



Village Manager's Report Week ending July 28, 2023

Meetings scheduled for next week:

- Monday, July 31:
 - Village Board, 7 p.m. in Council Chambers
- Tuesday, August 1:
 - Environment & Energy Commission, 7 p.m. in Council Chambers
- Wednesday, August 2:
 - Citizen Involvement Commission, 7 p.m. in Room 101
- Thursday, August 3:
 - Plan Commission, 7 p.m. in Council Chambers
- Friday, August 4:
 - No meetings scheduled

Police hosting National Night Out event – Don't miss the Police Department's National Night Out event from 5 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 1 on the south lawn at Village Hall. The free, family-friendly celebration will feature a bounce house, music, food, beverages, a dunk tank and more. More than 17,000 communities nationwide participate in the [National Night Out campaign](#), which takes place each year on the first Tuesday in August. The Oak Park Police Department's event aims to strengthen partnerships and positive interactions between law enforcement officials and members of the community. More information about the Oak Park event is on the Village website – [click here to view](#).

Fire investigation ongoing – Fire officials continue to investigate the cause of an explosion that occurred at about 5 p.m. on Wednesday in the 200 block of S. Maple Ave. A section of building's wall collapsed and a box alarm was activated, bringing in mutual aid from approximately 10 other jurisdictions. One victim was transported to Loyola University Medical Center with significant burns and sadly passed away Thursday night. The preliminary indication is that the incident began via natural gas explosion, but the official cause of the explosion and fire will likely not be confirmed until the Illinois State Fire Marshall issues its report on the incident in a few weeks.

Homes for a Changing Region update – The Development Customer Service Department is working with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) to prepare focus group interview sessions in August as part of a project that will produce an updated Homes for a Changing Region study for the community. Interview sessions will be held with key housing stakeholders, including representatives from local housing agencies, senior residence facilities and multi-family building owners. A focus group session and progress update will

also be scheduled with the Village Board in early October. Additionally, the Village and MMC are working to release an online survey in August through the Village's communications channels, and a public information meeting about the project is being planned for mid-September.

Economic vitality update – The proposed new Holiday Inn Express development at 1140 Lake St. continues to move forward. The proposed 70-room hotel was granted a special use permit by the Village, contingent upon the developer obtaining a permit related to the project on or before July 31. This week, the developer met that obligation by obtaining an interior demolition permit for work planned prior to the remodeling. Village staff continues to work with the developer and architect to move the permit process forward.

Leadership training for staff – Many of the Village's department directors, managers and members of the Police Department's command staff spent time this week with consultants from BerryDunn to discuss leadership and communication in the context of project objectives and the books [Flight of the Buffalo](#) and [Crucial Conversations](#). The sessions, which took place on July 26-27, centered around critical thinking, organizational change management, action planning and more.

Police hold parking meeting with residents – Members of the Police Department command staff held a follow-up meeting attended by more than a dozen residents to discuss new parking restrictions that will be going into effect next month in the 1150 blocks of S. Harvey, Highland, Cuyler and Ridgeland avenues. The new restrictions are intended to mitigate late-night disruptions cause by patrons of Mike's Place Sports Bar and Grill in Berwyn. Command staff personnel discussed how residents will be able to obtain vehicle stickers for their vehicles and hangers for visitors allowing them to park on the street when the parking restrictions are in effect.

Failor participates in panel discussion – Village Planner Craig Failor participated in a panel discussion on Accessory Dwelling Units this week, facilitated by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. The panel discussion was held Thursday in Woodridge and centered on increasing the supply of housing options in a land-locked, built out community for senior citizens who wish to age in place. Failor participated in a similar panel discussion for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency on Planning this past March.

Fitzsimmons Award winners honored – Four local organizations and two individuals were honored with a Fitzsimmons Public Health Award on Tuesday night in a ceremony at Village Hall, where more than 30 people gathered to celebrate the winners. The awards, named for William Fitzsimmons, a medical consultant to the Oak Park Department of Public Health from 1976-1992, were presented to the awardees by the people who nominated them. Many Fitzsimmons honorees were recognized for their dedication to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, while others were honored for their work on harm reduction, environmental health and wellness initiatives. The Board of Health selected the winners for the Fitzsimmons Public Health Awards, and chairperson Dr. Noel Chavez was on hand to announce each recipient. The 2023 awards were presented to the Cheney Mansion staff, the Collaboration for Early Childhood, Live4Lali, the Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce, Alicia Chastain and Kelly O'Connor. [Click here](#) for a photo of this year's winners who were present at the ceremony.

Rodent control tips – The Public Health Department is reminding residents that it takes a community effort to control the rodent population, though it will never be entirely eliminated. There are many things homeowners, renters and businesses can do to prevent rodent infestations, including managing refuse containers by keeping lids closed, not overfilling containers and ensuring bags of refuse are not ripped open when placing them in containers. Other steps residents can take include removing exterior clutter where rats like to burrow by keeping fence lines clear, removing pet feces and storing firewood away from exterior walls and off the ground. Find more ways to rodent proof your property on the Village website at www.oak-park.us/rodentproofing.

