

**APPROVED MINUTES - SPECIAL BOARD MEETING  
PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK  
HELD ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2011 AT 7:00 P.M.  
IN ROOM 101 OF OAK PARK VILLAGE HALL**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

President Pope called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Trustees Hedges, Johnson, Lueck, Salzman and Tucker; President Pope

ABSENT: Trustee Brewer

President Pope announced that this meeting will include the presentation of a follow-up report to the Board regarding the combined sewer system review and the short-term improvements project study as well as public comment.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Eric Davis, 1112 N. Lombard Ave. Mr. Davis stated that he is working with Berwyn and Cicero to develop a combined Multihazard Mitigation Plan, adding that it is a prerequisite to a number of Federal support mechanisms for prevention of this type of damage.

Damon Brown, 1014 N. Lombard. Ave. Mr. Brown asked what has been done to quantify the level of sewer back up and flooding in the Village.

Chuck Mishoulam, 1031 Woodbine. Mr. Mishoulam inquired about the Village subsidizing flood control systems for residents on an individual basis.

Mike Reust, 607 Belleforte Ave. Mr. Reust spoke about flood damage to his home as a result of a water main break in the area.

**V. FOLLOW-UP REPORT TO THE BOARD/MHW REPORT ON THE COMBINED SEWER SYSTEM REVIEW AND THE SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS PROJECTS STUDY**

Village Engineer Jim Budrick stated that staff has looked at a number of initiatives in response to the flooding concerns in portions of the Village. These included looking at the overall sewer system and to identify ways to help mitigate future flooding. The Village has retained the services of Montgomery Watts and Harza (MWH), who did an extensive review of the sewer system in 1994, for this purpose. For the past six weeks, Public Works staff and MWH staff have worked together in developing both short-term improvement options as well as future options.

Joe Johnson of MWH presented a chart going back to 1960 that gave an historical overview of 2-day rainfall totals at O'Hare. He indicated that there were variations in the totals, noting that the July 2010 and July 2011 totals were over six inches and over eight inches. Despite

periodic extreme rainfall events, there have been periods of ten years without an event of that nature.

Mr. Johnson referred to a map summarizing where flooding complaints were reported. He commented that there are clusters of complaints in the northeastern and northwestern sections of the Village, indicating the need to focus on the northern part of the Village and understand the widespread flooding in that area.

Mr. Johnson discussed causes of flooding, noting that Oak Park has no river, creek or waterway that drains through the Village. The water in Oak Park is entirely dependent upon its sewer system and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) sewer system for drainage. Individual homes have sewer services that convey water to the public sewer in the street. From the southern boundary of the Village, they go to the MWRD interceptor, which then conveys the wastewater to the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant. When the interceptor receives more than it can handle, the excess goes into the Tunnel and Reservoir Plain (TARP). When the TARP fills up, as it did during the past two extreme rain events, the combined sewer overflow and excess rainfall cannot be accommodated by the Water Reclamation Plant or the TARP, and water remains in the local sewer system. If that water can't get out, the combined wastewater can back up into local basements. The Village sewer system capacity is limited by the capacity of the MWRD system and building bigger pipes in Oak Park will not resolve the backup in extreme events.

Trustee Lueck noted that other factors that cause flooding, such as water runoff through basement doors or from cracks in the foundation, and asked how many of the flooded basements in the analysis were from sewer backup. Mr. Johnson stated that generally most of the problems reported were perceived to be sewer backup. Surface flooding is not a widespread problem in the Village.

Mr. Johnson spoke about long-term flood mitigation options. Conveyance can be increased by replacing the sewer system, a major capital improvement that is disruptive and expensive. Low-interest loans to help finance these projects are available through the State but these key capital projects are typically only done in response to major problems in the system. Another option is temporary storage, such as storing storm water on the street, in detention basins and underground storage. Other options included rain barrels, rain gardens, and permeable pavement, which can provide benefits only if distributed over a large area. He added that an increasing number of grant programs are available to help finance some of these projects. The last option discussed was individual property protection, such as backflow preventers or overhead sewers, which isolate a basement from a sewer system. He added that these typically cost \$10,000 to install, and while they have specific benefit to an individual property, their benefit on a community-wide basis depends on overall participation and how they are implemented with other projects.

