



**Village Manager's Report
Week ending May 12, 2023**

Meetings scheduled for next week:

- Monday, May 15:
 - Village Board meeting, 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers
- Tuesday, May 16:
 - Citizen Police Oversight Committee, 7 p.m. in Room 215
- Wednesday, May 17:
 - Community Relations Commission, 7 p.m. in Council Chambers
 - Housing Programs Advisory Committee, 7 p.m. in Room 101
- Thursday, May 18:
 - Building Codes Advisory Commission, 7 p.m. in Room 215
 - Disability Access Commission, 6 p.m. at Oak Park Library Maze Branch
- Friday, May 19:
 - No meetings scheduled

Gun lock giveaway – The Village’s Health and Police departments are teaming up to host a community event to promote safe storage of firearms. Free gun locks will be available from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. this Saturday, May 13 in the courtyard at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. No registration is required. The locks will be distributed on a first come, first served basis as supplies last. Both the Health and Police departments remind residents that safe firearm storage is a simple action a gun owner can take to reduce access to guns among young people, keeping families safe. More information is at www.oak-park.us/SafeStorageEvent.

Juneteenth Youth Arts Contest – The Village’s Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is hosting a Juneteenth Youth Arts Contest open to anyone age 18 and younger who lives or attends school in Oak Park. Artists are invited to create a work of art that embodies what Juneteenth is and why it is important. All forms of art are welcome, including hip-hop/rap, spoken word, paintings, etc. The deadline to submit a contest entry is Monday, June 5. Winners will receive a cash prize. The Village's Office of DEI will announce winners for elementary, middle and high school age groups at the [Juneteenth Cookout](#) on June 18. Find more information and a link to submit entries online at www.oak-park.us/juneteenth. Questions about the contest can also be directed to DEI@oak-park.us.

COVID-19 public health emergency ends - After 1,200 days, the federal public health emergency for COVID-19 ended May 11. While this does not mean the pandemic has officially ended, it does mean the emergency response on a national level is ending, and with it, the availability and access to some services will change. The Oak Park Health Department will still be able to offer some COVID-related services for free. Through at least

June 30, free rapid antigen or PCR tests will be available from the Health Department. [Check here for the upcoming days and times available for testing.](#) The Health Department will also offer free vaccines through the end of the calendar year. The next opportunity to receive a COVID vaccine booster is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. next Tuesday, May 16 at Cheney Mansion, 220 N Euclid Ave. [Click here to register and for more information.](#)

Historic Preservation Commission update – At its regular meeting on May 11, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) acted upon matters related to proposed projects at 505 N. Ridgeland Avenue and 312 N. East Avenue. The HPC provided an advisory review the proposed development at 505 N. Ridgeland Ave. The commission received 11 letters from the public, including one signed by more than 140 people, and heard comments from nine members of the public at the meeting. All public comments related to concerns about the proposal, including its scale, setbacks and design. HPC Commissioners also expressed concerns regarding these items and provided recommendations to the developer, Ambrosia Homes, including increasing setbacks, locating the entry on Ridgeland Avenue and stepping down the height of the proposed development, particularly adjacent to the single-family houses. Design recommendations included grouping windows, adding a cornice detail, using more brick, and using a single color on the exterior. The development application may return to the HPC if significant changes are made by the developer. The HPC's recommendations will be forwarded to the Village's Plan Commission when an application is submitted to the Plan Commission for their review.

The meeting also included a public hearing regarding a proposed dormer project at 312 N. East Avenue. The applicants said that they did not feel the Certificate of Appropriateness process was required for their project and further argued that the project meets the Village's Architectural Review Guidelines. The HPC maintained that the Village's Architectural Review Guidelines were not met due to the scale of the dormer and the nearly flat roof, which gives the dormer the appearance of an added floor. The HPC denied the Certificate of Appropriateness request by a vote of 6-1. The applicant's options include appealing the decision to the Village Board, applying for a Certificate of Economic Hardship from the HPC, altering the application to meet the Village's guidelines or withdrawing the application.