Police Department hosting basketball camp – More than 60 kids are signed up to participate in the Police Department’s annual youth basketball camp next Monday, July 31 through Friday, Aug. 4. The Police Department has notified families of a late location change for the camp, which will now be held at Beye Elementary School, 230 N. Cuyler Ave. The camp is open to Oak Park kids ages 8 to 14. Activities include group instruction, team play, one-on-one and full-court games, contests and awards.

Guidance for storm debris pickup – With thunderstorms expected throughout the summer, the Forestry Division is reminding residents that if a branch falls from a parkway tree located between the curb and sidewalk, please contact Public Works at 708.358.5700 or publicworks@oak-park.us so the Village is aware of the issue and can pick up the debris. Officials ask residents to not cut up branches from parkway trees as it is faster for crews to feed one large branch into the wood chipper than a lot of smaller pieces. The Village does not pick up brush from trees on private property. If you have a small amount of private brush to dispose of, you can bundle it, attach a green yard waste sticker and set it out for in the regular collection area for regular garbage and recycling pickup. More information is at www.oak-park.us/stormdebris.

Community award nominations sought – The Village is once again planning to recognize efforts made by organizations, individuals and businesses to improve Oak Park through property preservation and sustainability. Nominations are now being sought for the 2023 Cavalcade of Pride, Historic Preservation and Sustainability awards. More information is available at www.oak-park.us/2023awards.

Tips for a great block party – With block party season in full swing, the Village is sharing tips to ensure a great block party. Each block may sponsor two block parties per year. A petition signed by at least 10 separate addresses on the block is required to schedule a block party. Approved petitions allow the neighborhood to close off a street to vehicle traffic for the entire day. [Click here](#) to see the Village’s block party guidelines.

Hot sandwiches at Farmers' Market – For the first time in its history, the Oak Park Farmers’ Market is selling hot sandwiches this season for customers to enjoy while they shop. Baked Cheese Haus has been handcrafting small-batch artisanal cheese in southwest Wisconsin since the 1890s. This long-term Market vendor is selling Raclette, which is scraped off the wheel in the traditional Swiss format, on fresh bread to create hot cheese sandwiches available for purchase each Market day. The Market takes place from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. rain or shine every Saturday through October. More information is at www.oak-park.us/farmersmarket.

OPRF mosaic mural in the works – Student artists are hard at work creating a huge mosaic mural to commemorate Oak Park River Forest High School's 150th anniversary. The mural, which will be displayed on the west side of the OPRF High School building, is being created through a partnership that includes the Oak Park Area Arts Council's Off the Wall summer arts employment program and the OPRF Booster Club. [Click here](#) for a sneak peek photo of Arts Council Executive Director Camille Wilson-White next to a massive tree that makes up just one element of the project, giving an idea of the mural's scale.

New Chamber of Commerce Executive Director - The Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors has announced that Darien Marion-Burton, the current President of that organization, has been named its new Executive Director. Marion-Burton will begin in his new position starting Monday, July 31. Village staff is looking forward to continuing to work with Executive Director Marion-Burton and new Chamber President Rob Guenther.

Water and sewer improvements – The intersection of Augusta Street and Lombard Avenue will be closed starting Monday as work gets underway on water main and sewer repairs along Augusta between Lombard and Austin Boulevard. The contractor anticipates the closure could last up to two weeks, at which time temporary pavement will be installed as work continues elsewhere.

Forest and Ontario improvements – The electric sub-contractor has started boring conduits in the parkways around the intersection of Forest Avenue and Ontario Street. Next, crews plan to cut open the road to finish installing conduits due to equipment restrictions. Single lanes of traffic will be closed, but plates or temporary trench fill will be used to re-open both lanes of traffic by the end of each day.

Street resurfacing project – The 2022 street resurfacing project that was delayed to this summer is substantially completed. Over the next week, the contractor will be working through punchlist items that include placing roadway striping and restoring parkways.

Division Street improvement project – Roadway patching along Division Street is wrapping up and asphalt binder will be placed next week. The utility contractor will then begin the two-week process to bring structures frames to final grade. The final surface of asphalt is expected to be placed in August.

Alley reconstruction project – The first six alleys of the year's project have been reopened and the seventh alley will be done in the coming days. The final three alleys are under construction, with final completion expected during August.

Alley lighting upgrades – Work officially started on alley lighting upgrades this week with the contractors beginning installations on the north side of town between North Avenue and Lemoyne Parkway. Crews will move from west to east from Harlem Avenue to Austin Boulevard. Progress will continue southward, with the exception of avoiding garbage pickup conflicts.

Miscellaneous construction updates – Drywall hanging, taping and pointing is ongoing for building levels 3 and 4 at the site of the new development at the intersection of Marion and

Pleasant streets. Along Roosevelt Road, Illinois Department of Transportation crews continue to clean drainage structures and install pavement markings as part of the state's resurfacing project. Elsewhere, Nicor is back in town to inspect sewers along the 900-1100 blocks of S. Elmwood Avenue and the 1000-1100 blocks of S. Humphrey Avenue.