



**Village Manager's Report  
Week ending April 21, 2023**

Meetings scheduled for next week:

- Monday, April 24:
  - Village Board meeting, 7 p.m. in Council Chambers
  
- Tuesday, April 25:
  - Village Board Personnel Committee, 6 p.m. in Room 130
  - Board of Health, 6 p.m. in Room 102
  - Community Development Citizen Advisory Commission, 6 p.m. in Council Chambers
  - Housing Programs Advisory Committee Special meeting, 7 p.m. in Room 101
  - Liquor Control Review Board, 7:30 p.m. in Room 124
  
- Wednesday, April 26:
  - Disability Access Commission, 6 p.m. in Veteran's Room at Oak Park Library
  - Community Design Commission, 7 p.m. in Council Chambers
  
- Thursday, April 27:
  - Historic Preservation Commission Architectural Review Committee, 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers
  
- Friday, April 28:
  - No meetings scheduled

**COVID-19 Weekly Reports are posted at [www.oak-park.us/covid19](http://www.oak-park.us/covid19)  
just click on the *Status report bulletin* heading**

**South fire station renovations complete** – Renovations aimed at creating a healthier and more equitable living space at the Oak Park Fire Department's south fire station are now complete. The south fire station, located at 900 S. East Ave., was built in 1961, a time when only male firefighters worked in the department. Prior to this renovation project, bathrooms were single gender with community shower stalls, and only limited repairs had been made to the bunk, locker and bathrooms. The washroom area went through the biggest transformation as the community shower area was retrofitted into three self-contained bath areas with a shower, sink and commode. The setup provides privacy for all staff. The station also went from one large room for sleeping to six individual sleeping cubicles. In addition to added privacy, the new sleeping arrangements also assist in preventing the spread of sickness and allow for select alarm response among the on-duty crew. Lastly, the station now has two lock rooms that allow for more privacy while changing and a separate common hallway that all can use. [Click here to see photos comparing conditions before and after the renovations.](#)

**Development plans for 901 South Blvd.** – A developer has submitted plans to construct a three-story, two-family residential building containing two units at the property currently used for a private parking lot at the southwest corner of South Boulevard and Kenilworth Avenue. The proposed three-story building measures 35 feet from grade to the top of the flat roof, meeting the 35-foot height limit for the R-5 Two-Family Zoning District. The building features parapet walls and an elevator bulkhead and stairs to access the mechanical appurtenances above the roof, which is not considered when measuring the height of the building. At this time, the Village is still reviewing the permit application and has not approved this proposed development. The developer is not seeking zoning relief and is intending to build the proposal as a by-right development, in which case there will be no public hearing process. [Click here to see the developer's current elevation images of the proposed project.](#)

**Paper shredding event at Public Works** – Oak Parkers are invited to safely dispose of sensitive documents at a free paper shredding event scheduled for 9 a.m. to noon this Saturday, April 22 at the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd. Each household is limited to two bags or small boxes of paper items with personal information such as canceled checks, documents containing credit card numbers, social security numbers and medical information. Paper materials that can be placed in the recycling cart or bin, such as newspaper, magazines, chipboard or junk mail, will not be accepted.

**828 Woodbine Ave. update** – An underground 500-gallon home heating oil storage tank was removed this week from the rear of the property at 828 Woodbine Ave. near the alley. The tank was filled with ground water and a small amount of residual fuel. After extracting the tank, an environmental recovery company pumped the contents and removed it from the property. The environmental company is taking soil samples to determine what remediation needs to be done to complete the cleanup. The effort was in response to earlier complaints about what appeared to be an oil spill at the property. [Click here to see a photo from the extraction.](#)

**Surge in hotel/motel tax revenue** – The Village collected \$31,786 during January and February through its longstanding 4-percent tax on room stays in hotels, bed and breakfasts and AirBnb-style short-term rentals. The taxes collected in February alone were the highest on record, surpassing the next highest mark set in February 2020 by 14 percent. The combined January and February 2023 represent a 12-percent increase over the same period in 2020, which was the previous high-water mark for revenue through the first two months of the year. The data continues to provide a strong indicator that the hospitality industry is improving in the Oak Park area.

**CDCAC update** – This week marked the beginning of the Community Development Citizen Advisory Commission (CDCAC) meeting cycle focusing on the distribution of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The Village has received 23 applications from 17 organizations requesting CDBG funding for public service, public facility improvement and/or administration. This year the Village was allocated \$1,539,187 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for CDBG PY2023, which runs Oct. 1, 2023 – Sept. 30, 2024. On April 18, the CDCAC began the review of applications in the first of four public meetings. The remaining three application review meetings will be April 25, May 9, and May 30.

