



**Village of Oak Park Board of Trustees
November 5, 2007**

Gail Moran, Observer

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. Trustee Marsey was absent, but all other Trustees and the Village President were present. At the request of a Trustee, three items were removed from the consent agenda to the regular agenda. November was proclaimed Affordable Housing Month (there are 2000 families on waiting lists for Oak Park housing vouchers), and a Resolution was read into the record opposing Cook County Board President's proposed retail sales tax increases and urging Commissioners to vote "no." Service awards were then presented to Village staff, recognizing individuals' contributions to the Village of five (5) to forty-five (45) years of service.

Non-agenda public comment from one individual employed by the Oak Park Health Alliance concerned his allegations that Resurrection Hospital (West Suburban) discriminates against its housekeeping staff and his request that the Village do something to address it.

Manager Barwin gave a construction update: Marion Street ribbon cutting will take place on November 20th; WhiteCo. construction continues, as does Prairie Way improvements; Division and Augusta resurfacing will be completed soon; and, brick paver installation on Wenonah is behind schedule. Manager Barwin also pointed out that the Police Department is experimenting with posting local crime statistics online (www.oak-park.us).

During the reports of Boards and Commissions, the Citizens Involvement Commission chair made a plea for volunteers to serve on her Commission, the Community Relations Commission, the Fire and Police Commission, and the Retail Support Grant Committee. She also reported that the Local Improvements Commission is defunct.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) recommended and the Board approved a Class L grant recommendation for façade restoration at the property located at 1033 S. Blvd. (Final approval and funding rests with Cook County.)

Marion Street Cheese Market was recommended by the Liquor Control Commission for approval of a catering off-premises liquor license, which was unanimously approved. The Transportation Commission recommended, and the Board agreed, to deny a further parking restriction south on the 500 block of Wesley (there is currently 2-hour restricted parking).

The meeting turned to the regular agenda. The first significant item was a Resolution to approve a \$10,000 stipend to Madison Highland Development team to proceed with detailed drawings for a parking garage at Madison and Highland. First, staff explained that another presenter had come forward and, while not timely for the RFQ, should be considered due to a lapse in communication between the developer and the Village. Trustee Hale questioned whether the RFQ process was being circumvented. President Pope voiced similar concerns but indicated that the Village had

neglected to contact the respondent regarding its interest in the development in the area as requested over a year ago. The developer then presented to the Board that it did not have a proposal to offer at the time, that the Board should give it time to bring forward a proposal. The principal of the firm explained that it had expressed interest in the site to the Village previously but was not contacted, and argued further that the Village had a paucity of minority-owned firms.

The Madison Highlands Development Team then made its presentation, offering a five-story parking garage with retail on the main level and upper levels. It was explained that the Madison Street Business Association and the Madison Street Implementation Coalition had input into this concept and approved it. Proposed cost of development per parking space was estimated at \$26 to \$28 thousand dollars. Trustee Hedges expressed concern about moving forward with approval of the stipend for detailed plans in light of the belated responder, but Trustees Hale and Johnson disagreed. Trustee Johnson suggested that the late-coming responder could still offer its proposal while the Board moved forward on the stipend to Madison Highlands. Trustee Moore questioned the type of retail the Madison Highland team would introduce to the site and the presenter responded that type B office space was in demand in Oak Park. A long protracted discussion followed about whether there should be additional public input with regard to the "concept" for the garage as another respondent had come forward. However, the Resolution to move forward on the stipend to Madison Highlands was ultimately unanimously approved.

The Board unanimously referred to the Plan Commission a zoning ordinance text amendment to reduce the height restrictions on Lake Street to no taller than the Marshall Field's building (approximately 45 feet or four stories), consistent with the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan.

The Board then took up the proposed award of a contract to Camiros to develop design guidelines for the Village. It was explained that the process would take up to twelve months to complete. Trustee Hedges indicated his concern about approving the award in the face of the 2008 budget discussions. President Pope said creating the guidelines was long-overdue and he considered it a big priority. Trustee Johnson expressed concern that the original allocation was for \$50,000, but the scope of the project had been expanded as well as the time for completion. He opined that the Village should use its Commissions to reduce the timeline and the cost. Village Planner Failor explained that the 2006 budget had contemplated creation of design guidelines and staff moved it forward and sent out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to which there were two responses, with contract costs between \$87,000 and \$250,000. Trustee Hale commented that he would not authorize such an expenditure. The item was unanimously removed from the agenda.

After approval of the Consent Agenda, the meeting adjourned close to midnight.