



**Village Manager's Report  
The Week Ending March 11, 2016**

**Meetings scheduled for next week:**

- Monday, March 14:
  - Contract Review Committee, 6:30 p.m., room 130
  - Village Board Special Meeting, 7 p.m., room 201
- Tuesday, March 15:
  - Citizen Police Oversight Committee, 7:30 p.m., room 102
- Wednesday, March 16:
  - Community Relations Commission, 7 p.m., room 101
  - Housing Programs Advisory Committee, 7 p.m., room 215
- Thursday, March 17:
  - Building Codes Advisory Commission, 5:30 p.m., room 215
- Friday, March 18:
  - No scheduled meetings

**Daylight Saving Time returns** – Daylight Saving Time will begin at 2 a.m., this Sunday (March 13). Clocks should be set ahead one hour. The Oak Park Fire Department recommends using the time change as a convenient reminder to replace the batteries in all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

**Oak Park Station update** – Fencing went up this week around the site of the new Oak Park Station development downtown. Signs already are up alerting motorists to alternate parking options. A related ComEd project to relocate services for the area is scheduled to begin Monday (March 14) and will affect Marion Street under the viaduct. Southbound Marion Street will be closed to traffic during the work, which could take up to two weeks to complete. [Click here to see a map of the ComEd construction areas.](#)

**Chicago sewer work to affect Oak Park traffic** – Chicago Water Management Department contractors will be detouring Madison Street traffic through Oak Park beginning next week for sewer construction that will close Madison Street completely east of Austin Boulevard. Westbound traffic will be detoured south at Central Avenue in Chicago to westbound Roosevelt Road, then north on Ridgeland Avenue back to Madison. Eastbound traffic will be detoured in the reverse way. Madison Street within Oak Park will be open fully for local use. The work is estimated to take between six and 12 weeks.

**CTA Green Line project update** – Improvements to the CTA Green Line tracks are set to begin in April at the Harlem station and progress eastward the entire length of the Village. Work is scheduled to occur over seven weekends, beginning after the Friday rush and ending before the Monday morning rush. Passengers will be bused around the closed stations. The CTA is managing communications with its riders. Various north/south streets in Oak Park may be temporarily closed as the work progresses. Closings have been coordinated with the Fire Department to ensure public safety. Parking also will be affected along South Boulevard for equipment and materials staging. The project entails replacing track ties and stone ballast.

**South Boulevard streetscape update** – Engineering staff met Thursday with stakeholders in preparation for major streetscape improvements planned along South Boulevard between Harlem Avenue and Marion Street. Staff explained the extent of the project, discussed likely impacts and answered questions. The first step will be underground utility work, which is scheduled to begin in April. South Boulevard will be completely closed to traffic for about a month. Traffic then will be limited to east-bound only for an additional month.

**Harlem Avenue bridge project grant** – With hopes still alive to improve the Harlem Avenue overpass at North and South boulevards, the Engineering Division has begun working with the villages of River Forest and Forest Park on the joint application for the [Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery](#) (TIGER) competitive grant program. The proposed project would replace the existing bridge, lower Harlem Avenue to improve clearances and add pedestrian and aesthetic enhancements that would transform this deteriorated bridge into a gateway for the all three villages.

**Condo association event draws crowd** – The first of a two-part seminar to help condominium association members learn more about their responsibilities brought nearly 50 individuals to Village Hall Thursday night. This first session on rules and regulations featured presentations by an attorney specializing in condominium law and Village staff providing guidance on local requirements and available support resources. The second session is scheduled for April 5 and will address enforcing rules. Registration is offered, but not necessary. [More information is posted on the Village website.](#)

**Sewer Backup Prevention Grants on track** – The Village's Sewer Backup Prevention Grant Program is on track to help more than 235 households since the effort was launched in 2012. These grants help offset the cost to homeowners of installing plumbing systems that prevent sewers from backing up into basements during periods of heavy rain. Most recipient properties are north of Augusta Avenue – [click here to see a map of where grant-funded systems have been or will be installed](#). A recent survey found that 92 percent of program participants are either satisfied or very satisfied with their projects, with a similar percentage reporting they did not experience any backflow-related flooding after installation of a prevention system. Funding is still available and homeowners are encouraged to apply by visiting [www.oak-park.us/sewergrant](http://www.oak-park.us/sewergrant), where an application packet and answers to some of the most frequently asked questions are posted.

**Miscellaneous construction project updates** – Work has begun to rehabilitate both the south and north water pumping stations. The work, which will occur inside the buildings, includes elevating walkways, color-coding pipe and installing skid-resistant flooring. Pending Board approval of the recommended bid on March 21, a pre-construction meeting has been

scheduled that same week with the preferred contractor for the season's first round of alley and sidewalk improvement projects.

**Fire Department update** – The Fire Department responded to 573 calls in February, bringing the year-to-date total to 1,125. Calls for emergency services in February were the principal category, the 349 calls representing 69 percent of the total. February's EMS calls led to contact with 371 patients, 265 of whom were transported to a medical facility. Of those transported, 140 required advance life support services. Other activity in February included 95 general calls for service, 47 good intent calls, 40 fires/hazardous conditions reports and 38 alarms initiated. The increase in hazardous conditions calls was attributed primarily to storm and wind damage to power lines. Firefighters responded to 14 fire incidents in February. Three of the fires were in structures and all were contained to the room of origin.

**Public Works activities** – Since facing only one minor snow event since the last report, Streets Division crews have been taking advantage of the spring-like temperatures to install benches, relocate garbage cans, sweep streets and remove litter throughout the Village. Crews also continued installing signs, temporarily patching street openings where water system repairs were made and filling potholes. Water & Sewer Division crews began preparing for spring rains by clearing debris from sewer inlets to avoid potential flooding. Crews also repaired a 12-inch water main break and two-inch water service line at 179 S. Oak Park Ave. and a sinkhole at Harlem Avenue and Pleasant Street. Forestry staff visited two local nurseries to tag trees for the upcoming spring planting season that will include about 275 trees of 30 different species and cultivars. Both staff and contractors continued winter cycle tree pruning, with private crews currently working on Clinton and Home avenues between South Boulevard and Madison Street.

**District 97 seeking volunteers** – School District 97 has asked the Village to help spread the word that they are seeking residents to help advance their visioning planning process. These volunteers would serve on the superintendent's advisory panel and help gather information, identify themes and plan next steps to support the long-term success of the schools and students. The goal is to enlist one representative from each of the eight elementary school attendance areas. The deadline to apply is Fri., March 18. [More details are posted on the D97 website.](#)

**Employee news** – After nearly nine years as Chief Financial Officer, Craig Lesner has tendered his resignation, effective April 1. Craig has decided to pursue his intellectual interest in financial policy making with the [Illinois Policy Institute](#), an independent government watchdog group. While Craig will be sorely missed, we understand his decision to pursue this unique opportunity and wish him well. Steven Drazner, who has been Deputy CFO since August, will serve as interim CFO until Craig's permanent successor is chosen. Steve has extensive experience in municipal finance having served as finance director in Countryside, as well as assistant finance director in both Evanston and Morton Grove. In other employee news, Village Attorney Paul Stephanides was elected Treasurer of the [Illinois Local Government Lawyers Association](#) at its annual meeting last month. Founded in 1992, the association consists of 232 practicing local government attorneys across the state. Its purpose is to give local government lawyers a forum to share information and solutions to problems of mutual interest.

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