



**Village Manager's Report  
Week ending March 13, 2015**

**Meetings scheduled for the next week:**

- Monday, March 16:
  - Village Board Executive Session, 6:30 p.m., room 130
  - Village Board Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m., room 201
- Tuesday, March 17:
  - Citizen Police Oversight Committee, 7:30 p.m., room 102
- Wednesday, March 18:
  - Disability Access Commission, 7 p.m., 834 Lake St.
  - Community Relations Commission, 7 p.m., room 101
  - Housing Programs Advisory Committee, 7 p.m., room 215
- Thursday, March 19:
  - Building Codes Advisory Commission, 5:30 p.m., room 215

**Upcoming Meetings:**

- Monday, April 13 – Village Board Special Meeting regarding Madison Street, 7 p.m., room 101

**Economic development needs assessment begins** – With approval from the [U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development \(HUD\)](#), an assessment has begun to determine the form of technical assistance the Village needs to develop a federally funded business loan program. The needs assessment is being conducted by the [National Development Council](#), a non-profit community development organization that works to increase the flow of capital to underserved areas for job creation and development. Once the assessment is completed and approved by HUD, which is anticipated to occur in July, federal funds could become available to pay for expert guidance to ensure that the Village's new business loan program aligns with federal regulations, creates jobs and fills local economic development needs.

**Police conduct continues to earn high marks** -- The latest report from the ongoing, long-term study by the [Center for Research in Law and Justice](#) at the University of Illinois Chicago gave Oak Park Police officers high marks for their professional conduct. What sets the new data apart for the original 2010 study is the increased number of participating law enforcement agencies. Researchers now can compare Oak Park police to other law enforcement agencies that have since joined the project. Two reports were generated in this latest round – one for citizen-initiated encounters, such as reporting a crime, and one for police-initiated encounters, such as traffic

stops. [Oak Park Police scored very high](#) in both categories, and exceeded the performance of other agencies in the study, attesting to the high level of respect officers show citizens. The research reports are not packaged for general public consumption, but are interesting to review – [click here to download a document that contains both the citizen- and police-initiated data](#).

**CDBG administration exceeds standards** – The annual year-end-review letter from the Department of Housing & Urban Development noted that Oak Park had exceeded all performance standards, including having the best timeliness of spending ratio among peer members of the Cook County HOME Consortium. The consortium is comprised of municipalities that partner with the county to leverage [HOME Investment Partnerships Program](#) funding for building, buying and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or ownership throughout the region. The letter also highlighted the Village's interest in the [Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program](#) for economic development.

**Foreclosures decline** – The Chicago region is experiencing double-digit declines in foreclosure filings and auctions, according to data from the [Regional Housing Partnership](#). New data from the [Woodstock Institute](#) show foreclosure filings, which indicate the beginning of the foreclosure process, fell by 33.7 percent in the six-county Chicago region between 2013 and 2014. Foreclosure auctions, which indicate the completion of the foreclosure process and transfer to new owners, declined by 22.4 percent in the region over the same time period. [Click here to see the Oak Park data](#).

**Crime Free Housing Program update** – Working with the Police and Community Relations departments, the Neighborhood Services Division has hosted 13 crime-free-housing seminars since October. To date, 258 rental building owners and managers have participated in a seminar. In addition to providing an introduction to the program, each seminar covers fair housing, effective tenant screening practices, working with the [Housing Choice Voucher Program](#) and protections for victims of domestic violence. The Division also has issued 458 licenses to rental properties with three or fewer units, which is a new requirement under the [Crime Free Housing Program](#). Additional seminars are scheduled for March 25 and April 29. Future plans include posting a seminar video online to accommodate owners and managers who cannot attend in person.

**Inspectors help resolve property issues** – The Property Maintenance Inspection team participated in the Village's response to a fully engulfed house fire earlier this year, with inspector Steve Klebe helping the owner secure board-up services and providing a resource for contractors cleaning up the damaged home. Last month, inspectors responded to a call of a vehicle accident involving a residential garage, helping the owner find a contractor to remove the remaining structure and ensuring the damaged garage was not left unattended until the site was secured. Inspectors also played a key role in addressing two reports of possible abandoned vehicles. Inspector Kyle O'Connor tracked down the owners and determined that one of the vehicles was properly registered and insured, giving him the opportunity to explain to its owner the rules that must be followed to avoid towing should a future abandoned vehicle report be filed. The second vehicle was determined to be abandoned and was removed.

**Capital improvements** – Construction has begun to upgrade 29 traffic signals under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation. The project, which began ahead of schedule, includes signals along Ridgeland Avenue, Washington Street, Harlem Avenue, Roosevelt Road, North Avenue and Austin Boulevard at I-290. The new signals will be LED, with countdown pedestrian indicators and uninterruptible power supplies.

**Public Works activities** – Staff cleared out materials stored at 260 Madison St. in preparation for demolition to make way for the new District 97 headquarters. Demolition is expected to begin later this month. A water main break was repaired at 1174 S. Ridgeland Ave. and a water service upgraded at 947 S Grove Ave. as part of the Village's lead abatement program. A street light pole damaged by a vehicle accident earlier this year at Oak Park Avenue and Lake was reset and damaged light fixtures assessed Oak Park Avenue at the viaduct after being struck accidentally by a southbound truck. Crews have been taking advantage of the spring thaw by filling potholes, clearing sewer inlets to handle melting snow and ice, and checking for frozen hydrants. Tree trimming continued, with Forestry Division crews working on the north side of the Village, while a private contractor worked north of I-290, moving east from Austin Boulevard.

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