



Village Manager's Report
Week ending November 13, 2015

Meetings scheduled for the next week:

- Monday, November 16:
 - Village Board Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m., room 201
- Tuesday, November 17:
 - Citizen Police Oversight Committee, 7:30 p.m., room 102
- Wednesday, November 18:
 - Village Tri-Board Meeting, 7 p.m., OPRFHS
 - Community Relations Commission, 7 p.m., room 101
 - Housing Programs Advisory Committee, 7 p.m., room 215
- Thursday, November 19:
 - Oak Park Area Arts Council Board Meeting, 7 p.m., room 102
 - Plan Commission Special Meeting, 7 p.m., room 101

Upcoming Meetings:

- Wednesday, November 18 – Village Tri-Board Meeting, 7 p.m., OPRFHS

Downtown construction update – Staff from the [Development Customer Services](#) and [Parking & Mobility Services](#) departments hosted a kick-off meeting Thursday with business owners and operators to discuss the redevelopment project coming soon to the Colt site on Lake Street. The meeting at the Lake Theater attracted about 30 individuals eager to learn more – especially about how changes to parking will be managed. The Dec. 18 target date for opening the new parking garage at Lake & Forest was shared, along with details on the universal valet parking proposal under consideration for the area. [The presentation also offered details](#) on important items such as loading zones during construction, as well as an overview of a marketing campaign by Downtown Oak Park to keep businesses, residents and visitors informed about the project and focused on its future benefits. Staff also distributed a written overview of the project that [included answers to what were likely to be the most frequently asked questions](#) and contact information for Village staff and the developer. Attendees were given [cards urging them to email comments](#) about valet parking to parking@oak-park.us.

Police collecting toys for tots – The Oak Park Police Department will once again be an official collection point for the annual [Toys for Tots program](#). Toys may be dropped off through Dec. 21. Donated toys must be new and sealed in their original packages, but not gift wrapped. Stuffed animals cannot be accepted because of dust and allergy concerns.

Alley projects preparation – Letters have been mailed to residents whose properties abut alleys scheduled to be reconstructed in 2016. In addition to providing details on the scope of the work, the letters also explain the special service area assessment option for green alleys and replacement of the garage aprons on private property. Letters alerting residents to the pending construction will be mailed in the spring prior to work beginning.

Customer service training – Trainers from [Fred Pryor Seminars/Career Track](#) will be at Village Hall on Nov. 18 and 19 to provide training on *How to Deliver Exceptional Customer Service*. The seminar is intended not only to train staff to prevent problems, but also to pursue service excellence. Two, one-day sessions have been scheduled to provide an opportunity for as many staff as possible to participate. The training is open to all staff, even those who may not think of themselves as customer service personnel, since their actions can affect both internal and external customer relations. Seminar registration is being managed by the Development Customer Services Department.

Property maintenance code status – The International Property Maintenance Code goes into effect here on Dec. 1. The Village Board adopted the International Council's [2009 IPMC with local amendments](#) earlier this month. Many stipulations in current code will remain in effect, but the new code provides more clarity for property owners and Village inspectors.

Crime-free housing education – Five seminars have been held this year for rental property owners and managers as part of the Village's effort to provide guidance and education on how to respond effectively to criminal activity. The seminars are part of the annual licensing process required of all rental property owners, including those who only rent out a single unit. Neighborhood Services worked with the Communications Department to create an online registration process for the seminars as well as a video of a session for owners who could not attend. Owners may view the video and answer a 10-question quiz to satisfy the seminar requirement. Staff will evaluate the format of the seminars for improvements in 2016.

Vacant building process update – With [recently approved](#) amendments to the Village's Vacant Building Ordinance, staff has begun classifying buildings as vacant if they are unoccupied for six months. The new, shorter timeline will allow Village staff to act more efficiently to prevent negative impacts on neighboring properties and help prepare these buildings for occupancy. A vacancy determination requires the title holder to register the property, show proof of liability insurance and submit to a thorough interior inspection. Re-inspections continue until any code violations are addressed. Title holders may appeal the vacant building determination to the Village Manager.

Housing programs report – Four projects funded through the *Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Program* were completed and one was under construction as the federal plan year closed on Sept. 30. The goal of the program, which is funded with Community Development Block grants, was seven projects, a goal that should be attainable in the new plan year now that the Housing office is fully staffed. Projects were completed in 13 rental units under the *Small Rental Rehabilitation Program*,

two more than were recommended originally by the Housing Programs Advisory Committee. A call for projects will go out soon for the *Multi-Family Incentives Program* following amendments to the program approved by the Village Board in October. Staff is compiling data and developing a new marketing strategy to engage owners in 2016.

Sewer backup grants update – By Dec. 31, 35 homeowners will have taken advantage of the Sewer Backup Protection Grant program in 2015, using all funds appropriated for the program. Currently, 28 property owners are on a waiting list pending Village Board action on the 2016 recommended budget. In the more than three years since the program was launched, more than 200 households have gotten help paying for improvements to address basement flooding. The size of the average grant delivered through the program is about \$3,100 – less than the maximum allowed – and the average total project cost topped \$7,900.

Public Works activities –Streets Division crews continued building bike parking pads at various locations, restoring streets and curbs where water service repairs were completed and pushing leaves for the seasonal leaf collection Program. Water & Sewer Division crews installed a fire hydrant at 102 N. Lombard Ave. Village Foresters began fall parkway tree planting this week. About 220 trees are scheduled to be planted. In addition to routine tasks of responding to resident requests, removing hazardous trees and stumps, Forestry Division crews also pruned parkway trees to better accommodate the snow plows that are sure to be on the road soon. In preparation for the snow season ahead, the Public Works Department held its annual *Snow Road-ee*, the annual half-day training session on winter storm safety and operations procedures.

Gas main replacement update – Nicor crews are continuing to replace gas mains in the Village. Work currently is underway on Oak Park Avenue. Engineering staff is maintaining frequent contact with Nicor to monitor progress and ensure coordination.

Employee news – The Public Works Department’s Daniel Smith recently received his *Engineer in Training* license. The six-hour test required to earn the designation is the first step in obtaining a Professional Engineer License. To become licensed, engineers must complete a four-year college degree, work under a Professional Engineer for at least four years, pass two intensive competency exams and be licensed by the state.

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