**HPC sustainability talk a success** – The Historic Preservation Commission hosted speaker Mark Nussbaum on April 13 to speak about geothermal heating in historic buildings. Nussbaum’s talk included local case studies of Unity Temple, Pleasant Home and the Balch House. The talk was attended by commissioners and members of the public and was followed by a question and answer session. The event was held in collaboration with the Environment & Energy Commission for Earth Month. A recording of the talk is available at [www.oak-park.us/commissiontv](http://www.oak-park.us/commissiontv).

**Health officials recommend stocking up on COVID-19 tests** – With the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency set to end May 11, changes in federal requirements for access to free tests may soon limit your ability to obtain free rapid at-home tests. Since 2021, the federal government has required all private insurers to cover up to eight free tests per month. That requirement will end when the emergency ends, so the Oak Park Public Health Department urges residents with private insurance to take advantage of that benefit in April and early May. Those enrolled in Medicaid will continue to receive free tests until September 2024. As of now, the federal government is also still offering free tests through the Postal Service – [click here to order free test kits through the mail](#). Free PCR and rapid testing will also be available from the Public Health Department at least through June 30. Find details about local COVID-19 testing events at [www.oak-park.us/testing](http://www.oak-park.us/testing).

**Village staff celebrates Earth Month** - The Offices of DEI and Sustainability have teamed up on fun Earth Month activities for Village staff, including competitions for best reusable mug, best office plant and tallest seedling. Each week, staff receive an email with helpful tips and resources for the office and home on topics like energy conservation, waste reduction and plants and biodiversity.

**Employee news** – The Village welcomed two new employees this week as Ammar Eshac joined the Development Customer Services Department’s Neighborhood Services Division and Kayla Jackson joined the Police Department as a Parking Enforcement Officer. Ammar is the Village’s newest Property Maintenance Community Development Inspector. He comes to the organization after having previously worked as a licensed home inspector in the Chicagoland area and as a construction contractor. Kayla grew up in Oak Park and graduated from Oak Park River Forest in 2018. She is currently working toward a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

**Green Business Program webinar** – Oak Park businesses looking to go green are invited to join an informational webinar from 9 to 10:30 a.m. next Thursday, April 27 to learn more about 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. Anyone interested in participating can [click here to register](#).

**Prescription drug disposal event** – Safely dispose of expired and unwanted prescription drugs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. this Saturday, April 22 at the Oak Park Township offices at 105 S. Oak Park Ave. The event is part of National Rx Take Back Day sponsored by the federal Drug Enforcement Administration to help prevent drug addiction and overdose deaths. The drugs should be in their original package. Prescription drugs also can be safely disposed of any time in a special collection box in the Oak Park Police Department lobby in the lower level at Village Hall. More information is at [www.oak-park.us/drugdisposal](http://www.oak-park.us/drugdisposal).

**Health and Wellness Fair this Sunday** - The Oak Park - River Forest (OPRF) Chamber of Commerce is hosting its Community Health and Wellness Fair from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 23 at FFC Oak Park, 1114 Lake St. The Oak Park Health Department will be among more than 70 local health and wellness professionals on hand providing a wide range of health screenings and services during the free event. More information about the Health and Wellness Fair is available on the Chamber of Commerce website – [click here to view](#).

**Division Street water & sewer update** – The intersection of Division Street and Ridgeland Avenue is expected to re-open this weekend once utility work concludes at the site. Meanwhile, utility work is set to ramp up next week at the intersection of Division and Oak Park Avenue, which remains closed to traffic. Concrete work is also underway along the north side of Division with the removal of curb and gutter and select driveways and sidewalks. The contractor expects the concrete to be replaced on the north side of the street by the end of next week.

**Street resurfacing update** – The utility contractor completed the installation of a new water main this week on Pleasant Street. The new main will be chlorinated next week. Concrete work for the wider street resurfacing project at various locations in Oak Park is in progress and is expected to wrap up next week in most locations. The exceptions are on Elmwood Avenue, Ontario Street and at various cul-de-sacs, where concrete work will take place at later date.

**Sidewalk repairs** – All major construction for the annual sidewalk project has been completed. Contractors are returning to repair sites in the coming days to clean up and address any remaining punch-list items.

**Crosswalk repairs at South and Marion** – Work is underway to remove damaged paver crosswalks at the intersection of South Boulevard and Marion Street and replace them with decorative concrete. South Boulevard is closed to eastbound traffic between Home and Harlem avenues. Travel in all other directions remains open, but drivers should anticipate delays in the area.

**Miscellaneous construction updates** – Illinois Department of Transportation crews are working on brick paver placement and pedestrian signal repairs along Roosevelt Road as part of IDOT's ongoing street resurfacing project. This week the contractor for the Nicor Gas project is televising the 1000 and 1100 blocks of S. East Ave. with partial lane closures anticipated while work is ongoing. Windows are being installed by mobile crane at the new

development at Pleasant and Marion streets, with masonry work set to occur next week on the west side of the property.