Multi-year liquor tax collection analysis – The Development Customer Services Department recently completed a multi-year analysis of the municipal liquor tax. During the five-year period from 2018 to 2022, the Village collected \$3,255,948 in local liquor taxes. Last year was a record setting year for liquor tax collections, totaling \$698,326, a 2.2% increase over the next highest collection year of 2018. [Click here](#) for a graph showing the overall trend of liquor taxes collected since 2018. The 2023 numbers are from partial first-quarter receipts. The Village has a 3% liquor tax, and license holders are required to collect that percentage on the net taxable receipts from liquor sales. The number of liquor license tax payers in Oak Park equaled 70 in 2018 and 2019, 69 in 2020, and 66 in 2021 and thus far in 2023. Municipal liquor tax receipts are dedicated to help fund the Village's general fund expenses. [Click here](#) for an in-depth presentation on the liquor tax analysis.

Childcare business assistance grant update – The Village's business assistance grant program designed to aid Oak Park childcare providers impacted by the COVID-19 emergency has processed 20 grants totaling \$249,250. Operators of licensed childcare businesses in

Oak Park are encouraged to contact the Development Customer Service Department at business@oak-park.us for information about obtaining grant funding. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 emergency, the Village has facilitated six separate business assistance grant programs that have led to 332 grant awards totaling more than \$1.2 million in assistance for the business community.

Fire Department celebrates retirements – Two longtime members of the Fire Department retired this week. Battalion Chief Jerry Cote and Lieutenant Dave Spagnoli both began their careers at the Fire Department on May 10, 1993, and their retirements were a day apart as they departed after completing 30 years of service to the community. As part of the retirement celebrations, both Jerry and Dave were honored during a “walkout ceremony” on the morning of their last day working for the Village.

Employee news – The Village welcomed two new employees this week as Elyse Rodrigues joined the Law Department as a paralegal and Claudia Gonzalez joined the Health Department as an Administrative Assistant. Elyse has a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Mount Holyoke College. Claudia has an Associate of Science degree from Moraine Valley Community College.

Building Safety Month continues – Continuing with the *Building Safety is Personal* theme of Building Safety Month, the Village is recognizing Chief Building Official Steve Cutaia and his entire Permit Processing Division team for the important, ongoing role that building safety professionals play in keeping Oak Park homes and businesses safe. Building safety professionals include building inspectors, building officials, plan examiners, permit technicians, fire marshals and more. Building safety professionals are constantly training to keep-up with the latest building codes and standards. These professionals have knowledge that spans every aspect of the life of a building, from the bottom of the foundation to the top of the roof. In Oak Park, the building safety team works hard year-round ensure the Village is a safe place to live. For more information about building safety or the process of obtaining a building permit, visit www.oak-park.us/permits or contact permits@oak-park.us.

Green business webinar planned – Oak Park businesses looking to go green are invited to join an informational webinar from 9 to 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 18 to learn more Oak Park’s Green Business Program. The webinar will include information about resources, support services and funding available to help businesses launch or continue their sustainability journey. Participants will also learn about the Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability’s BRITE Program, which is offering no-cost assessments and funding to implement recommendations for businesses in the dry cleaning, auto body and repair, metal finishing and food & beverage manufacturing sectors. [Click here to register for the webinar.](#) More information is available on the Sustain Oak Park website – [click here to view.](#)

Cop on A Rooftop fundraiser – Members of the Oak Park Police Department are planning to participate in the statewide Cop on A Rooftop event from 5 a.m. to noon next Friday, May 19 at the Dunkin Donuts at 6820 Roosevelt Rd. The community is invited to stop by to help the Police Department raise money to benefit the athletes of Special Olympics Illinois. [Click here for more information about the Cop on A Rooftop initiative.](#)

Fire safety trailer visits Oak Park schools – Over the past few weeks the Fire Department brought its fire safety trailer to visit all second-grade classes in Oak Park Elementary School District 97 and most Oak Park parochial schools. During the visits, firefighters taught children to get out and stay out in the event of a fire. They also shared other important messages including stop, drop and roll, crawl low under smoke, fire safety in the kitchen and how to make a 911 emergency call. Additionally, the students were able to practice an escape in the trailer. The fire safety trailer visits have long been part of the Fire Department’s mission of teaching fire safety to Oak Park’s youngest residents but had been paused the past several years during the COVID-19 emergency.