Mr. Johnson noted that these long-term strategies will require significant investment and planning. The focus during the last six weeks has been short-term strategies for the Village to consider while developing a long-term strategy that would achieve an increased level of protection.

The first option discussed was disconnecting downspouts. Mr. Johnson noted that this must be done properly or residents will send water onto their neighbor's property.

President Pope asked how differentials in elevation and the water level contribute to seepage and sewer issues. Mr. Johnson noted that the water table is closest to the surface in northeast Oak Park, which is the lowest part of the Village. He reviewed the sewer system diagram and noted that the sewers leaving Oak Park at Roosevelt Road are 20 to 30 feet deep, while the sewers at Le Moyne Parkway may be only eight or nine feet below the surface. At the northern end of town, if the trunk sewer backs up, it goes into the basements. When trunk sewer improvements, as well as overall capacity improvements of the system were looked at in 1994, they tried to determine how to provide better capacity to that low area of the Village.

The second option discussed was an overhead sewer cost share program, which some communities currently offer. Mr. Johnson summarized how the program works. He added that overhead sewer systems provide individual residents with a level of protection beyond what the public systems can normally afford to provide and is something that the Village should look at as a viable alternative to increasing the size of public sewers.

Trustee Hedges asked if the flooding would simply move to other parts of town if residents in the current flood-prone areas install overhead sewer systems. Mr. Johnson stated that if the volume of water taken away from those areas is pushed to where the sewers are deep enough, a problem is not as likely, but this may require some improvements to the system.

Trustee Tucker asked for data from other communities which have implemented the overhead sewer cost share program. Mr. Johnson stated that typically the cost share is 50%; he is not aware of any communities that have funded 100% as an alternative to public infrastructure.

Mr. Johnson presented the third option, implementing low impact design and storm water best management practices. For these to be successful, a strong effort needed to be made to get information to the public.

Another recommendation is to look more closely at some of the local issues of the sewer system and establish what decisions need to be made over the next 10 to 20 years regarding improvement to the combined sewer system.

Mr. Johnson explained that the Village is now replacing a water main on Le Moyne Parkway and staff have suggested that the current median be inverted into a bioswale to capture rainwater; some of the street runoff can be directed there. There was a brief discussion regarding landscaping of the bioswale with hardy native plants.

Mr. Johnson spoke about inlet restriction on the streets, the last short-term option. This option would keep storm water on the street during the rain event and then allow it into the combined sewer at a rate that the sewer system can handle. He discussed how and where this would be implemented, and suggested working with staff to identify a demonstration area to determine the challenges of installation. President Pope commented that it would also be helpful to know how pooling water would impact the life cycle of the streets and curbs. Mr. Johnson noted that the water on the street is usually gone in a couple of hours.

Mr. Johnson reviewed some of the external funding sources for these projects. President Pope asked if some of these projects were eligible for Pre-disaster Mitigation Funding. Mr. Johnson said any project that demonstrates an attempt to mitigate the impact of a similar

disaster is eligible. Trustee Johnson noted that an approved Multihazard Mitigation Plan was needed prior to applying for funding and asked if the county's plan would supersede Oak Park's or whether the Village should create their own. Public Works Director John Wielebnicki noted that several staff members, as well as staff from Berwyn and Cicero, would meet with a consultant to learn more about this and added that the Village can wait for the County, partner with Berwyn and Cicero, or create their own plan. He noted that Illinois only funds public property improvements.

President Pope asked if partnering with Berwyn and Cicero would put Oak Park in a better position to qualify for the grant funds. Mr. Wielebnicki said that it would put the Village in a better position than doing this alone but did not know if it would be better than the county's position overall.

