



**Village Manager's Report
Week ending July 23, 2021**

Meetings scheduled for next week:

- Monday, July 26:
 - Village Board Meeting, 7 p.m., via Zoom
- Tuesday, July 27:
 - Board of Health, 6 p.m., via Zoom
- Wednesday, July 28:
 - Community Design Commission, 7 p.m., via Zoom
- Thursday, July 29:
 - Environment & Energy Commission, 4 p.m., via Zoom
 - Village Board Personnel Committee, 6:30 p.m., via Zoom
- Friday, July 30:
 - No meetings scheduled

Bridge temporarily closing – The Ridgeland Avenue bridge over I-290 will be fully closed for repairs for about three days beginning late next week. The current schedule calls for closing the bridge to all traffic from the night of Fri., July 30 through the morning of Mon., August 2, weather permitting. The repairs, which were originally scheduled for this weekend, are routine, but will disrupt traffic flow along this important north-south roadway. During the work, vehicle traffic will be detoured around the area at Madison Street and Roosevelt Road.

Rent/utility assistance available - The Illinois Department of Human Services recently announced that rental and utility assistance remains available through its network of community providers. With IHDA and many county programs now closed, the program could be a source of assistance for those residents still seeking assistance. The aid is available statewide and eligibility requirements includes Illinois residents who are renters and have a household income at or below [80 percent of area median income](#); have experienced a financial hardship due to the pandemic; or is behind on rent and/or is at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Proof of citizenship is not required. More information is available online at www.illinoisrentalassistance.org.

Building permit activity– The Development Customer Service Department reports that for the first six months of 2021, the Permits Division had processed 1,993 permits. This six-month report represents a 41 percent increase over the first six months of 2020 and a 15 percent increase in permit activity over 2019 totals. Permits issued so far this year have generated more than \$1 million in revenue.

Parking garage activity – Use of Village-owned parking garages appear to be slowly rebounding from the COVID-19 emergency. Garage revenue for the first six months of 2021 remains significantly below normal 2019 pre-pandemic totals, but has shown some growth each month this year as compared to 2020. [Click here to see the comparison](#) of revenue by month in 2019, 2020 and 2021 for each of our three garages.

Junior police academy – The Junior Citizen’s Police Academy created through a partnership between the Oak Park and River Forest police departments quickly filled to capacity for its August activities. The free program is offered to children between the ages of 10 and 15 who live or go to school in Oak Park or River Forest and are interested in learning about law enforcement and careers in public safety. This year participants are expected to hear a presentation by the [Mounted Patrol Unit of the Chicago Police Department](#). Past programs included a visit to the Brookfield Zoo to learn about the extensive and comprehensive training zoo police officers must undergo to be prepared for possibly dangerous rescues from animal enclosures. Residents who might like to learn more about the program and future participation opportunities can call 708.358.3800 or email Sgt. Robert Monty at rmonty@oak-park.us.

Oak Park Avenue improvements – Preparation for paving continues. Contractors are replacing crossing ramps, sections of sidewalk and curb along the entire length of the roadway. Work then will entail milling the surface and patching as needed in preparation for paving operations. The project remains on schedule to be completed in November, with all new pavement from Roosevelt Road to North Avenue, except in the Hemingway District, which was part of last year’s Lake Street improvement project. Construction details and schedules are posted at www.opaveanew.com. In the meantime, Verizon contractors are installing conduit along Oak Park Avenue for future projects. By installing the conduit now, the private project should not impact planned resurfacing activities.

Miscellaneous construction updates – State contractors are still on North Avenue replacing corner sidewalk ramps between Harlem and Cicero avenues as part of the repaving project, and are installing the final asphalt surface from Harlem to Oak Park Avenue. In a separate state project, an Illinois Department of Transportation contractor also still is replacing sidewalk ramps on Harlem Avenue from Roosevelt Road to North Avenue, making sure they meet ADA requirements. In downtown Oak Park, the Village’s electrical contractor is completing punch list items related to lighting and traffic signals along Lake Street.

Staff development – The Public Works Department completed its first Leadership Development Program for its staff this week. The program started pre-COVID and was suspended for several months, but was able to be completed via several Zoom meetings. The course included nine sessions consisting of lessons on the public works mission, vision and values, as well as ethics, Village Code, budgeting, customer service, supervision, performance measures, project management and best practices. Police Chief LaDon Reynolds provided the final lesson in supervision

and leadership. While the program was targeted to Public Works employees, the concept could offer a blueprint for expansion to other operations.

Employee News – Fire Battalion Chief Kevin Fadden will begin a rotation as Interim Fire Chief starting Monday (July 26) as the process of selecting retired Chief Tom Ebsen continues. Kevin has been with the Fire Department since 1998 and achieved the rank of Lieutenant in 2010 before being promoted to Battalion Chief in 2016. He also served as the Department’s Emergency Medical Services Coordinator from 2009 – 2016. Current Interim Chief Rob Kobyleski will resume his Deputy Chief duties and will work closely with Interim Chief Fadden and Deputy Chief JT Terry.

###