Foam recycling event in the works – As part of its ongoing effort to expand recycling opportunities for Oak Park residents, the Public Works Department’s Environmental Services Division is making plans to include foam recycling at the Village’s next paper shredding event in the fall. Foam products with the No. 6 symbol are not accepted as part of the Village’s single-stream recycling program with waste hauler LRS. To fill the gap, the Village has scheduled Dart Container Corporation to collect foam products during the paper shredding event planned for 9 a.m. to noon on Sept. 23 at the Public Works Center. In the meantime, residents can hang on to foam products with the No. 6 symbol rather than send them to the landfill. On the date of the recycling event, the foam products will need to be dropped off in a clear or translucent bag. Straws, lids and foam packaging peanuts will not be accepted, and any foodservice containers will need to be rinsed or wiped.

L’Arche Chicago groundbreaking planned – L’Arche Chicago will host a celebratory groundbreaking at 4:30 p.m. on May 31 for its new home at 1111 S. East Ave. in Oak Park. L’Arche Chicago acquired the property in August 2021 and plans to construct a home where developmentally disabled adults, the core members, live in a community setting with non-developmentally disabled adults, the assistants. This group home will be for four individuals with developmental disabilities to live in together with up to four live-in staff members who will support them. The home will be a licensed Community Integrated Living Arrangement, operated under the authority of the Division of Developmental Disabilities of the Department of Human Services in the State of Illinois. For more information about L’Arche Chicago and the May 31st groundbreaking, visit www.larchechicago.org.

Alley improvements – Eight alleys throughout the Village will be constructed with a concrete surface to drain water away from homes. Contractors will stagger work to minimize closure durations. Construction will begin in the north half of the Village with prep work starting the week of May 15. Alley closures last approximately three weeks. Each home impacted by the alley reconstruction project is receiving two 24-hour parking passes to use throughout the length of the closure for parking on the surrounding blocks.

Pavement preservation project – Crack filling contractors completed their work and removed the no parking yard signs placed prior to the start of the project. Rejuvenator contractors were in town the second half of this week, working from the south to north throughout the Village. Roads were coned off for 10 to 30 minutes after work was completed before being opened to traffic. The roads were also swept 24 hours after the initial application.

Division Street water & sewer update – Utility work was completed this week and the detour at Division Street and Oak Park Avenue is expected to be removed by the weekend. Concrete and sidewalk work is ongoing and should take about four weeks to complete.

Street resurfacing project – Wet weather last week delayed landscaping and sod replacement in areas undergoing street resurfacing, which in turn delayed planned roadway work. Pavement milling is now expected to begin the week of May 22 and will last about three days. The milling will be followed by patching. In the meantime, all concrete work is wrapping up this week.

Pleasant & Marion update – Carpenters are continuing to set structural wall as the building is on schedule to top out the week of May 15. Interior and exterior gauged framing continues and window installation is ongoing with crane assistance.

Roosevelt Road resurfacing – Crews are working on surface removal in westbound lanes of Roosevelt Road from 47th Avenue to Highland Avenue as part of the Illinois Department of Transportation's resurfacing project. Crews are also reinstalling brick areas on the south side of Roosevelt.

Miscellaneous construction updates – Contractors poured concrete for the north half of the crosswalks at the intersection of South Boulevard and Marion Street, and traffic control will be flipped to close the south lanes next week for removal of concrete once the new concrete on the north half has settled and meets strength requirements. The contractor for the Nicor Gas project televised the 100 and 1100 blocks of S. Humphrey Ave. this week. Elsewhere, minor punchlist work is occurring throughout the Village to wrap up this spring's sidewalk repair project.