There was discussion regarding the recommended programs and how they would be incorporated in the Public Works budget. Mr. Barwin noted that the trunk sewer improvements, local sewer improvements, permeable pavers and demonstration sites would fall under Capital Improvements. He added that Mr. Wielebnicki had already included \$250,000 to address flood mitigation.

Eric Davis, 1112 N. Lombard Ave. Mr. Davis referred to the partnership with Berwyn and Cicero, adding that this group will be recommending that the Village submit an "intent to file" for an annual allocation from the State of Illinois Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program. He noted that if the Village waits for the County's plan to be completed, they will miss their window of opportunity to apply for these funds in 2012. He also said he was in favor of the Village subsidizing overhead sewers.

Mr. Wielebnicki spoke about the overhead sewer program. President Pope stated that the Board would have a more detailed follow up conversation regarding this option, as it will be a long term program and the Board needed to understand how many residents it will impact along with the associated costs.

Angela Spinillo, 40 Le Moyne Parkway. Ms. Spinillo asked if the bioswale project would be eligible for an Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant, noting the deadline to apply is December 15. She also suggested that the downspout disconnection project be tested first in one area of the Village.

Lawrence Msall, 824 N. Harvey. Mr. Msall stated that residents who have already incurred the cost of installing overhead sewers should be considered as well in terms of the cost sharing program. He also stated that residents need to be better educated regarding disconnecting their downspouts.

Rich Bodner, 812 N. Harvey. Mr. Bodner commented that the houses in northeastern Oak Park are too close together for downspout disconnection to be effective. He also questioned the capacity of the MWRD. Mr. Bodner asked if televising the sewers on Harvey would continue.

Mr. Johnson explained that the MWRD does not guarantee a certain capacity for their system.

Water and Sewer Superintendent Brian Jack responded to Mr. Bodner's concern regarding sewer televising, stating that all sewer lines on the 800 and 900 blocks will be completed. Issues with the equipment that have been resolved and the program will be continuing, as there are a number of homes that have to be completed by the end of the week.

Tom Cofsky, 1127 N. Kenilworth. Mr. Cofsky asked what the status was regarding televising the sewer on the 1100 block of North Kenilworth.

Water and Sewer Engineer Bill McKenna spoke about the unique configuration on Kenilworth; 100 feet of homeowner sewer runs under the Village-owned parkway and street where homeowners cannot maintain their sewer. He added that a sewer televising program is scheduled for late fall that includes Kenilworth. The cost of inspecting those services will be looked at.

Angela Spinillo, 40 Le Moyne Parkway. Ms. Spinillo asked if the sewers under Le Moyne Parkway were scheduled for televising as well.

Mr. McKenna stated that a new main was installed in 1982 adding that if the bioswale is done, the Village will make sure this is not constructed over a bad pipe.

Trustee Salzman asked for clarification regarding sewer maintenance responsibilities of homeowners, specifically on a street such as Kenilworth.

Mr. Wielebnicki stated that sewer maintenance such as rodding out tree roots is the responsibility of the homeowner. The Village is responsible for the maintenance from the curb to the sewer, even though the parkway is Village-owned property.

Chuck Mishoulam, 1031 Woodbine. Mr. Mishoulam noted that Lindberg Park was not holding water anymore and asked if restrictors were put in place.

Mr. Wielebnicki stated that the Park District did not install restrictors; repairs were made to a sewer main in the park.

Mr. Barwin referred to the public comment regarding the water main break. An ordinance addresses this issue and he will distribute copies to the Board.

## **VI. ADJOURN**

In compliance with the Open Meetings Act, it was moved and seconded to adjourn to Executive Session for discussion of litigation. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. The meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 9:20 P.M. Thursday, October 20, 2011.

## **SUBMITTED AND RECORDED IN THE OFFICE OF:**

By: MaryAnn Schoenneman  
Interim Deputy Village Clerk

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Teresa Powell, Village Clerk