cake for the 50th Anniversary of Adoption of the Fair Housing Ordinance, 7 p.m. Council Chamber
 - Regular meeting, 7:30 p.m., Council Chamber
- Tuesday, May 8:
 - Aging in Place Commission, 6 p.m., room 215
- Wednesday, May 9:
 - Farmers' Market Commission, 7 p.m., room 101
- Thursday, May 10:
 - Civic Information Systems Commission, 7 p.m., room 215
 - Historic Preservation Commission, 7:30 p.m., Council Chamber
- Friday, May 11:
 - No meetings scheduled

Farmers' Market volunteer recruitment – The Farmer's Market Commission will host its annual Friends of the Market volunteer recruitment night at 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., Tues. May 8 at the main Oak Park Library. This informal orientation session is intended for anyone interested in volunteering or learning more about the Oak Park Farmers' Market. Volunteers also are needed to serve on the [Farmers' Market Commission](#). The market is set to open its 43rd season on May 19. Market information is posted on the Village website at www.oak-park.us/farmersmarket.

Historical Society home tours – The [Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest](#) will host its 15th Annual Spring Housewalk from 1 to 5 p.m., Sun., May 6. Participants will tour the interiors of six private Oak Park homes built during the roaring '20s. According to Oak Park's resident historian Frank Lipo, the homes – all north of Division Street and east of Oak Park Avenue – tell stories not purely of architecture, but of the upper middle class moving to the suburbs, including the founder of Sunbeam appliances and the personal physician to Cardinals Mundelein and Stritch. More details on the homes and tickets are posted at www.oprfmuseum.org.

Home prices recovering – An article this week in Crain's Chicago Business painted a rather gloomy picture of how slow the area has been to recover from the housing crash, while noting that Oak Park was among those communities where home prices were above or equal with their old peak. Crain's quoted an Oak Park real estate

agent who said that while sellers here may not be cashing out in a big way, the activity is back in the market. Trendy areas in Chicago saw the greatest recovery, according to the article, while the least recovered zip codes are on the south side of Chicago and in the southern suburbs. [Click here to read the story online](#). A PDF file also is [available on the Village website](#).

ZBA activities – The Zoning Board of Appeals reviewed three requests this week, denying one applicant and approving requests for variances from two applicants. A request for variances was denied by a 6-to-1 vote for an increase in the front yard setback and a reduction in the rear yard setback for a mixed-use, residential-over-commercial, four-story addition at 200 – 216 Lake Street because it would continue an existing outdated strip mall development in conflict with the vision of the Lake Street Neighborhood Plan. By a vote of 5 to 2, the ZBA approved variances to allow construction of a five-story condominium building at 1024 Washington Boulevard that will replace an existing single-family residence between two existing multiple-story residential buildings. All seven members of the ZBA voted to allow Fenwick High School to construct a temporary surface parking lot without interior landscaping. The applicant is meeting all other landscaping requirements. The temporary parking lot without interior landscaping will be allowed for only two years.

Teaching fire safety – Public education specialists from the Oak Park Fire Department are bringing fire safety lessons to every public and private second grade class in the Village before the school year ends. Our firefighter/paramedics use a specially designed and equipped safety trailer to teach safety skills in a realistic residential setting. The trailer has a kitchen equipped with props to simulate typical home fire and electrical hazards and a bedroom section where students learn about smoke detectors, home escape plans, feeling doors for heat before opening and how to avoid smoke. Students also are taught how to make an effective 911 call and practice stop/drop/and roll techniques. Fire Chief Tom Ebsen reports that older students observing the arrival of the trailer at their schools often comment enthusiastically on their earlier training, demonstrating that the safety lessons produce long-term benefits. Oak Park shares the trailer with the six other municipalities that make up Division 11 of the [Mutual-Aid Box Alarm System \(MABAS\)](#).

Influencing careers – The Human Resources Department orchestrated the participation of Village staff in the Oak Park and River Forest High School's latest career event. Representatives from the Fire and Police departments were on hand to share their experience and answer questions from students who might be future municipal employees. Representing the Fire Department was Deputy Fire Chief Pete Pilafas and Firefighter/Paramedic Joseph Terry. The Police Department was represented by former school resource officer Police Sgt. Samantha Deuchler and Zone 7 Neighborhood Resource Officer Derrick Verge. The four offered relatable tales of the sometimes winding paths they took to their current positions. Representatives of other Village departments have since expressed interest in participating in future events with the help of the Human Resources Department. The high school sponsors the job fairs eight times each year.

Alley improvements – The first phase of the sewer improvements in alleys under construction this season was expected to wrap up this week, with work near schools deferred until early June after the summer break begins. Crews have begun removing

pavement in the alley between Ridgeland and Cuyler avenues, and south of Chicago Avenue. The alleys between Division and Thomas streets and Oak Park and Euclid avenues have been completed and access restored. The number of residents within the boundaries of the alley projects that have elected to have their private garage aprons replaced as their alleys are reconstructed has grown to 30.

Miscellaneous construction updates – Utilities are scheduled to be disconnected next week at the Albion redevelopment site on the northwest corner of Lake Street and Forest Avenue, the first step prior to demolition. One lane of Clinton Avenue remains closed under the viaduct between North and South boulevards as ComEd crews continue relocation activities. New curbs are being installed on Fillmore Street between Highland Avenue and Austin Boulevard in advance of paving. Preparations continued for upcoming street resurfacing projects, including notifying affected residents and business owners with details on parking and refuse collection.

Public Works Activities – Street Division crews began preparations for the seventh season of the [Oak Park Sculpture Walk](#) set to begin next week. This year's event will be held in the Southtown Business District along Oak Park Avenue between Lexington and Van Buren streets. Contractors are applying permanent patches to pavement that had been temporarily repaired following water line breaks during the winter. Street Division crews installed alley speed humps and picked up litter in the business districts and Village parking lots. Water & Sewer Division crews replaced damaged fire hydrants at Taylor Avenue and Berkshire Street and 1124 S. Euclid Ave. and exercised water valves on Austin Boulevard between Chicago Avenue and Lake Street. Forestry Division crews delivered compost to schools and focused on routine tasks, including responding to requests from residents.

Employee news –John Kramer was officially promoted this week to Deputy Chief Financial Officer, a role he had filled in an interim capacity for several months. John has been with the Finance Department since September 2016, serving first as office manager and later as senior accountant. Halston Shanklin has joined the Streets Division of the Public Works Department as an Equipment Operator. Halston brings six years of experience in public works activities, including snow plowing operations. Three Street Division workers attended [International Municipal Signal Association \(IMSA\)](#) training this week to learn about the latest signal systems construction and maintenance procedures, as well as see new products and equipment developments that may be applicable to future Village needs.

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